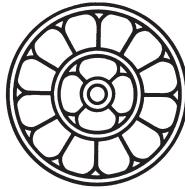


THE MOTHER

New Correspondences
of the Mother

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New Correspondences of the Mother

Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Pondicherry

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Publisher's Note

This book contains the Mother’s correspondence with twelve disciples; eleven were members of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Each correspondence is presented in chronological order, with the question or comment of the disciple provided whenever possible. The names of the disciples have been given since they have all passed away. A brief life-sketch of each disciple appears at the beginning of his or her correspondence. Ten of these correspondences are entirely in English; two are largely in English, but have a small number of replies in French, which appear here in translation. Further details are provided in the Note on the Texts at the end of the book.

The reader should note that the word “new” in the title of this book does not mean “published here for the first time”, but rather “not published in the Collected Works of the Mother and therefore new to most of its readers”. The Collected Works was organised and published around 1978, at the time of the Mother’s centenary. Forty years have passed since then, and a number of new correspondences have come to light, including those in this book. Most have been published in the Ashram’s quarterly journal, *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, but since the *Bulletin* has a limited readership the correspondences will be new to most readers.

The twelve correspondences in this book supplement those published in Collected Works Volumes 16 and 17.

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New Correspondences
of the Mother

Series One

Correspondence with Dyuman

Born on 19 June 1903, the Gujarati disciple Dyuman (Chunilal Desai) joined the Sri Aurobindo Ashram on 11 July 1927 at the age of twenty-four. From the beginning he worked in the Dining Room, serving rice and purchasing food. In 1930 the Mother placed him in charge of the Dining Room, a position he held for more than sixty years. He also started Gloria Land, one of the largest Ashram farms. When the Ashram Trust was formed in 1954, the Mother appointed him as one of the five trustees; later he became the managing trustee of the Ashram. Active till the end, Dyuman passed away on 19 August 1992 at the age of eighty-nine.

Dyuman's correspondence deals largely with the management of the Dining Room from 1929 to 1937.

Mother,

I had no intention of violating Your orders. The wiping was already finished by the time I received Your last order at 5 p.m. or so. Mother, I am at Your feet for any punishment for violating Your orders even unconsciously.

Why punishment, my child?

I never thought of such a thing! I never thought even that you had violated any rules. The whole thing is a misunderstanding.

You must know that I trust you and have full confidence in your earnestness and your goodwill. It is on that ground that we are working together and also that I let you know whenever there is something that has to be corrected.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Never doubt my love.

12 June 1929

*

Dyuman,

I quite appreciate the spirit in which you have made your proposals.

But there is one thing you have not quite grasped. And this you must get clear and keep in mind. The organisation of the Ashram is certainly not a fixed mental construction. It has been left plastic so that it may be a growing and progressive creation expressing more and more of the Truth.

But in this growth and progression every detail is fixed by my will; it is not chance or a fortuitous arrangement.

28 March 1930

*

Mother,

A lady sadhika is working with me. How should I behave towards her? Let me know in words, if You please. I have often put before You how I behave and work and You know all about me. When we work together, we forget all except the work for You and how to do it in the best way.

It is well understood that you must meet only for the work and at the time of work. If while working you forgot everything except the work it is all right. But always be careful to avoid all vital interchange.

5 July 1930

*

Mother,

I attended the French classes, junior and senior

Series One —Dyuman

both. Now the question comes to me: Why not read Vedic hymns rather than French lessons? Whenever I go to the library, I do not find any books to read except Sri Aurobindo's and from them I read only on the Vedic hymns and The Secret of the Veda. No doubt I have taken other books, but hardly a few pages I have gone through.

I would like to know which is more near and akin to me, and I shall follow You.

Do not narrow your mind. You can find help not only in the "Veda" but in all the writings of Sri Aurobindo.

Why not learn French if you feel inclined?

1930

*

Dyuman,

The more you treat R like an invalid, the more he will become an invalid. He must not take all his fancies for needs and I do not see why he should not be submitted to the same discipline as the others.

He can get his meals earlier if he requires but he must not enter the dining room at will.

1930

*

Dyuman,

Don't starve yourself. You are working hard and need food. By not eating enough you would lose your strength and the work would suffer.

1930

*

All who serve the meals or prepare curds, etc. must, while they are doing this work, cover their hair with a cloth tied like a

New Correspondences of the Mother

turban fully covering the head.

1930

*

Never kill lizards; they are most useful creatures. Without them you would be devoured by the insects.

1930

*

Mother,

When P handed the monthly Prosperity things to me I thought: "What will Mother do if the stock of toothbrushes is exhausted? Mother must have this one — it goes to Mother."

I have taken already my precautions. Since more than four months I am using my finger as a toothbrush and find it quite convenient. So I am sending back your toothbrush. If you have no use for it, you can return it to the stores.

2 February 1932

*

Mother,

Nolini brought me the typed message sent by You. I have read it again and again. It is the strongest letter I have ever read. The last few lines about Your children's disobedience and disregard for You are heart-rending. Though the letter is not addressed to me and though You do not make me responsible for this dramatic catastrophe, I cannot shirk it.

The letter is not from me but from Sri Aurobindo.

Last night I was going to write to You: how can I pay You the price of the 250 items?

Series One —Dyuman

I do not see why you should have to pay for it. We do not consider you in fault.

I will give You the easy chair and iron bed, and if that does not suffice I will send to You the trunk with some clothes given by You.

Send me *nothing*. I want nothing. Keep the bed, the chair, the box and the rest.

My first thought was to give up half my measure of milk for one year.

Certainly not. I find that already you are not eating enough and would like you to eat rather *more* than less.

Mother, disregard for You? Disobedience to You?

I never said that you did disregard or disobey me.

If this is the case, it is all the same whether I am here or elsewhere. Why pain You by gross darkness?

This is quite absurd. I am not pained.

No longer will I trouble You with writing “Thy child”.

I never objected to your writing “Thy child” and expect you to do it always.

Mother, let Your Will alone be fulfilled.

This is quite good. And I trust you will do it.

In fact I sent the letter to you so that you might use it to show to people if necessary.

4 March 1932

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Dyuman,

I find no good use for this lace except to give it back to you. When holding your hair together, it will remind you of the Divine's unifying action and thus be of double use.

28 March 1932

*

Mother,

This bowl has been put on the fire by somebody and is now spoiled. Who this somebody is, is not known.

It is a great pity, because the best punishment would be to serve his or her meal in the bowl!

7 June 1932

*

Dyuman,

Why were you so serious, almost grave, at pranam this morning? Is it that you thought V was occupying your place? It is not so. He had asked permission to sit behind you after I had come, and we had agreed.

Let no cloud come over you and keep our love ever present in your heart.

19 August 1932

*

My child,

Be quiet, peaceful, strong. Nothing is impossible with a quiet strength, the Divine's Grace and the Mother's blessings.

With love

22 November 1932

*

Series One —Dyuman

Dyuman,

For the bread problem. All those who want their usual number of slices must be given them, part from the Ashram bread and the complement from bazaar bread.

I suppose you will easily calculate how many bazaar loaves are to be bought daily.

P.S. You can scarcely ask people to take rice instead of bread as those who take bread generally do not want rice.

3 December 1932

*

Dyuman,

I cannot understand why you have got so upset, for I have been conscious of nothing unusual except a little more concentration because of S's accident (she has broken her arm by falling yesterday). I found it quite good that you should sit at that place so long as she cannot occupy it herself, and I have no objection to your removing my sandals.

So cast away all disturbance and recover your normal balance.

With my blessings

December 1932

*

My child,

I have an impression that the visitors are arriving with a big appetite and that they may find our dishes somewhat small. Consequently I have increased the quantity on the "menu".

14 February 1933

*

My child,

I hear that your clothes are torn—this won't do. But I have no long dhoties. I am sending you 2 pairs of shomins.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Instead of cutting in the middle (where there is the mark), cut them as long as needed to wear them as dhoties and with the bit left I suppose you can have a punjabi made by Kanai. This will do for the moment until I receive the new cloth.

16 February 1933

*

My child,

Why were you so serious at pranam?

Don't let anything from outside approach and disturb you. What people think, do or say is of little importance. The only thing that counts is your relation with the Divine — and from that point of view you have nothing to worry about, all is all right.

And never forget that we love and trust you.

30 April 1933

*

My dear Mother,

P and I went to Aroum  [the Ashram Dining Room] today. We find the existing kitchen an impossibility. To change it we will have to spend time and money. We can put the kitchen somewhere else, as I am showing here in the plan.

The room which has an opening towards the Governor's house can be turned into a kitchen. It has tiles on the roof and glass ventilators for light. We can put the ovens there. As for the smoke from the ovens, we can put up a chimney. The food we can carry to the serving room. The kitchen vessels we can wash in the kitchen itself.

Unfortunately the latrines are next to the kitchen and also a new gutter. We can close the gutter and cut off the view of the latrines by planting a creeper.

Series One —Dyuman

I do not think this idea is at all practicable.

First, the greatest objection is the neighbourhood of the latrines; to hide them or to shut a gutter does not prevent the flies from going freely from the latrines to the food in the kitchen.

Second, X was very particular that we should not misuse these rooms. I do not think he would agree to turn them into a kitchen.

Third, to put a kitchen just under the windows of the Government House, sending them directly all the smoke of our cooking, is just the best way to get us into trouble.

Fourth, it is a long way to carry the food to the serving place.

Fifth, there are many other minor inconveniences.

Sixth, you cannot judge the existing kitchen so long as it is not thoroughly cleaned and repaired. If it is not sufficiently ventilated and if there is not enough light, we can put in a new window. I am ready to do it at my own expense if necessary.

4 December 1933

*

(Around this time Dyuman suffered a nervous breakdown due to overwork. It took him about four months to recover. A number of letters in the following pages refer to this condition of nervous exhaustion.)

My child,

I would like you to go to bed now. I am sending you a hot tisane which is expected to make you perspire.

As I am not sure that you have something sufficiently warm to cover yourself in bed, I am sending you a cover.

18 December 1933

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Mother,

About the Aroumé accounts, I shall make one account for You and one for the accountant.

You can ask S to lend you his books, it will help you to learn the words; 3 books only: *menu, entrées, sorties*. The description of all that has been used in each dish is not necessary.

c. 24 December 1933

*

Mother,

Instead of so many books, can there not be less?

If you put *entrées* and *sorties* in the same book, you can have two books only; but it must be very clear, so that I can see at the first glance.

c. 24 December 1933

*

My dear Mother,

There is no peace and happiness in my being. What has happened to me? It was seven years ago, when I was in the hospital, that I took the final decision: I am here to live at the Feet of Sri Aurobindo; it is my only life.

Today there is a great struggle in me. I hope it will not lead to misery, trouble, peril and difficulty. My body falls down as if it is dying. Mother, my heart is completely broken today.

What has happened? I am anxious and want to know. Anything wrong physically? Of which heart are you speaking? and why? Is there any exterior cause for that? My love is anxious and wants to know all about it.

25 December 1933

*

Series One —Dyuman

My Mother,

Bless me with Thy Love. I now go out of this compound for the Divine Work, protected and surrounded by Your Love and the Love of my beloved Sri Aurobindo.

My Mother, though I shall be working outside, I am ever Thine, ever at Thy Feet.

Why do you speak of working *outside*? Do you think that any house of the Ashram is outside our atmosphere, even the most material? Here or there it is just the same: I am always close to you, helping you, supporting you, working through you, and it is not a few yards more or less which can make any difference for that.

4 January 1934

*

Mother,

S wants to work with me. But she will not be able to bear this atmosphere and will easily get upset. I am altogether a different person in my room than when I am at work. She had not seen me at work: quite upright, honest and full of justice. She must become more quiet and calm and get firmly established in the faith before we give her any work.

I fully agree with you in this. She is not yet ready for that, and it is better if she goes on with her paddy work. She might be given separate work from the two others to avoid all clash.

10 January 1934

*

Let a wide and deep peace settle in you, my child; it will give you rest. As far as your body is concerned, I wish that you should go to the market in a push rickshaw. I am sure that it

New Correspondences of the Mother

will do much to lessen the burden of fatigue. Some monthly arrangement can easily be made with a pushwalla and it will be, on the whole, quite an insignificant increase of expense. It seems that the peon who worked some time for the Ashram could do that. You might speak to him and find a suitable arrangement.

10 January 1934

*

Mother,

I am quietly happy. Now I go to bed at 10.20, to rise in the morning with Your Vastness and Peace.

If it were possible for you to go to bed 20 minutes earlier, I would like it very much.

13 January 1934

*

Mother,

I have learned that N is not remaining healthy at present. I would like to stop her work at least for a week, to let her rest.

I do not think it advisable to stop altogether N's work. It would not be good for her. If she feels tired she may do less, but she must remain occupied.

22 January 1934

*

Mother,

S wanted to spend 20 minutes with me. That is not possible—not even 10 minutes regularly at a fixed hour. It is nothing but a vital demand on me; I cannot satisfy that. I can give her 2 or 3 minutes and not more.

Series One —Dyuman

It is not at all advisable to let her encroach like that upon you. The more she will get, the more she will want and finally, if she could, she would swallow you up.

Mother, I do not think that I should go to call her; if she comes to me I shall receive her. What do You say?

Keep quiet. You must not go to call her. She wants to annex you; this cannot be tolerated.

c. 25 January 1934

*

Mother,

*I do not understand this Yoga. I know only this:
To be one with the Mother and to live and work for
Her; this is all.*

Why are the Ashram inmates hankering after food? Why this big fuss over eating? Why are we breaking our heads due to vital desire, ego, pride, self-will, mental ideas and preferences? I do not follow all this and am unable to understand.

*Mother, my heart was filled with such feelings;
it was restless and unquiet again. But now I am quiet
and happy. All these feelings have passed away.*

This is very good. Indeed, if you want to do your work with a clear mind and discrimination, you must never get upset—whatever happens. This is a very important point.

26 January 1934

*

My child,

When I wrote “your work”, I meant “your working”, still more clearly “your carrying out of my work”. I know that your aspiration is to become more and more fit to manifest the

New Correspondences of the Mother

Divine's Will. That will never be forgotten or doubted. It is understood once and for all. And whatever I tell you to be or to do, it is from that point of view that I tell it.

27 January 1934

*

Mother,

Seeing the work of the Building Department at Aroum , I found so many faulty repairs. [The disciple noted several defects in the carpentry, painting and masonry work.] Mother, we spend plenty of money, but get a very bad result. We do some work, we find faults in it, we break it, we redo it and it comes out as something else. Labour, time, money and energy are wasted, yet we do not get what we require.

For all that, the change can come only from within, when the consciousness of each and everyone will be changed.

28 January 1934

*

Mother,

These are the books I tried to write. Certainly I shall give You all the information in detail.

I thought you were writing the books and not sending them. That is why I asked for them. But if it is to add to a work already somewhat excessive, I do not want it. You will let me know only if there is something of importance.

Is there no way of arranging the work so that you might take a little more rest? It would please me immensely.

January 1934

*

Series One —Dyuman

Mother,

S, the new visitor, came for work today. She cut the vegetables, then did not even wait to clean the knife she used. At noon she is expected to stay up to the finishing of the cutting, that is, to put aside the peelings for the bullocks, to put away the knives etc. in the cupboard and do other such works.

I think we cannot ask that from her in the beginning, at least. If she truly wants to do work she will ask you what to do and how to do it, and then things can be explained to her, leaving her the choice to do or not to do. She is only a visitor and cannot be treated as the permanent members are.

4 February 1934

*

Mother,

Newcomers staying in the Ashram houses come to the Dining Room for food. But what about people staying outside the Ashram, in hotels and private houses?

Is it not easier to let them eat in the Dining Room as food cannot be sent to the hotel? That is why I said that they could come to the Dining Room. But it may be better to give them food in the late-comers' room to prevent their mixing too much with the inmates and ... their bad habits!

7 February 1934

*

My dear Mother,

I am quietly happy, though I still have a cold and headache. This physical disturbance is sure to go away. And I am joining in the work. Mother, let me

New Correspondences of the Mother

be out doing my work; it will be good for me. I defy all attacks on the body.

One day of rest from time to time is not a bad thing — but it is better to get rid of the cold and headache as soon as possible.

8 February 1934

*

Mother,

Often I get colds and fevers and am obliged to remain in bed for some time. During and after each illness my body becomes weak and faints.

How is it that I often have illnesses and my body becomes so weak? I feel that it is not as strong as it ought to be for Your work. I had high hopes and expected much from the body, but it has failed.

Your body is all right, but you are not giving it enough rest and food. I will have to ask you to be more careful on these two points because I want to make it strong and healthy, but regular rest and nourishing food are indispensable for that. I would like to give you one orange for orange juice every day. The best time would be when you rise. For that, if you give me a flask, I could fill it in the evening and send it to you before you go to bed and you would take it in the morning when you wake up.

9 February 1934

*

Mother,

The cartman could not get a coolie to help him transport the kerosene. Not minding the load, he dragged the cart to Aroum . While going up the slope at the gate, he was thrown back with the cart. I was there just in time to help. He gave me back the two annas I had given him for a coolie. Seeing the work

Series One —Dyuman

he did, I gave one anna to him, as he deserved it. I would have paid two annas to a coolie.

You could have given him the two annas.

10 February 1934

*

Mother,

I have asked R to see whether corn flour is available in the European shops. This will be the best corn flour. We can no longer give You Your food prepared out of bazaar flour full of insects, old and kept out in the open. I shall put an end to this business.

Yes, it is better to stop that bad flour.

12 February 1934

*

My Mother,

I hope that You will not hesitate to tell me anything required to be done during our crucial Darshan days.

Be quiet and confident, it is all that is required.

Blessings

19 February 1934

*

Dear Mother,

All kinds of bad suggestions about myself come and pass away; I have no time at present to pay attention to them, but every possible thing tries to enter: (1) I am bad; (2) I am fallen; (3) the body is a failure; I would like to give it up; (4) I have received nothing, progressed nowhere; and many more such things.

New Correspondences of the Mother

All this is mere nonsense and falsehood and nothing more. You do well to pay no attention to it.

22 February 1934

*

Dear Mother,

The fever is over. I am quite all right. Tonight I will drink the decoction again and I am sure I will get up 100 percent cured. My Mother, You are with me and our relation is now more close, more compact and more loving.

Certainly our relation is bound to become more and more close and strong and intimate.

Only your insistence is on *the work*—and my insistence is on *your health* first.

I have just heard somebody coughing. Is it you? It seems to me that, *until you are quite free from this cough*, it would be better not to rise before the sun rises; because these early morning hours are *very cold* and that helps in prolonging the illness.

My love and blessing are constantly with you, whatever are the circumstances.

3 March 1934

*

Dear Mother.

G has sent to me four annas through the doctor to buy oranges for her from the market. Shall I bring them?

Yes.

The doctor tells me that she wants to eat soft khichri. I said: "Let her eat sago congee, bread and milk. If you go on giving food like khichri, there will be no

Series One —Dyuman

*end to it; people will go on demanding special things,
you will not find people to cook them and then you
will be in difficulty.”*

Your answer was *quite right*. This special diet for each one is an impossibility. You can send her the oranges, saying that I am sending them.

With love and blessings

5 March 1934

*

My child,

Why are you not taking honey and butter? They are both good for your health and will give you strength. It is light and wholesome food. For cough it is recommended to drink very hot milk sugared with honey (2 teaspoons in a cup of milk). Or the drink that P prepares for you can also be sweetened with honey.

What you say about my trust in you is quite true — and that in itself should give you the strength and the courage to do what is needed to get completely cured.

With love.

5 March 1934

*

My child,

Resist all depression, it is just the thing that would delay your cure. If this cold is not gone, I want you to take rest tomorrow (Saturday) and on Sunday I shall see you at 11 a.m. to set things right.

Our force and love are with you.

16 March 1934

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

(Regarding the disciple's physical condition. He had a headache, sore throat, fever, and suffered from general nervous strain and weakness.)

To get over this attack soon, one thing is needed: remain quiet, calm, peaceful. Do not get upset, do not fear, do not get restless or impatient. A quiet, firm trust in the Divine's Grace is the one thing needed.

The anxiety of the mind, the restlessness of the vital delay the cure more than anything else.

Our love and protection are always with you.

21 March 1934

*

Mother,

I feel hungry and I eat. My weakness is decreasing, I feel. The doctor told me: "Because you remain confined in your room, there is this weakness."

I am very happy to hear that you are all right. It seems to me that if you walk for some time in the garden, it will help to make you recover your strength.

With love and blessings

22 March 1934

*

Mother,

I walked in the sun from 10 to 11.20 a.m. It was all right as long as I was out in the sun, but no sooner did I enter my room than I began to get cold on the body. I remained lying on the bed up to 12.25. I found that there was fever in the body. I took some food, covered myself tightly and slept. At 1.30 I was completely wet with perspiration, yet the fever was

Series One —Dyuman

still there and the shivering of the body. Again I covered myself, again perspired and after the third perspiration at 3.30 all was cool, no fever, no headache.

Today I am quiet, Mother. But a suggestion passed: Why write such things again and again to Mother?

It is better to write always whatever happens in your consciousness and in your body also.

What you had felt like fever and the consequent perspiration is simply the working of the force to throw out what remains of the illness in you.

It is good that you are becoming quiet. You must teach your body to be quiet also and to have full confidence. Then things will become all right.

With love and blessings

25 March 1934

*

Mother,

In the afternoon, I perspired so much that all the clothes on my body were quite damp; and like yesterday, there was that kind of fever, but after one hour's walk in the sun I was fresh and full of strength.

When You look at me from the roof, my body gets heated. Even when You start from Your room for the roof, it begins to heat up; the eyes burn and my whole body is as if on fire.

You need not worry, it is the fire that is pushing the illness away.

My well beloved Mother, at each moment You remind me of Your love and affection; and to You my difficulties do not seem to be so severe as they present themselves to me.

I am not at all anxious and find nothing so very severe about it.

New Correspondences of the Mother

You have strained your nerves to the utmost and nerves require time to recover, that is all.

With love and blessings

26 March 1934

*

Mother,

When I started turning myself towards God 22 years ago or so, I never imagined that this could happen to me, not even when Sri Aurobindo openly questioned me: "Who has given you this Yoga?"

Now it has happened: that unfailing confidence and courage got shaken, and I had a breakdown. Yet in all this nervousness, my love for You, my faith in You and our relation is just the same, or rather, we have become closer. You have treated me like a sick baby — Your baby—and it is Your love that is curing me.

Yes, you have only to keep your faith unshaken and to be patient—everything will be all right.

We are not speaking of work just now, because we want you to rest quietly without any worry—but we have no intention of changing your work. It is waiting for you and you will take it back as soon as you are quite all right.

26 March 1934

*

Mother

All through I have felt Your Love. You have given me a long rest, and in fact the body does need to rest still more. Even when I speak, I get high and rapid breathing—a kind of fatigue comes to the lungs.

O my dear Mother, heart of my heart and love of my love, as long as You are with me, I am fearless. You have given me today a true and solid confidence

Series One —Dyuman

and my entire being has taken refuge in You.

I will work outwardly, but inwardly I will always be in Your deep and infinite peace, in Your ice box of Eternal Peace.

I am so happy that all the clouds are gone. Now only some time more of rest for the body to recover completely and all will be all right—with something gained that was not there before.

27 March 1934

*

Dear Mother,

Some people tell me that my condition is the result of too much strain. No doubt the nerves got strained and then came the breakdown of the body, but I have lost nothing thereby—I have gained. Strain or no strain, I have not lost my Mother. Mother, we have lost nothing. You have gained a child who knows and understands You better, and I have gained my Mother; I have Her love and She presides in my being actively.

Yes, we have lost nothing, on the contrary, we have gained much.

With love and blessings

28 March 1934

*

Mother,

I feel that the persons who were connected with me in a personal relation are definitely wishing for my recovery. What will be my relation with them when I shall be out? Mother, You will settle it, and I shall obey You.

New Correspondences of the Mother

The most important thing will be not to allow them to eat you up as they used to do before.

Mother, I am quite at rest and the days are passing so quickly.

Yes, rest, rest, rest—be quiet and gather strength and force, not only to do work but also, chiefly, to achieve the Transformation.

With love and blessings

30 March 1934

*

Dear Mother,

I pass the day in Your Love and Presence. All through the day we are together, and at each moment this becomes more and more real and concrete: to live in You is the Truth.

This is very good and a promise of complete victory.

My love, my blessings, my presence are always with you.

4 April 1934

*

Mother,

D came to me this evening and told me: "J is forcing me to wash the mats. Can they be washed with soap? Can they be washed?" I told her: "No, they cannot be washed; at the most you can put them in the sun."

It seems that they have become very dirty with vegetable droppings, salt, etc. I do not think we can keep them like that, they would begin to smell horribly. A wet cloth might be passed over them, at least, and they must be placed in the sun.

4 April 1934

*

Series One —Dyuman

Dear Mother,

My body is increasing in bulk and volume, my physical consciousness or outward consciousness is growing in Your consciousness. The growth of my body depends upon this external consciousness growing in You.

It is all right. I think you can put on a little more flesh without any inconvenience.

Love and blessings

5 April 1934

*

Mother,

I have no confidence in the body; it is too sensitive. I cannot be rash. I still fear to drink cold water from the kuja, I go to the filter each time for water. I cover myself before going to sleep.

A fear and a feeling of weakness have entered the body, but this fear and this feeling are not true. They are falsehoods that are to be shaken away and replaced by the contrary conviction and feeling—the conviction that the body will get stronger than before and the feeling that the physical strength, like the rest, belongs to the Divine and that there is no reason why the body should not receive it in plenty.

8 April 1934

*

Mother,

Now I realise that if I could love You with all my being and keep Your Presence in every single cell and atom, it would not be an inferior work to any outer work or activity.

My dear Mother, do with me as You want. I remain completely quiet, obedient, surrendered and cheerful.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Yes, keep quiet and gather peace and strength. When the time has come I shall ask you to start work again and you will see that it will be done quite smoothly.

With love and blessings always

8 April 1934

*

Mother,

Quietly happy and at rest. The body is becoming strong, and it will become more so. Tomorrow I finish my last bottle of honey.

I think that soon we shall speak of taking up a little work, very little work only to begin with. I shall call you once before so that we may speak of it fully.

With love and blessings always

12 April 1934

*

Mother,

In spite of some of the things I have been hearing about Aroum  and the work there, I am quietly happy. I feel that things are going to change and get better. I leave them to You.

It seems to me that things have gone on fairly all right during your absence; it is not at all so bad as it could have been. I intend to see you on Friday the 20th at 11 a.m. We shall see what is to be done at that time.

With love

13 April 1934

*

Mother,

Today the head is strained—by what I do not know. I feel a great heaviness on the head, as if the

Series One —Dyuman

whole sky has come down. The body does not want to move, it asks only for rest. When I sit down my eyes close by themselves; at once I feel still, quiet, as if frozen, yet full of life within.

Be very, very quiet, do not think about what the work will be. This week take complete rest, and sleep as much as you feel inclined to sleep. It is perfectly strong and rested, with the head free, that you must take up the work again. It is very important that the head should be neither heavy nor strained.

14 April 1934

*

Mother,

S bought 24 kg of potatoes yesterday. Out of that, 9 kg were not good. Of course they will be utilised in parts.

Bad potatoes are very dangerous and have a nasty taste even in the "good" parts. It might be better not to use these spoilt potatoes.

Last night's salad (cucumber and potatoes) was so very good that I thought during the hot season we might try to have salad twice a week.

16 April 1934

*

Beloved Mother,

I remain completely quiet, calm and open. And if this outer consciousness remains a block and does not give way like an obstinate horse, we shall patiently take it into our control, make it submissive and allow the Divine Will to manifest.

This is quite good.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Do not get bothered with the recurrence of the “cold”. With the influenza it is almost always like that. But finally it will get cured.

Blessings

17 April 1934

*

Dear Maman,

When You asked me: “Do you take S with you in the push rickshaw?” I said “No.” Did You mean that I may take him? Or was I to take him?

I thought that if he went at the same time as you go to the market he might feel it an injustice that he should have to walk when you are sent in the push. But if he goes after you this question does not arise.

21 April 1934

*

Mother,

This auspicious Darshan day has given me a new life, a new consciousness and a new aspiration. I feel that a force of transformation has gathered and it will transform me. I bow down to Thee, dear Mother, and with Your Love and Blessings I begin the new life.

Yes, a special protection accompanies my blessings today and a certitude of Victory is included in my love.

24 April 1934

*

Mother,

I am happy to be working again. All Your Love, Grace and Protection are with me, Your Presence is in me and, Mother, surely the Divine Grace shall manifest.

Series One —Dyuman

Keep this quietness and this faith, let *nothing* disturb them. If there are things to be changed, do it slowly, not in a hurry —*time* is a great helper when we know how to make use of it—and change only what is quite indispensable. Rules must not be too rigid—the Divine's working needs suppleness and plasticity—and for the workers, a too rigid rule is a big strain for the nerves. It is only when the liberties taken are dangerous and harmful that they must be checked.

And be sure that all will be all right.

With love and blessings

24 April 1934

*

My dear Mother,

*I am quietly happy in Your love and confident
of being as the Divine wishes because You will make
me so.*

I am quite confident that you will be more and more as the “Divine wishes” and that all will be all right.

*B gave me a bag of paddy from Chidambaram; we
shall have this rice cooked for the whole Ashram on
the 29th.*

Will you remind me of it on the day so that I may put special care in tasting it.

25 April 1934

*

Mother,

*N often comes to me for work. If You like, we
can give him the kerosene work. He will keep the
account and give it to me daily; this will be a check
upon him. I do not fear that he will misuse the articles
entrusted to him. With a ray of faith that he may be
changed, I submit this to You.*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Did you speak to L about stopping the kerosene work? How does he take it? This is an important point.

If we give that work to N it must be with a *very strong warning* that he must be *absolutely scrupulous*, that any breach of trust would be taken very seriously. He must give regular accounts daily which will be submitted to me.

All love and blessings with you.

I hear that A's salad leaves have been thrown in the dust bin! What a horrible wastage! So many people would have been glad to get them, it is such wholesome food! I cannot understand such a thing.

If it was too much work to put them in the general cooking, at least they could have been given away. S would have been so happy to get them. I hope that in future such a thing will not happen again.

26 April 1934

*

Mother,

In the kitchen, H and P work hard and without any reserve. If ever You have a worker of Your choice for the kitchen, I pray to You, please lighten the work for them.

The difficulty will be to find somebody whom they will agree to take inside the work. I do not want fresh quarrels. If you have anybody to suggest, I shall very willingly arrange.

With patience and persistence everything will become all right.

With love and blessings

26 April 1934

*

I have taken my seat in the heart of my child and my blessings are with him.

7 May 1934

*

Series One —Dyuman

O my beloved Mother,

Surely You are giving me a bath in Your Love.

Whatever people may say of me—good or bad—I have my dear Mother in my heart, holding me close to Her bosom. I know also that when dangers are outside, when there is bad will, my Mother keeps me under Her wings and then nothing can touch me, nothing can affect me.

Yes, my child.

You are always in my arms, bathed in my love which must be the strongest protection against all attacks of any kind. Keep your entire faith and confidence: we shall cross victoriously through all difficulties.

13 May 1934

*

Mother,

D asked for less curds, but J served her the ordinary cup. She began to return the cup, but he would not take it, so she left it on the table. Then he asked her to get Mother's sanction if only half a cup of curds was required. D complained to me about all this. I said: "I shall see tomorrow."

Truly we cannot interfere in such petty things. Those who constantly forget that they are not here to lead the most silly ordinary life cannot expect us to deal with their stupid quarrels.

27 May 1934

*

O Lord Buddha, the forces of Mara attacked You, but You were unshaken, concentrated, calm, quiet, peaceful; then the Light descended, the hostile forces disappeared and there was peace on earth.

New Correspondences of the Mother

*O Mother, let us all remain consecrated to the Truth,
always peaceful, calm, quiet and unshaken, unmoved by
any circumstances, and the hostile forces shall vanish.*

Yes, this is excellent. It is by a quiet, strong and persistent peace that the true victories can be won.

With love

28 May 1934

*

My Beloved Mother,

My entire being takes refuge in You and at each moment feels You as the Reality.

I always keep you in my arms and will carry you through all difficulties.

29 May 1934

*

Dear Mother,

Let my entire being remain turned only towards You.

Be very careful to remain always calm and peaceful and let an integral equanimity establish itself more and more completely in your being. Do not allow your mind to be too active and to live in turmoil, do not jump to conclusions from a superficial view of things; always take your time, concentrate and decide only in quietness.

My love and blessings are always with you.

30 May 1934

*

Mother,

I am tired of my nature. I must rise above it if I want to fulfil the work. Again and again it knocks me

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down and tries to drag me into an unquiet state full of doubt, lack of confidence, and ego.

Mother, lift me once more out of this turmoil in my nature and let me breathe in the free and vast air of Your infinite Love.

It is not in one day that one can overcome one's own nature. But with patience and enduring will the Victory is sure to come.

1 June 1934

*

Dear Mother,

I actually see the waves of hostility against me, yet I am quiet; my being remains firm, poised and concentrated in Your Love and Presence.

Yes, be quiet. We have only to work patiently without being disturbed by anything and keep unshaken the faith in the inevitable Victory.

With love and blessings

6 June 1934

*

Dear Mother,

I asked for tamarind on behalf of the ladies, to use for cleaning. He told me a long story about Your sanction for the tamarind, so I gave it to him. I still hold my view that lemon skins are sufficient, but these ladies have their own ideas. Tamarind cleans faster than lemon, which takes more work and which they do not want to do.

The advantage of the lemon skins over the tamarind is that lemon skins do not spoil the hand—on the contrary—while the tamarind will bring crevasses. But let them have the experience of it.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Mother, L and I have a nick-name now: Pagal, which means madcap.

Do not mind the stupidity of others.

8 June 1934

*

Dear Mother,

The Divine Consciousness descends, fills the earth and penetrates deeply. It is sure to bring about the complete recovery of the earth.

You have worked out many things in me within these few days; You have given me Your patience, quietness and peace, an energy that works and works and a firm faith in the infinity of time.

Yes, the certitude of the Victory gives an infinite patience with the maximum of energy.

Always with you

9 June 1934

*

Dear Mother,

I do not find it difficult to deal with F. I believe that I can exert a good influence upon her and bring her back to You. Arrange that we may come in contact with each other under the pretext of work or anything You like. I know that if I go, I am surrounded with Your love and protection. I dare to do so because You have kept me in the protection of Your love.

It is true that the divine protection is always around us, but it works completely only when we are faced by dangers which were unavoidable; that is to say, when doing some work for the Divine if dangers suddenly rise on the way then the protection works at its best. But to take up some work that is, after all, not at all

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indispensable and not even surely useful and which is extremely dangerous, counting on the divine protection to save us from all possible consequences, this is a movement which is like a challenge to the Divine, and the Divine will never agree to it.

I will explain myself—if it were indispensable that you should learn her work (which is, in fact, not only not indispensable but absurdly useless) and if F was the only person who could teach you (which is not the case, because H knows almost as well as she does) then we could overlook the very real dangers that await you by meeting F regularly, and this meeting could perhaps, with the Divine's help and protection, have some good results for F.

But to pretend to learn the work only with the purpose of acting on F's character, is putting a worm of insincerity in the very seed of the action and can only have disastrous results.

With love and blessings

10 June 1934

*

Dear Mother,

The work at the Dining Room is being done and it will always be done; the cupboards, floor and cloths there are cleaner than at any other place. But something else must be done now: we must rise above falsehood and our false nature.

Yes, this is the important thing. Once falsehood is conquered, all these difficulties will go.

22 June 1934

*

Dear Mother,

Formerly, the wood pieces bought for cooking used to take a long time to burn—it was slow cooking; but the fire from these wood-shavings is quite strong

New Correspondences of the Mother

and cooks quickly. Personally, I feel that food cooked under a slow fire is good in taste and good for the digestion also.

I am tasting the food both morning and evening and find it *quite good* in all ways. As for the fire some things need quick cooking, some need slow cooking. In the last case you might add a few pieces of wood to the shavings in order to keep a slower fire.

Mother, I would like to know who are the persons having the stomach ache, for I may be able to trace something. The water used for cooking is always filtered and passed through a piece of cloth. Since a very long time, we clean our pans and vessels with ashes only—fine and sieved. Is soap required?

No, soap is not required and I am sure that nothing is dirty. As for the people who had stomach ache they are of several kinds and most of them are not taking food from outside, but it may very well be the change of weather and that they have caught cold in their stomach. There is nothing to worry about, I am sure.

24 June 1934

*

Mother,

Today I was threatened with clouds, dark clouds; but now all that has passed away quietly. Mother, forgetfulness of Your Loving Presence, even for a few minutes, brought such a deathlike condition—it was quite unbearable. I felt so relieved when it passed away.

I do not understand how clouds can come to you now and am quite sure that they cannot remain at all. You must have caught it from somebody. Be careful to always keep the living Presence and Protection around you when you speak to people.

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With all love always.

26 June 1934

*

Mother,

I worked with C or rather I replaced him for a few minutes. I felt so happy to see him. You have joined us as friends for Your work and taken us to such a state of conscious understanding, knowledge and love that misunderstanding, disharmony, intolerance and anger have no place.

What you say is quite true. There is a deep and true Consciousness in which all can meet in love and harmony.

28 June 1934

*

Mother,

The 14th of July¹ is coming. The roads on both sides of Aroum  will be filled with crowds of people and there will hardly be any space for people to pass, especially in the evening. I propose that the inmates finish their dinner early, a gate-keeper be put there all through the day, and the gate be locked from inside at 7.30 p.m. I do not fear the public rowdiness, but it is better for us to be on our guard.

Yes, it is better to be on guard. It may even be better to close completely the front gate (except for letting in and out the cart) and to open the door of the waiting room on the rue Fran ois Martin, with somebody keeping that door. Moreover the terrace of Aroum  will be a wonderful place for watching the fireworks. All those who want to see them must be allowed to

¹ French Republic Day.

New Correspondences of the Mother

remain there and go away together by the back door when all is finished. When they are gone M will bolt the door.

A suggests that the ladies need not go for their food that evening—it can be sent to their rooms in tiffin boxes.

I do not see at all the necessity of these precautions, if things are arranged as I have explained. Moreover, some of the ladies may like to see the fireworks and if they go and come with somebody to accompany them, there is no possible danger.

1 July 1934

*

My dear and beloved Mother,

Today I was very badly disturbed—the disturbance of all those ladies was rushing upon me. I refused to listen to anything; I said to myself: “The Divine is the Truth; the same Divine element is in all. See that, live that. Harmony, love, peace and happiness is the life of the Ashram.”

I am happy to see that you have kept the right attitude and remained unshaken by these superficial and silly storms.

Always with you in the love and the protection

6 July 1934

*

Mother,

The serving room has become a place to read the newspapers. Can it be allowed? Had there been the works of Sri Aurobindo or Your “Prayers”, it would be all right. But novels, monthlies and dailies—how can they be read there?

I suppose it is difficult to interfere in this matter. If the readers

Series One —Dyuman

don't feel we cannot impose it upon them.

7 July 1934

*

Dear Mother,

It has always seemed to me that I do not know the meaning of Bhakti. But like a river, my entire being flows and flows towards You. This is all that I know, Mother, and I wish that it may flow more and more, rise in floods, break all limits and disappear once and for all into Your Love.

This is bhakti and nothing else.

10 July 1934

*

Dear Mother,

When the servant K comes to fetch the empty tiffin-boxes, he opens them and eats anything that is left or takes it away. I have asked Amrita to tell him not to open the tiffin-boxes at all: his business is only to remove them. A will speak to him tomorrow.

What happens to all the food taken back in the tiffin-boxes? Is it distributed (and first to the servants working in Aroum ) or is it thrown away? If it is not distributed I do not see why this poor man should not eat if he is hungry. Most of the servants refuse to take the food that is left; if one takes it why refuse it to him? Perhaps when the boxes come back to Aroum  all the food is mixed up and becomes uneatable. All this is to be seen carefully, before deciding anything.

14 July 1934

*

Mother,

The ants trouble me too much; they cover up the

New Correspondences of the Mother

butter in my room. I have no jar or bottle, so I keep the butter in the butter-tin itself.

For the butter you have only to take a deep dish filled with water, you set an empty tin in the middle and place your butter on the top of the tin.

18 July 1934

*

Mother,

M does not feel inclined to give cow-dung. He asked me: "What will you do with it?"

I said: "I shall mix cow-dung, sawdust and charcoal dust, and prepare balls for fuel."

"From where do you get the charcoal dust?" he asked.

"From S," I replied.

He told me: "I ask and ask him for it, but he does not give it to me. If you give me charcoal dust I will give you cow-dung, as much as you want."

Mother, if You want to give him charcoal dust, certainly it can be given.

The charcoal dust is *absolutely* indispensable in the balls if you want them to last long and give good heat without having too bad a smell. But S has much more charcoal dust than you can use; in fact there was one time when he was giving or throwing it away. So there will be surely enough charcoal dust for the balls and to give to M also. If you need a word written for S, I shall give it.

20 July 1934

*

Mother,

I am not so sure of getting plantains. If they are available, they will be the plantains You saw today,

Series One —Dyuman

kept until tomorrow. If they are not available, shall I return without them? And I might put a notice written on the slate in Aroum : "No plantains in the market."

It is difficult to put up such a notice if there are actually some plantains in the bazaar. It is only if truly there are none that you can say so.

22 July 1934

*

Mother,

Will the day not come soon when I work for You, my dear Mother, and You rest completely on Your sofa; You bring down the Divine unmanifest and we work and manifest You.

This is a point which is impossible for me to answer just now.
With all love and blessings always

23 July 1934

*

Dear Mother,

All submission to Thee, all love for Thee, a complete merging, a total disappearance in Thee. Today an unconditional surrender of my entire being rushes out in floods to Thee.

Yes, my dear child, I know that your surrender is quite sincere, and you know also, I am sure, that my trust in you and your future is complete.

All love and blessings to you, always

23 July 1934

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Mother,

I got 200 plantains quite unripe. I am distributing them tomorrow morning with a hope that inmates will preserve them for one day and then eat them.

Perhaps you could send a notice saying that the plantains are unripe and have to be kept as nothing else was available in the market.

24 July 1934

*

Beloved Love,

Surely I know Your love, Your affection, Your trust in my future—it is bright, brilliant, luminous. May all my love be for You, Mother.

Look in front of you with a wide, quiet, strong peace and advance steadily. All will be all right.

With love and blessings

25 July 1934

*

Mother,

My consciousness is getting changed. I see and realise Oneness, Union, Harmony. You are in each one of us and You shine in all. I feel You, Mother, Your Love and Your Light.

It is your own consciousness that is growing and changing, and it is very good.

All love to you, my child

28 July 1934

*

My dear Mother,

The entire adhar must be perfectly strong—quiet,

Series One —Dyuman

at rest, in peace, unmoved, undisturbed, steady, perfectly balanced—before the Divine Realisation takes place.

Yes, all this is quite correct and it is indeed this deeper Peace that must establish itself in you.

With all love and blessings, always

29 July 1934

*

Mother,

Yesterday K took R's mother to Aroum . In the godown she asked H: "Are you married? Where is your husband? Have you got a child? How big is it?"

How imbecile!

K told H: "Do you understand what she says! May I tell you?"

H replied: "I understand, no need of your speaking."

Mother, it would be better not to have visitors when we are at work; and nobody should be taken to Aroum  at the time of serving and eating. They must arrange with me previously.

Quite right.

A notice can be put up to this effect, that Aroum  cannot be visited without a special authorisation of the Mother and previous arrangement with Dyuman as for the hour of the visit.

With all love and blessings

4 August 1934

*

Dear Mother,

A of the Washing Section asks me to help him. He says: "The Mother has written to me to be very careful about the flies so they may not gather, etc."

New Correspondences of the Mother

Yes—flies are very dangerous, just now more than ever.

When the Washing Section is working it puts the inmate's vessels in water immediately; but when the inmates go for their food at late hours, their dishes remain in the open and flies gather on them.

No dishes must be left in the open as an attraction for flies. If they cannot be washed at once, they must be dipped in a tub full of water—*this is very important.*

It is better, these days to wash every day with “chlorure de chaux” the floor of the kitchen, the serving room and the dining rooms. The serving tables too.

8 August 1934

*

My Beloved,

D prepares syrup to put in Your juice out of the ordinary sugar supplied by R. Would it not be better to use the Taikoo packets of China sugar for You?

It is not necessary; the other one gets quite clean by the boiling and filtering.

My dear child, I am always with you in all love, protection and trust.

16 August 1934

*

Beloved Mother,

All Love to You. May things be more quiet, more calm, and may You have a full rest.

In the present condition of things at large, we must be satisfied, I suppose, with the inner rest which is always there, untouched by any exterior turmoil.

With love and blessings always

17 August 1934

*

Series One —Dyuman

Mother,

What to do about the potatoes and onions asked by the ladies? I have not been able to find a solution, though several times the idea has passed in me to buy them from Madras.

There is cholera in Madras too, worse than here. I would rather they did not use onions as, of all vegetables, it is the one that catches most any infection.

18 August 1934

*

Mother,

I am informing the persons who cook for You about the onions. What shall we do for the kitchen then?

They must not be kept but used soon after buying, *peeled only at the very moment of use* (this is very important) and very well boiled.

Always near you, in the help and the trust

19 August 1934

*

Mother,

The beauty of the seasonal vegetables: [the disciple lists the ingredients of two pumpkin dishes]. The things are fresh and good and cheap.

It is all right provided there will not be pumpkin at each meal.

23 August 1934

*

Dear Mother,

H read the note of D for the white pepper. She told me: "Why buy a bottle! Bring the white pepper,

New Correspondences of the Mother

I shall grind it as fine as a bottle of Morton pepper ground in London. It will be quite fresh for the Mother."

If it is truly not too much work, certainly I like better to have it prepared at home.

30 August 1934

*

My dear Mother,

At D's kitchen I saw the potatoes and told her: "These cannot be used for Mother." When they are going to rot, they become soft, and she calls them flowery potatoes. I explained to her the whole thing.

If it is a question of the uncleanliness of the market, I wash and rinse the vegetables required for You in water mixed with a few drops of vinegar.

You are quite right and the market vegetables are far superior to what she gives us, especially the brinjals which seem to be made of straw.

31 August 1934

*

Beloved Mother,

There is nothing that can stop my union with You. Boils or no boils, nothing can prevent me from merging into Your Love. I am experiencing daily that You are bearing me in Your arms and heart. Love, love to Thee, dear Mother.

Surely these boils will soon go and you will be quite well once more.

All my love is there to work this out.

4 September 1934

*

Series One —Dyuman

Mother,

Why so sudden a change in my condition, I wonder? I was quite in a normal state this morning, and in the twinkling of an eye it all got changed and I was before You in a changed condition. Whatever it may be, I have learned many lessons today, Mother. The movements that were loose and scattered have become controlled and concentrated. Mother, in spite of falls and blunders, with a certitude to become as You wish.

There is no fall and no blunder and I do not know why your condition got so much changed. But if it is for the better I am very glad. Of course one has always something to learn and a progress to make, and in each circumstance we can find the occasion of learning the lesson and making the progress.

If you feel more concentrated than you were, it is a very good thing, especially if it is a concentration on the Divine, wanting more and more to avoid all influences except that of the Divine and to accept to be moved only by the Divine's will and no other. You said today that it is the end of making remarks to one another on people. Surely the day when the inmates of the Ashram will stop making among themselves remarks on the others, when all gossip will stop, it will be a blessed day and our work of realisation will be made much easier.

What you see, what you observe, you must keep for yourself and say to nobody except me.

Once again, be the giver of example to the others—show them how a true sadhak must be.

I trust that you will do it and all my love and force are with you for this accomplishment.

11 September 1934

*

Dear Mother,

Surely You will tell me if Your trust in me gets shaken, if Your love is not responded to.

New Correspondences of the Mother

You have called forth this being to live in the Ashram in the Light of the Divine, with the head filled with the Presence of the Divine, the heart filled with Your Love, the vital filled with the dynamic Force of the Divine for the execution of the Divine Will.

O Mother, O Lord, may You possess this being, may it come forth and live exclusively in the full splendour of Your Love and Light and Truth.

This is my prayer to the All-Gracious Divine.

Your prayer is heard, your ardent aspiration is receiving the proper response. Our trust and love are always with you and our Light and Consciousness to enlighten, transform, perfect the whole being.

With all our blessings

11 September 1934

*

Dear Mother,

One thing surmounts all difficulties in me: it is that my faith, confidence and trust are never shaken. This condition of faith is solid and unbreakable; it is an eternal faith, a loving present from the Divine. I am sustained by a vast faith in You, my loving Mother, and in my beloved Sri Aurobindo.

Yes, it is your faith and love that carry you through all difficulties to an ultimate Victory.

With all my love and blessings

14 September 1934

*

Mother,

I am quiet and happy. One prayer: may this hostile attack pass away and let all of us remain sound.

Series One —Dyuman

My dear child, be sure of our trust and love. Our help and protection is over all so that all trouble may come to an end.

15 September 1934

*

My dear child,

I do not understand how what you propose can help. The work you are given, the life you live must be the work and the life of a sadhak, not that of a coolie. If you were treated or lived like a coolie and not as a sadhak, this work could never be done by you.

Moreover I do not see how your renouncing the things I give you could in the least cure the discontent of A and those like him.

The true attitude is neither to be an ascetic nor to indulge in desire. The true attitude is to take in all simplicity what I give, to be perfectly satisfied with it and neither to ask for more nor to refuse what is given. This is the true example to give, the one that can help the others towards a better understanding of their duties as sadhaks.

Nothing can cure A except getting rid of this making desire and the satisfaction of desire the principle of his life.

Now, if he *truly* wants to stop the cleaning of the kitchen vessels, I suppose that you will be able to manage in another way. But first you must ascertain from him that he truly wishes to give up that work.

Remain my child, simple, quiet and content, and all will be all right.

5 October 1934

*

My dear Mother,

Let me tell You, my dear Mother, I am completely quiet all through, though there are direct accusations

New Correspondences of the Mother

against me, and I feel happy to inform You that a better understanding is coming.

It is bound to come if we stand firm in the right attitude.

My beloved Mother, I accept You, I receive You, I have You in my heart always. My dear Mother, may Your Love manifest.

Yes, I am with you always, in the heart of your heart, in un-shakeable Consciousness and Love.

11 October 1934

*

Dear Mother,

I heard that D, B, N and G have all made accusations against me. But that does not matter. I am quite happy—happier and more firm and quiet than ever before. There is one thing that has given me quietness and kept me at rest: Your confidence, Your Love, and my faith in Your Love.

Dear Mother, the entire thing is ending and I have full hope that there will be better understanding and a little more peace.

So long as all these women are living in the vital consciousness—as they do—they are bound to quarrel, to be jealous, envious, spiteful, depressed, and the rest. The best is not to pay much importance to it—because in fact it has none. You set things right, the next day they go wrong again, because the seat of their consciousness is not changed. Even if they turn to the Divine, they will turn in the same spirit and with the same reactions: competition, strife, anger, jealousy, spite and the rest.

It is the consciousness that must change its seat and get out from the vital to a higher or deeper place.

When they come to you, you can tell them that all these stories have no importance whatever, that they are the ordinary

Series One —Dyuman

reactions of the ordinary life and that surely it is no use coming here to live in that ordinary way. They must make an effort to rise to a higher and truer, to a more disinterested and unselfish consciousness and there they will see that all will be all right for them.

As for you, I am happy that all this turmoil left you untouched. Indeed it must be so more and more and you must yourself look at all these things from the light and equanimity of a spiritual consciousness filled with the Divine Presence and Love.

Our help and trust are always with you.

12 October 1934

*

My dear Mother,

This morning, when H and P were frying the balls for vegetables, this thought passed in me:

We come here to stay. Suppose we are put to the test? We are put in a big pan filled with oil beneath a very strong fire, and we have to sit in the pan, calm, quiet, unmoved and completely at rest. Those who pass the test are allowed to take up the Yoga.

It would scarcely be a test. The moral courage and endurance are often much more difficult to get than the material courage and endurance.

15 October 1934

*

Dear Mother,

My task is more difficult now. When A comes to me, he hardly speaks about the work at the Granary. But he can freely talk on subjects unnatural to me: the world, its curiosities and many other things. I am really puzzled over the matter.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Let him talk, you need not answer. Simply keep living in you the thought of the true consciousness and the will that he should awake to it.

18 October 1934

*

My dear Mother,

During the monsoon rains the servants failed to show up and we inmates volunteered to distribute the food and carry the dishes to the other inmates. Shall we not go on like that?

Yes, it will have to be done. People cannot go without food.

21 October 1934

*

My dear and beloved Mother,

I am happy because I am always supported and carried by You. So often the workers come to me and play a drama and fall into gloom. But I am happy, my dear Mother, so the gloom passes away from them and happiness and peace pervade.

Yes, it is very good—happiness is as contagious as gloom. And nothing can be more useful than to pass on to people the contagion of a true and deep happiness.

25 October 1934

*

Dear Mother,

My entire being remains more unmoved than before, more unshaken, more undisturbed, more unclouded by circumstances, conditions and gloom.

Yes, this is good—and this equanimity and poise must go on increasing until perfection.

Series One —Dyuman

Our help, love and trust are always with you.

26 October 1934

*

My dear Mother,

*Not a pleasant information: this evening at 6.00
I broke the porcelain handle of the window-spring. I
am very very sorry for this unpleasant incident.*

It does not matter, they will replace it by a brass one—it is truly a very small incident without importance.

Always with you my dear child, bringing you peace, help and protection with an unshakeable love.

28 October 1934

*

My dear Mother,

*Surely Your Love is unshakeable and always You
love me. Surely I shall advance with You, as fast as
Your Love permits. I am once more firmly poised on
a better plane than ever before. After a little shaking
and crying my equanimity has become more strong
and unshakeable—because of Your unshakeable Love.*

Your love fully answers to mine.

Yes, my dear child, it has, indeed, been a true and great progress and your feeling of having emerged in a new light is true; rather it is a new light which has descended in some parts of the being still obscure and brought there a Certitude.

Love is, in truth, the Victor.

29 October 1934

*

Mother,

*M took no food last night, this morning and this
noon. Is he not well?*

New Correspondences of the Mother

I know nothing about M not eating, but perhaps it is in protest because I made him remove plants which he did not want to remove (the plants were injuring the foundations of Cocotiers house). But now if the men also will start a hunger strike when I do not do exactly what they want me to do! then... Perhaps you might speak to him and ask him why he did not eat. Do not mention my supposition—let him say what he has to say.

30 October 1934

*

My dear Mother,

A few days ago S put a demand on me: "Come to Canal House daily."

I told her, "It is not possible."

Then she said, "Once a week."

I replied, "That too is difficult. All the same I shall try but it will not be regular."

"I want to come to you," she said.

"All right, at 11 a.m. when you come for your flowers."

I have not said, "Do not come to me," but when they try to bind me tight, I always find it very difficult.

She has passed through a difficult time and old movements have come up again trying to drag her back to ancient errors; that is why probably she was wanting to see you.

But surely she will be all right again after some time.

You are right in letting nobody catch hold of you, it would be very bad in all ways.

With love and blessings always

7 November 1934

*

My dear Mother,

S of the bakery came to me this evening and told me: "Why do you give us hard bread now? Why

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do you keep the stock? You can give us fresh bread daily." I explained to him the problems of the rise and fall in consumption each day and the need to keep some stock.

I suppose things can continue as they are now. But do you not think it would be fair to give to S and the bakery people a loaf of fresh bread every day? They have all the work and hard work too; they must at least eat their own bread when it is quite good.

9 November 1934

*

Dear Mother,

S is again badly disturbed. When I am frank, there is difficulty; when I remain silent, there is also difficulty. Give me a middle path, such as Buddha found.

Do not worry—whatever you do will always be criticized. So the best is not to pay any attention to what people say and to go on one's own path according to the highest light one can get.

With all love and blessings always

10 November 1934

*

My dear Love,

Physically, I am much better; the throat also seems to be better. I hope to be quite all right.

Let the light, the force, the consciousness flood your whole being and give you the strength to throw away at once the attack on your body.

Always with you

11 November 1934

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Dear Mother,

I had a little fever today and the throat is bad also. Perhaps it is due to a sudden change of weather and it will be quite all right in a day or two. My dear Mother, I do not accept this fever or this cold. It has to go away.

Certainly it must go at once. But why not have your throat painted by P as he did it for you before?

Do you have something warm to cover yourself in the night? If not tell me, I shall give you a rug. It is in the middle of the night that the weather becomes cold.

Our love and blessings are always with you.

12 November 1934

*

My dear Mother,

The condition of the vegetable market is exceptionally poor. Nothing can be found in quantity for us. Prices have gone up more than double and for certain vegetables 5 or 6 times.

For the money we must accept the necessity of the expense, but we must be strict about the quality of the food. We cannot give bad or spoilt things.

13 November 1934

*

My dear Mother,

M told R: "Why not ask the Mother to get biscuits prepared for your son in our Bakery?" R told me: "Will you ask the Mother and take her permission to get the biscuits prepared for the boy? I shall pay you the money." I did not answer him.

I told M: "Do not make such statements. We do

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not do such things, it is altogether new. We shall have to write to the Mother first before we take up such things.”

It is quite impossible to tax the Bakery people with such extra work and to do business with their work.

14 November 1934

*

My dear Mother,

You have told us: “I have come to fight and conquer.”

Accept me, my dear General, as Your humble soldier. I carry Your banner of Truth and Light. I accept no defeat.

A decisive Victory is crowned upon You, my dear Mother. Divine Love is the Victor.

Yes, my dear child, you are my good warrior and you will have your share in the Victory.

With love and blessings always

16 November 1934

*

My dear Mother,

The last two days, when I was on the footpath of Aroum , I got a rising of temperature in my body and a bad head; this morning it was worse and I was pushing and pushing it out.

Today I cleaned M’s bottle with sweets and was bringing it to You from Aroum . I held it tight with a consciousness that it must not fall. It did not slip, but jumped out of my hand; twice I grabbed for it and the third time it went out of my hand onto the stone steps of Aroum  and broke into pieces.

The bottle itself has no importance, but why

New Correspondences of the Mother

these attacks on me when I go to Aroum ? It did not stop there. Some hostile force wanted to send me away from the Ashram, it wanted me to tell You: "Mother, I want to retire; make me free from Aroum  and the Aroum  workers."

My dear Mother, the hostile forces are taking a little pleasure in troubling me, but I accept no defeat, I do not become weak; I am up and up and on and on, forward with full strength, zeal and confidence in myself and in You and in the final Victory of the Divine Light.

Yes, fear not.

The attack is not on you only but on the whole place, because of the approaching darshan.

We have only to say—in perfect peace—to these adverse forces: what you are trying to do is perfectly useless—you can in no way interfere with the victory of the Divine.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

19 November 1934

*

My dear Mother,

In all love for You, I disappear in You, and You alone live in me. My Mother, I am Thy child.

With all love to you, my dear child, I take you in my arms and keep you in my heart.

20 November 1934

*

My dear Mother,

This evening I wished and wished for a being to come, a being who has risen above all lower nature and is completely merged in the Divine. My dear

Series One —Dyuman

Mother, there are such beings somewhere above; may they come down and serve You and manifest Your Love and Consciousness.

If they took a body, they would at the same time take upon them the human nature and all its difficulties.

27 November 1934

*

My dear Mother,

My entire nature is changing and will change more and more and reach its perfection. I wish to be a happy transformed being, only so that I may be at Your service.

It is true that you are advancing rapidly towards the goal.

My love is accompanying you on the way.

28 November 1934

*

My dear Mother,

Today S tells me: "I want to work with a winnowing fan also." The day before yesterday she definitely told me: "Only husking and nothing else." When she goes on with her whims, it is rather difficult to go to the others and make changes in the work.

One thing I wish to know: do You want her to husk and do all other work?

What can I say when she agrees to one thing and the next moment she wants another one.

30 November 1934

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear Mother,

Mother, my Mother, may the Divine Peace descend upon earth. May the Divine Peace descend into each heart. It is only in Peace that the Divine shall manifest and spread the glory of His Divinity.

My Mother, I ask for Peace, Peace and Peace.

Yes, Peace is the indispensable basis. Our peace, love and blessings are always with you.

30 November 1934

*

My dear Mother,

I read Sri Aurobindo's notice about You. I read it again and then read it once more.

My Lord, the Mother has no rest; may She have some. Lord, grant that wherever I go and move and work, there may be nothing but peace and happiness.

My dear Mother, this is my humble prayer to the Divine: may You have rest.

Just now, I am resting quite all right. Surely the best way to help is, indeed, to be peaceful and happy. And if peace and happiness were spread in the Ashram much of the work would be saved.

Our love and blessings are always with you.

1 December 1934

*

My dear Mother,

I am quiet, happy and filled with Your Love, the Love that is a great victorious force.

Yes, love is the great Victor.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

2 December 1934

*

Series One —Dyuman

My dear Mother,

Ah, the moment we remain fully conscious and vigilant, all our difficulties vanish—they cannot stand! It is impossible for them to face the flaming fire of the Divine. Grant me full consciousness, complete vigilance and that flaming fire.

Surely you will have more and more the divine fire of progress and purification burning in your heart.

With our love and blessings

3 December 1934

*

My dear Mother,

Happy am I that You are in my heart; Your Love and Light surround me.

Yes, I am always in your heart and the peace, protection and help are constantly surrounding you.

With love and blessings

7 December 1934

*

My dear Mother,

This evening at 8 p.m. a very strong giddiness came in my head and began to make me unconscious. I sat down for a few minutes and it passed away.

Why do such things happen? I know why: in 1935 we enter the Eternal Consciousness, a consciousness of complete peace, joy, harmony and happiness. In order to obstruct this, such things come.

To be quiet and fearless is the condition in which these adverse forces can do no harm at all.

Always with you

8 December 1934

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Mother of my heart,

Awaken the unawakened parts in me. Make me integrally conscious of Thy Presence, the Presence which will lead me to an integral and perfect union with Thee and make me live as a brilliant portion of Thyself.

Yes, your prayer will be granted.

Always with you, day and night, in the action and in the rest.

With love and blessings

10 December 1934

*

My dear Mother,

D has taken so many photos and there is now an album. People ask me: "Where are you?" I answer: "In the heart of the Mother."

I have only one place, and it is Your heart.

My dear child,

Well, you have lost nothing from not being photographed because the photos are far from good!

And surely it is better to be in my heart (where you actually are) than in an album...

18 December 1934

*

My dear Mother,

S has not taken her evening food, for reasons she knows. I do not, but most probably I am the culprit.

I do not think you are the culprit. I must be the culprit because she wanted to embroider a crown for me in gold and I said that I had no gold thread that I could give, which is the plain truth.

All these moods are absurd, and the best thing is not to

Series One —Dyuman

mind them at all. A perfect equanimity is the strongest power.

19 December 1934

*

My dear Mother,

*May S have submission and love for the Divine,
may she be filled with gratitude, may she progress in
the sadhana.*

I shall add: may she have a simple humility, because that is what she needs most.

*The Divine Grace is infinite. O Mother, grant me a
perfect receptivity. I give myself to the Divine.*

Yes, my dear child, it is with the widening of the consciousness and the one-pointedness of the aspiration that the receptivity increases.

23 December 1934

*

My dear Mother,

*I don't know how far it is true, but I feel that I
am a being who has come down upon earth and taken
up the human form only to manifest the Divine Will.
I am eternal, unborn and immortal.*

*Let me tell You, after having this consciousness
I feel myself untouched by anything and I find the
strength of the lower life completely broken.*

Your consciousness is quite true and I am happy you have come to realise this. Keep this consciousness in all humility towards the Divine because such is the condition of an integral realisation.

Our blessings are with you.

23 December 1934

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear Mother,

*May You rest, and the best way of giving You rest
is for me to rise above the lower nature and progress
in the Divine Light so that I may live only as a spark
and ray of the Light.*

*If each inmate determines to do this and pro-
gresses, surely, my dear Mother, You will have more
rest and ease.*

You are quite right, the only thing that can give me rest is that each one should take the right attitude and progress.

I am much better today.

With love and blessings always

25 December 1934

*

My dear Mother,

*Seeing You this evening, this prayer arose in me
so fervently: "O Lord, may my Mother get complete-
ly cured tonight." Surely had we been devoted to You,
a collective prayer and aspiration would have arisen,
instead of the sneezing, yawning and coughing. How
nicely we receive You! You appear on the steps, and
we begin this noise.*

*My dear Mother, may a collective and concen-
trated will be created, a will consecrated to the Divine
for the manifestation of the Divine Love.*

My very dear child, yes it is quite sure; if many could think and feel like you, things would become so much easier and so much time would be saved!

All love to you

27 December 1934

*

Series One —Dyuman

Mother,

C says the light in his section is too high. A says the light in his washing department is too dim. Others say the light in the dining halls is too dim. They ask me to put in more powerful bulbs.

The bulbs in the dining halls cannot be changed. The two other things have been arranged.

The kitchen has two bulbs. I think one can be put aside and used only when necessary.

It is better not to take away the bulb. It can create some mischief in the electricity.

c. 1934

*

Mother,

A takes extra bread and gives it to the gardener and his daughters. He gets slices from the tiffin-carriers of others and this too he gives to them. If he asks for more slices, it is secretly for this purpose. I do not think we can allow such things to develop.

Give him the number of slices he used to take and nothing more. If he asks why, you have only to answer, "Mother's orders."

c. 1934

*

Mother,

People are complaining about milk spilling in the tiffin-carriers. When the carriers are opened, we fill them like this: bread comes first and we put it in the bottom pot. Then come the vegetables; we put them in the next pot. Last of all comes the milk and it goes in the top pot. Now when the carriers are sent off on

New Correspondences of the Mother

the cart, the milk sometimes drops down by the jerks of the cart and spoils the vegetables and bread. So people have begun to ask for the milk to be served in the bottom pot. This means at least four times the labour and time for the workers.

In my heart I feel that if we give food, why not give it in a better condition? But my mind refuses to yield; it says that those who are so particular should come and take away their carriers themselves.

Mother, please decide for me.

It seems to me that it is only a question of organisation of the work. Why not have all the pots of each tiffin-carrier spread in a row, in the order in which they have to be placed afterwards, like this: 1 2 3 4 (1 is top, 4 is bottom)?

Logically, 1 must contain bread

2 " " vegetables

3 " " rice

4 " " milk or curds

Each thing is served in the corresponding pot as soon as it is ready (that is to say, bread first, vegetables afterwards, etc.) and the tiffin-carriers are remounted *only when all is served*, which allows the milk to be put at the bottom.

I hope I have been clear in my explanation about how to deal with the tiffin-carriers. Of course two minutes' practical demonstration of how to do it would make it clearer and easier to understand. If something is still obscure, I shall call you and explain how to do it. The only objection you can make to my proposal is the space needed to spread 50 to 60 tiffin-carriers. But perhaps it is quite possible to manage the required space.

c. 1934

*

My dear Mother,

The old plantain vendor has vacated the market

Series One —Dyuman

and a new man has opened a shop now. This morning the old vendor sent the plantains directly to us and he wants to continue this way. But when I went to the market I saw the new merchant. He will bring the rate down to 10 annas per 100 plantains; this includes home-delivery and the selection is ours. The old vendor was charging 12 annas for 100, plus coo-lie charges.

It is better to put them in competition with one another, not only for price (I do not see why we should pay more than 10 annas when we can have them at that price) but also *for quality*. And for that we must try the new man and see how he behaves with us and what is the quality of his goods.

1 January 1935

*

My dear Mother,

D is suffering badly from cough and has a fever, so she has become weak. I think perhaps, it would be better if she does not move out much and takes rest.

The remaining at home brings depression and it is the worst thing for this illness—but she must not do hard work, and remain in the sun and the open air as much as possible.

3 January 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Today K cried and cried for one hour in my room, for reasons I do not know.

If only she wrote about it and said the reason—if there is any—of such an upsetting, she would be cured at once.

5 January 1935

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Dear Mother,

J is so disobedient that he breaks the Dining Room discipline at each and every step. He allows M to take home food in the D.R. bowls. She has been given a tiffin-carrier, so there is no reason why the D.R. vessels should go out.

Of course, it is not good for the D.R. vessels to go about like that. But I suppose, in this case, it is a choice between a break of discipline and the shouts, screams and tears of M!...

7 January 1935

*

Dear Mother,

Serving food to the inmates after fixed hours: for the late-comers, breakfast goes up to 10.30 a.m., lunch up to 3.30 p.m. and dinner up to 9.30 p.m. There are nearly 40 late-comers. And they go on asking for slices of bread. People take more slices on one day and the next day they return them. What shall we do with the slices afterwards?

Dear Mother, money-lending is also going on in the Ashram! I thought that You alone deal in money.

Yes, people are irregular, fanciful, unscrupulous, undisciplined, disobedient... but there is only to keep a steady, quiet will and to be patient—all that will come to an end, one day.

I am always with you in your advance towards realisation.

7 January 1935

*

My dear Mother,

The condition of milk: we are not sure of receiving the required amount of milk in the morning, yet

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people come forward to take 2 or 3, even 4 cups of milk in the morning. This makes the D. R. workers nervous and anxious about the noon-time distribution of milk. Suppose I get 3 cups of milk for the whole day, and I begin to take 2 cups at one time—it creates a disturbance in the distribution for the D. R.

I understand that it is very difficult for the people who serve and that the inmates are very exacting—but on their side is it not that the servers are anxious more for their own convenience than for that of the others?

My dear Mother, I ask for more patience, more quietness, more peace and for a more perfect equanimity.

Yes—for the growth of equanimity one must learn to see things from many points of view and especially from the point of those who oppose us—not in order to agree with them but to understand better their point of view. Let the peace and a quiet strength always inhabit your heart and your head.

11 January 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Make me constantly a sadhak of the Yoga. May I remain a sadhak all the time and not only when I come to You for Pranam.

Indeed this is a very important thing for everybody.

With all love and blessings

11 January 1935

*

Dear Mother,

So often I receive things from You. An orange, some butter, a biscuit or a cake are daily gifts.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Yes, I am sending all these things to you with the idea of making your body quite strong.

Our help and protection are always with you.

13 January 1935

*

My dear Mother,

We tried to bring S to the Dining Room for his food, but he insisted upon the tiffin-carrier and he got it. A the same. So too G, who has a brother and wants to take food for him as well.

One more candidate for a tiffin-carrier: D who complains that if he goes to the Dining Room he meets M and B, and he does not want to see their faces!... I have answered nothing to his demand. You will do according to the possibilities.

18 January 1935

*

Dear Mother,

On this coming Wednesday, we are thinking of preparing Halwa. Now that it is a routine dish, shall I try it once without cashew nuts and raisins?

Will it not be a little tasteless?

19 January 1935

*

My dear Mother,

G's brother has gone to Madras, so G is sending a small girl to Aroum  to fetch the tiffin-carrier for him. His brother was a big man and after going to Gujarat he has become still bigger!

Series One —Dyuman

I don't know if the man is too big but surely the girl is too small to do that work.

21 January 1935

*

My dear Mother,

A wave of threats—such as going on hunger-strike and not attending the meditations—has entered the men-folk from the ladies!

Many men did it long before the women began.

At 9.15 a.m. I saw D jumping at the compound wall of the Governor's House to pluck some flowers. He plucked or rather robbed a bunch of flowers.

This is extremely serious. You must tell him that A went to prison for a similar thing.

This is how we bring troubles for us and for You! I am much pained by that.

I hope you have told him that it must never be done. If he does not listen to you I shall have to write to him that if he does it once more I shall send him away from the Ashram.

21 January 1935

*

Dear Mother,

My love for You is too little, too shallow. My self-offering and devotion are too flat and full of turmoil. My consciousness is too clouded, not clear and transparent.

My dear Mother, I know this, yet I know also: there is a certitude of Victory and Realisation.

It is all right to see the imperfections and deficiencies but only

New Correspondences of the Mother

on condition that it brings a greater courage for a new progress, an increase of energy in the determination, and a stronger certitude of victory and future perfection.

Always with you

21 January 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I have deceived myself and You all along; I am filled with imperfections and lower impulses. I boasted of my purity, but now I see that it was all boasting, full of pride and ego.

Dear Mother, make me vividly conscious of all my defects and imperfections. I lose neither courage nor heart nor strength. My strength is You, and in You I rest.

Everything will be all right in time. There is only to keep up a patient aspiration and an unfailing confidence in the Divine Grace and its assured victory.

Always with you

23 January 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Y saw the cupboard to be repaired and told me: "This is quite the old pattern; even if I repair it, it will not be safe. Ask the Mother for a new one."

I told him: "I have no heart to reject the old one."

He said: "It is your economic nature that goes on using the old one. Everybody is giving away the old furniture and is asking for new."

My dear Mother, let us use what we have. This attitude of Y is a very big drain of the Ashram energy.

Series One —Dyuman

Yes—it is quite a wrong attitude.

24 January 1935

*

My dear Mother,

K told me: "Sometimes when the flow of Light comes down from above, I say: 'Not now, let me finish this work.'"

I said: "Never do that. Receive it, welcome it, allow it to come. It is the physical consciousness that wants to have its own old nature."

Surely what you said was right. Moreover with a little practice the light can be fully received and still the work go on. But this condition comes later.

With all love and blessings always

28 January 1935

*

My dear Mother,

An Aroum   servant asked for half a day leave for tomorrow morning. I told A I need a replacement, but it seems he does not have sufficient hands and cannot spare a man. If a servant comes to do part of the work, it is all right. Otherwise, we can manage with what we have quite easily.

It is better to insist a little with A—the difficulties come from inadequate organisation and by insisting it obliges them to make an effort and the difficulties get solved.

6 February 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Now You know H's absurdity, for she has written to You what she wanted to do today. I am happy that

New Correspondences of the Mother

she is now free from that.

Sri Aurobindo has just read her letter to me—you did well to console her. These ideas of incapacity are absurd, they are the negation of the truth of progress. What cannot be done today, will be done another day—if the aspiration is there.

6 February 1935

*

My dear Mother,

H has gone into a state of depression and despondency. To imagine, to invent, to justify and assent to falsehoods as the Reality and Truth—this is a chronic disease with many of us. May this nature of purely vital ignorance and physical stupidity disappear from the Ashram.

Surely it will be a very good thing when all these ignorant depressions are chased away.

7 February 1935

*

My dear Mother,

What's the matter in the Dining Room? Why do we take pleasure in coming into conflict with each other? Is there even one day that has passed peacefully until now? Why do we seek for power instead of consecrating ourselves at the feet of the Divine?

Save, save us, O dear Mother.

There is only to be patient—all that will pass one day. Perhaps in the state of their present consciousness they would find life too dull without quarrels.

Since yesterday I have been thinking of taking up the serving and distribution of food.

Series One —Dyuman

I do not think it is possible. I do not like that you should be bound by a regular work like that one. The rest would suffer.

My dear Mother, grant me an absolute loving consecration to Thee. Make me Thy humble and docile servant. And wherever I am asked to serve, give me gentleness and peace. Teach me to be Thy docile servant.

Surely you will do more and more perfectly your service to the Divine.

9 February 1935

*

Dear Mother,

I am often called a “miser” because of my resistance to outer suggestions. I am a miser! If I become generous and lavish, as the inmates want me to be—which is absolutely impossible—we must put aside not 16 thousand rupees for food but 30 or 40 thousand rupees. How shall we do so?

You are quite right and I do not find you a miser.

If I listened to what the people say, we should have been ruined long ago.

My dear loving Mother, make me more and more true and faithful to Thee. O my dear Love, may the Divine Grace alone manifest.

You have chosen the right path. Do not mind what the others say.

In all love and trust

10 February 1935

*

My dear Mother.

Today I experienced that wherever I turned my

New Correspondences of the Mother

eyes, I found You claiming all; I left all, ran to You, Mother, called You, threw myself at Your Feet, and I had all, and You.

This is a very good experience.

My dear Mother, always Thy child, make me Thy child, a true child.

Yes, my true child whom I keep always in my arms.

12 February 1935

*

My child,

Did you ask H how the work will be done if she leaves it? It is not fair to take up such a big responsibility and drop it like that, in a fit of bad temper.

20 February 1935

*

My dear Mother,

A display of tremendous energy: the lady workers of Aroum   worked from 5 in the morning to 3 in the afternoon. This is not the first time; once they worked from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. at a stretch.

O my dear Mother, let the energy be consecrated to the Divine consciously; let it be a pure self-giving to the Divine.

Yes, with consecration the work can be done much more easily and happily. But nobody must be asked a greater effort than what he can do.

27 February 1935

*

Series One —Dyuman

O my dear Mother,

I am becoming more quiet and peaceful. It is peace and equanimity that have made my work easier and simpler and brought goodwill where there was bad will.

Yes, let the peace and the quietness settle more and more in you and everything will become easy in your work.

Always with you

9 March 1935

*

My dear Mother,

The Aroum   servants are obedient and willing workers, never absent without informing me previously. Even when they are ill, they come and take leave. I think it is the result of my kind and gentle behaviour with them.

Yes, I am sure that servants behave according to the way they are treated.

10 March 1935

*

My dear Mother,

The negligence of C and A today reminded me of past cases where I and my fellow workers were treated like butlers and couriers. Happily, it passed away very quickly. We may not be close friends, but surely we have to cooperate fully in the work.

Yes, it is good to turn a difficulty into an occasion for a new progress.

With love and blessings always

12 March 1935

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear Mother,

No doubt bad suggestions of every kind come and present themselves before me; but just as the clouds pass away and the sun remains unaffected, so does my condition.

The only saving factor is this: Your Love has penetrated into all the corners of my being. And it has gone deep down: there is a constant remembrance of You, my dear Mother. It is that which pushes me onward and carries me forward towards the goal.

Yes, my dear child, my love is always with you, around you, in you, and the protection, the help, the blessings never leave you.

14 March 1935

*

My dear Mother,

What should my attitude be towards H in her disturbances?

My dear Mother, let there be no attachment in me for others; let there be purely a goodwill and a heart filled with loving consecration to the Divine. If help or consolation comes from me, or rather through me, let it be purely a divine work.

Yes, it is like that that the help becomes true and effective.

To do at each moment the best we can and leave the result to the Divine's decision, is the surest way to peace, happiness, strength, progress and final perfection.

With love and blessings always

15 March 1935

*

My dear Mother,

A complete reliance upon the Divine Grace alone

Series One —Dyuman

gives peace, happiness and joy. That is because the Divine Himself takes up the devotee and carries him or her in His arms.

Yes, the Grace is infinite for one who sincerely trusts the Grace.
Always with you, my dear child

15 March 1935

*

Dear Mother,

What about R? What work will he do? He has not spoken to me about anything.

He has not been accepted as a permanent member and that is why no work has been given to him. He is married and has children and he wanted to bring the whole lot here. He has always lived on G's charity. We do not need this kind of people here.

21 March 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I heard today that due to somebody's ungratefulness the eyes of Sri Aurobindo have big red marks. My only wish is that the day may never come when You have them.

I also might have been ungrateful to You...

No, you have never been ungrateful and we know you will never be.

With all trust and love always

21 March 1935

*

My dear Mother,

A full trust and confidence in the Divine Love

New Correspondences of the Mother

saves a sadhak from all dangers and difficulties and gives him happiness, peace and joy.

My dear Mother, grant me a force that brings an integral and complete self-giving to the Divine.

Yes, it is a sincere self-giving that saves one from all difficulties and dangers.

With love and blessings always

28 March 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I was getting suggestions that she would become mad. It seems that many people said to her: "Why do you laugh so much?"—even when she was not laughing. I told her: "These are suggestions thrown upon you; you are not like that. On the contrary, it is such a nice thing, this laughter, a sort of great release and liberation."

Yes, she must not fear—it is all stupid suggestions and you spoke quite well.

31 March 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I want You to interfere in all my movements, whatever they are; and Your interference will be promptly responded to with love and submission, with an earnest will to change as You would like. I want You, I seek for You day and night, night and day—for Your Light, for Your Consciousness, for Your Force.

O Mother, come into my entire being, my smallest cell, the tiniest drop of my blood. Come, my dear Mother, and make the whole being Your seat.

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My dear child, with all my love I take you in my arms as my own child and assure you that you will become more and more mine.

3 April 1935

*

My dear Mother,

We have to find somebody for the washing and wiping of vessels. I do not know who it could be.

It seems to me that the only solution is that A should work himself, instead of throwing all the work upon others.

6 April 1935

*

My dear Mother,

A big disturbance is hovering over the kitchen. Twice it appeared a few days back, but it was controlled. P has accused me directly of being unfair. I tried to explain to her each time, but the roots have not disappeared.

The best is to ignore all these petty things. To want only what the Divine wants in us and for us is the only important thing.

6 April 1935

*

Dear Mother,

I thought I had a very pure relation with the inmates, but today I see that it was all humbug. There is a still greater purity to manifest and to live.

When I go deep down and analyse myself, I find the lower vital impulses, the animal impulses of ordinary human life and its instincts. These things

New Correspondences of the Mother

have no strength to make me act physically but I understand now that they creep in and govern the lower vital nature in a very subtle polished form.

Yes, these things were to be seen. It is good that you have seen them; but now there is only to be quiet, happy and peaceful in a steady will that all the nature should be enlightened.

6 April 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Blessed be the day when there will be peace, gentleness, kindness and the manifestation of Love.

My dear Mother, may the Divine manifest.

I would say: may the world become aware that the Divine is manifesting!

8 April 1935

*

My dear Mother,

The kitchen has not yet finished its troubles, and now the serving section has begun.

We are not trained to resist all evil, nor disciplined enough to persist after the Truth, nor cultured enough to live a quiet and happy life.

Yes, the suggestion of disturbance and dissatisfaction has become very strong and many respond to it; but we have only to keep quiet, very quiet, more and more quiet as an answer to the growing restlessness and stand calmly until the storms are over.

It is only a perfect Peace that can overcome all these excited fits...

With all love and blessings always

9 April 1935

*

Series One —Dyuman

My dear Mother,

G made a big fuss this afternoon. She was crying so loudly in her room that people could hear it on the footpath. I was passing that way, I too heard it and went straight upstairs and called to her: "G, keep quiet! It is enough. Keep quiet!"

She became silent and I went away.

Yes, you did well to interfere. We cannot tolerate these fits of hysteria—they turn the Ashram into some kind of asylum!

11 April 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Water supply: Aroum  consumes a good deal of water for drinking, cooking and washing. If it happens again like today that there is no water from the taps for many hours, what shall we do? We shall have to use the well. The water will be fetched from it, boiled, passed through a cloth and used for cooking, drinking and washing vessels.

It is ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE to use the well water (even boiled) for drinking—the well water of the town is contaminated by infiltrations—this means *typhoid* and *cholera*—and for cooking also it is impossible because the well water has a filthy taste and smell.

12 April 1935

*

My dear Mother,

S bought some things last month and did not pay for them. Today A gave me the money to pay on her behalf. After that I began to think: so many people are buying things in their own capacity. Do they all

New Correspondences of the Mother

pay cash or do they remain as debtors? Can they not be stopped!

I have tried several times but never succeeded and the result was only that they began hiding things from me, which made their case much worse.

13 April 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Feeding animals in Aroum : crows, squirrels, etc. come in a very big number. They not only eat up what is thrown to them by S, but also what is put for drying in the sun. When they eat up raisins and cashew nuts and spoil the sugar and such things, it is too much. I feel we should stop this feeding and lessen the number of animals in Aroum .

Now that they have taken the habit of coming it may be difficult to stop them, but you may try.

21 April 1935

*

My dear Mother,

More peace brings more Light, and that sets everything right. O Lord, more peace.

Yes, it is in peace that the knowledge and the power can manifest.

Always with you

24 April 1935

*

My dear Mother,

May all atoms and cells and parts of my being open to You, receive You, contain You. May You

Series One —Dyuman

alone be the Sovereign Master. This is all my wish.

Surely it will be fulfilled as I am always with you.

25 April 1935

*

My dear Mother,

How is it that I read nothing, learn nothing! Some people learn languages, some learn painting, some learn singing; many read books on yoga and some are typing out Sri Aurobindo's articles in "Arya".

All that is for people who have a restless mind and need some mental occupation.

How is it I do nothing? This becomes a riddle to me at times, and I have no solution except this: it does not matter, let me have my Mother; it is quite sufficient if I have Her.

This is surely the best.

Always with you, my dear child

28 April 1935

*

My dear Mother,

In advancing towards the realisation there might come difficulties. I pass them over as the Mother's child; I begin the sadhana as a child of the Mother, I advance like that and even in fulfilment I remain Thy child, my dear Mother, a child of eternity.

Yes, you will always be my dear child and thus you will reach the realisation.

29 April 1935

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear Mother,

*Tomorrow I am finishing the medicine for boils.
May this be the last medicine for me. O body consciousness,
open yourself to the dear Mother and get
yourself filled with Her Love.*

Yes, there comes a time when medicines are no more needed, but that means that the body consciousness is quite opened to the force from above and that a strong unwavering will is established in the material.

With all love and blessings to you, my dear child

30 April 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I have seen this: the Ashram has no hostile forces; it is filled with the Mother. It is only when we open to these hostile forces, calling them in, that they come and disturb us. If we remained calm, quiet and open to the Divine alone, the life of the Ashram would undergo a very rapid transformation and there would be peace, joy and happiness.

This is quite true. The peace and the happiness are always there.

With you always.

30 April 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Peace and an unshakeable equanimity are the firm basis for happiness, joy and progress towards the Goal. May it increase in me, in all of us in the Ashram.

Our love and blessings are always with you, establishing

Series One —Dyuman

equanimity as an indispensable basis for the Realisation.

2 May 1935

*

O my dear Mother,

My heart is filled with gratitude that You brought me here. You fished me out of the lower nature and kept me in the bosom of Your eternal love.

O my dear Mother, teach me to love Thee, to surrender to Thee; teach me to be Thine, more truly Thine.

Yes, I am keeping you in my arms and surrounding you with my love which united to your aspiration will take you to the goal.

6 May 1935

*

My dear Mother,

In Aroum  there are a good number of people having moods; none can say when these moods will come—they come without any reason.

Moods are all over the Ashram—they come from the obscurity and bad will of the physical mind. When the physical mind will consent to open to the light all these moods will disappear.

With love and blessings always

11 May 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Too frequently I meet people in their difficulties and bad conditions. In this state I go deep down within myself, and my being rises in a great and fervent prayer to You:

New Correspondences of the Mother

O my dear Mother, make me more and more selfless, completely selfless, filled only with Your Purity, Peace, Consciousness, Love and Light.

I am always with you and you will never call me in vain—our peace, love, help and protection will always answer to your call.

13 May 1935

*

My dear Mother,

There is misuse of filtered water in Aroum ; people are taking too much water in their tumblers and then throwing it away. No external rule can alter the situation; there has to be a change of consciousness and a complete consecration to the Divine.

Surely you are quite right—but we have to provide until the change of consciousness takes place!

Herewith a notice that can be put in Aroum  and also here near the filter.

Always with you

14 May 1935

*

Dear Mother,

When anything happens to the body, it loses courage at once and becomes weak, helpless and full of fear. In one word, there is no peace and equanimity in the body consciousness. Not only the body but the entire consciousness gets clouded and veiled; there is no remembrance of the Divine in the physical consciousness and it is this that catches the illness and prolongs it.

Yes, this is quite rightly observed—but to have become

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conscious of it is a big step towards a successful transformation of the body consciousness and the victory over illness.

My love and blessings are always with you.

15 May 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Unless the body consciousness opens and receives the Divine Light, Peace and Consciousness, nothing of permanence is achieved. The body is the base, and upon that base the Divine has to work and construct a building. However much the vital and the mental are open and receptive, nothing can be said to be permanent if the body is not stable.

I am glad that you had the experience of the necessity for the body to open and to receive the divine Light and Will, as the mind and the heart does. This will do much for the increase of the resistance to illness and the capacity of keeping good health.

I am always with you.

15 May 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I am always given to Thee and to Thy Work. Make me more quiet, make me rest in full peace amidst these hundredfold activities. I have to learn this more and more, and You have to teach me. Teach me, my dear Mother, to be more and more Thine.

Yes, I am always with you, teaching you the true action and the true consecration.

19 May 1935

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear Mother,

The most important thing for me to do is to remain quietly happy, consecrated and concentrated on You, and to do what has to be done very sincerely and devotionally, not worrying about the future, but quietly aspiring very humbly before You.

Yes, this is the right attitude and the most sure way.

Always with you in an affectionate trust

27 May 1935

*

My dear Mother,

What did I see this evening when You were looking at me from Your window? I saw that my chest was as transparent as glass and that You were seeing Your own image there.

My dear Mother is always in my heart for eternity. My Mother, my Mother, my Mother.

This is a very beautiful and true experience. I am happy you had it. Yes, I am always in your heart—for ever with you.

28 May 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I fail to understand why there is so much antipathy against me in the Aroum  workers.

I do not think it is so bad as all that.

Three days back, as soon as I entered Aroum  gate from the market, a force ran through my neck, saying: "It would have been better if you had died."

Do not listen to all this rubbish. *It does not come from the*

Series One —Dyuman

Aroum  workers, but from some hostile force that wants to upset you.

Yesterday when I was taking my lunch, a force wanted to send me away from Aroum : "Go away, go away, you are not wanted here."

Same explanation as above.

And now M tells me: "I shall not be able to cooperate with you in this way, nor shall I be able to work with you." I do not even know what "way" he means.

My dear Mother, all is left to you. I rest happily and go to bed.

Yes, be quiet and do not worry about all that.

It is the same forces which want to make you believe that your co-workers hate you and make the others believe that you hate them. The mistake is to believe these forces—one ought always to answer them: *No, it is not true, it cannot be.*

Always with you, my dear child

30 May 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I thought that as I have grown bulky, I might not be able to work physically. But I find that I can work with a sustained energy, quietly and with a balanced mind. And I think You are quite happy to see me working.

Yes, I am very glad to see you working physically and am sure it will do you much good. I am glad also that your body is getting a little less thin. It was truly necessary to fill the holes!

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

30 May 1935

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear Mother,

Today I heard A and P quarreling. Afterwards, P told someone: "Prison life is easier than to work with A."

Would it not be better if you spoke to P? If he is not satisfied, it is better for him to tell it frankly rather than to complain hidingly.

Always with you, my dear child

1 June 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I have spoken to P very clearly: "Give dumb service; utter not a word even if there are whips on your back."

If you mean that there must be no quarrels it is quite all right. But he must feel free to tell me what he has in his heart.

"Work can never be done if there is no discipline! The Mother knows very well the person in charge of the work, and those who work with him have to follow his instructions." And he has agreed to that kind of work.

Let us see, my dear Mother. I wish that dumb service should be given to You by all of us.

I wanted you to tell him also that if he has any complaint to make or if he is not satisfied with his work, it is *to me* that he must freely say so.

My love, blessings and trust are always with you, my dear child.

2 June 1935

*

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My dear Mother,

I, who was so social and friendly to all, am becoming more reserved day by day and relate to others only for the work or for business. Often the suggestion has passed in me that even with those I am somewhat free with, I should relate just for the work.

This is not necessary nor even advisable. You must feel free to speak to them and help them when they need it. Go on with them as you do—it is all right.

Grant me the strength, my dear Mother, to remain quite faithful to the Divine Will.

Yes, the strength is always with you to be always faithful to the Divine Will.

2 June 1935

*

My dear Mother,

There is not a single worker in Aroum  who has not shown his or her bright side of love, devotion and service to the Divine. That is the light which shines in each of us; that I adore and through it I always feel in harmony with the inmates. That is what I put in front with my dealings with them.

Good.

Difficulties each of us have, some more, some less, but it is foolish to have contempt for someone having troubles. On the contrary, a sympathetic heart must go out to them in all goodwill and kindness, to help them out of their difficulties.

What you say is quite right and with this attitude there is no doubt that sooner or later, the difficulties will vanish.

New Correspondences of the Mother

All love and blessings to you my dear child

4 June 1935

*

My dear Mother,

The work in our courtyard garden: as you saw, I can do good work as a coolie also, and though completely soiled with earth all over, I can remain Your child.

I was very pleased to see you enjoying your work. I hope you will rest very well this night and your body will get stronger and stronger.

I feel that it would be good for us inmates to do some sort of manual work—but the wish must come from within our hearts.

Yes, it is when it comes spontaneously from the goodwill of the heart that it is helpful in all ways.

I am quietly happy, with a greater confidence that the Divine Will is always victorious. The increased confidence gives me more strength, quietness, peace, patience and a force that serves the Divine Will.

Yes, with the growing confidence comes the growing force and the growing capacity to receive it.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

6 June 1935

*

My dear, dear Mother,

I am happy with an increasing daily experience: My Mother is in my heart. She who supports me, guides me, loves me, She is the soul of this body and much more than that.

Series One —Dyuman

My dear Mother, I love You with all my heart.

Yes, you are truly in my arms, arms of love that always keep you close, very close to me.

6 June 1935

*

My dear Mother,

At work two parties have formed—the quarrels go on daily and the smallest thing becomes a mountain. Both parties are quite dissatisfied with me because I do not take sides, I hear nobody and I put forth my case of peace and quietness.

What you are doing is quite all right. The most important thing is to keep an unshakeable quietude and peace. One day or another it will act upon them.

Desires, desires, have they no end? Yes, they have, the moment we turn towards the Divine and quietly aspire for Him, giving ourselves completely and sincerely to Him.

Yes, you are right. Keep a constant faith in the Divine's final Victory.

7 June 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Where You are, I am. And I have no place to go except into Your loving and affectionate consciousness.

Yes, my dear child, your home is here and I am always with you.

7 June 1935

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear Mother,

Beloved of my heart, soul of my body, whatever I am, good or bad, whatever I have or am going to have—all is Yours, Yours alone.

Given to You completely, my dear Mother.

Yes, you have given yourself and I have accepted your gift with trust and love, and I am always with you, my dear child.

10 June 1935

*

Mother, my dear Mother,

Grant me a complete faithfulness to You and Your work. Never let me accept the idea or suggestion: "Mother, I want to go; let me go."

Surely such a monstrous idea must never cross your mind—it is unthinkable for my love.

11 June 1935

*

O my dear Mother,

You are my dear Mother; dearest of all, loveliest of all, You are my eternal Mother. It is the Divine's Will that I, a human being, shall turn into an eternal child of Your eternal Love. May it soon be fulfilled.

Yes, you are my true child, and I trust you fully. There is no possible doubt about reaching the goal—the Victory is certain.

11 June 1935

*

My dear Mother,

There are many difficulties at work, but it does

Series One —Dyuman

not come into my heart to send any worker away from Aroum . I am satisfied with them, one and all; and I am confident that in spite of all these quarrels we are arriving at a consciousness where there is unshakeable peace and happiness and harmony.

Surely this must be hoped and willed and worked out.

My dear Mother, my prayer to you: may the day come soon.

Yes, may it come soon. All love and blessings to you, my dear child

14 June 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Things are becoming difficult to manage in Aroum . The workers want to do things according to their wish and a sort of negligence has come into the work; there is idleness, laziness, indolence, unwillingness etc. Sincerity is getting clouded everywhere.

Today a thought runs on and on in me: O Mother, tell me, how much am I responsible for this condition in Aroum  and the quarrels between the workers?

I do not see in what way you are responsible for that.

So often in recent days I was going to get entangled in the network of bad disturbances, but as yet I have resisted it firmly. Now I ask for Your help, a help that completely removes all the disturbing elements from the co-workers, so that they may turn towards You.

Those who are sincere I can help and turn them easily towards the Divine.

But where there is insincerity I can do very little. And as

New Correspondences of the Mother

I told you already, we have only to be patient and wait for the things to become better. But surely I do not see why you should get disturbed and in what way your disturbance would help things to be better. You know by experience that there is only one way of getting out of confusion and obscurity; it is to remain very quiet and peaceful, firm in the equanimity and to let the storm pass away. Rise above these petty quarrels and difficulties and wake up once more in the light and the power of my love which never leaves you.

15 June 1935

*

My dear Mother,

In all clouds, all difficulties, all obstacles faith in the Divine is the only guide, strength and protection. It is faith in the Divine and love that save a sadhak and carry him beyond the dangers to a life of immortal bliss.

Fortify my faith, O my dear Mother.

Yes, never let anything cloud your faith in my love for you and in my constant presence and help. And rise high enough above these difficulties which try to seem big, so that you may see them as they really are, that is to say, very small and insignificant.

Always with you

15 June 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Once more I am out of the clouds of confusion and obscurity. A firm quietude and equanimity and a reliance upon the Divine has dispersed them. The Divine is my strength and force, and I live for the Divine alone.

Yes, my child, it is quite true that the Divine is the sole refuge. With Him is absolute safety.

Series One —Dyuman

My love and blessings are always with you.

16 June 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I have received a letter from H. I think that you also must have received one of the kind.

Yes, even two. I find this little girl truly selfish and heartless to behave like that just on the eve of your birthday.

O my dear Mother, this is nothing but an attack directly upon the Ashram kitchen on the eve of my birthday. The kitchen ought to have rejoiced, but alas, now it is gloomy and dark. We laboured for years—and what a letter I receive!

O dear Mother, may she be shown the right path and the right attitude.

We are trying our best—but ...

My dear Mother, as the Divine wills.

Let this day be for you the day of complete liberation from all that is not the Divine, let it be the day of your absolute, integral consecration to the Divine.

Our love, blessings and help are always with you and today they will be with you in a special way.

18 June 1935

*

My dear Mother,

May the entire Ashram rise above, high above the ordinary human nature, may it consecrate itself to the Divine Will and live for the Divine alone. The Divine is the Supreme Reality for the Ashram.

So may it be!

New Correspondences of the Mother

Always with you to give you strength and peace, light and love and to build in you an unshakeable equanimity.

18 June 1935

*

My dear Mother,

This year is a year for a very deep and high progress for the Ashram. All those who are open to the Divine will move forward towards the goal.

And I humbly and quietly aspire to be in perfect union with the Divine Will.

My dear Mother, my heart is flowing with goodwill, good heart, sympathy and a constant prayer for Peace.

Yes, my dear child, your aspiration and your prayer will be fulfilled. Surely this year the Ashram will make a big step towards Peace and Harmony—and your union with the Divine Will will become more and more perfect.

19 June 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Make me an instrument of Truth! In Light and Truth and Consciousness alone can one hope to be a true and faithful instrument. Remove unconsciousness, enlighten the hidden parts of my being, bring them to the Light. Let my whole being be directly under the influence of the Light.

I am always with you, my dear child, surrounding you with light and consciousness.

21 June 1935

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Series One —Dyuman

My dear Mother,

Grant me a sincerity which discerns the truth and upholds it, which discerns the falsehood and throws it out. It is simple sincerity that will purify my love for You, strengthen it, make it wide, vast and deep, and bring my being into a complete union with the Divine Consciousness—You. Increase the simple sincerity in me, around me, in the Ashram. This is my prayer to You.

It is, indeed, a very good prayer, deserving to be fulfilled.

With love and blessings always

23 June 1935

*

My dear Mother,

We tried our best to get good wheat suitable for our bread, but we could not find it. If we can add fine flour, which comes from America, would it not improve the bread? The market prepares the bread from that flour alone.

No, it will not do. J has sent two samples of bread, speaking of them as if they were raw and bad for serving—but I find them both quite good and not at all to be rejected. It is to be seen that now the servers do not go to another extreme and waste the bread!

25 June 1935

*

My dear Mother,

The sword of Damocles hangs over our kitchen. We shall have to remain alert, watchful, full of force, quiet and patient. My dear Mother, I am full of confidence in the divine Victory.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Yes, as you say, one must keep up the entire confidence in the Victory of the Divine—and this general Victory will include in itself the personal victory of all those who will have kept faithful and confident.

29 June 1935

*

My dear Mother,

There is an adverse force in the Ashram that goes from inmate to inmate and it wants only to destroy. When inmates leave the Ashram, it does not go; it only becomes more violent. If the inmates remain faithful and sincere, it is bound to go in one second.

I ask for the wrath of Mahakali, the intensest love of that warrior Mother, to chase away this obstinate force and free the Ashram from our everyday trouble.

The wrath of Mahakali manifests from time to time and acts all right, but the effect of it does not last because those who answer to the adverse force do not truly want to be cured. They are not sincere.

We have only to remain quiet and confident, unshakeable in our faith and trust in the Divine's Grace.

1 July 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I worked hard today in our courtyard garden and had a new vision: as humans are beings, so also plants are beings, and they too respond in proportion to one's love and affection for them. And if a sadhak with insight develops this, it will be a great help in the evolution of Nature.

Yes, plants have a consciousness of their own; they are very receptive and respond quite well to the force.

Series One —Dyuman

Always with you my dear child

2 July 1935

*

My dear Mother,

If there were even a little sense of gratitude in the hearts of the inmates, no one would dare to tell You: "I am leaving." May the Ashram inmates learn to be grateful and bow down in gratitude to the Divine.

Yes, my dear child, you are quite right—but gratitude is a virtue of the psychic and very few people live in their psychic consciousness.

5 July 1935

*

My dear Mother,

The physical work done in our courtyard these last few weeks has given me a very nice training. But I saw people looking at us with contempt when we were soiled and working; it has given me a better understanding of where they stand. I wish we would realise that physical work is in no way inferior to meditation. In fact if we think of the manifestation, work will surely be an important factor for the new creation.

There is no doubt about that.

I am always very happy to see you work physically. A good material work not exceeding normal capacities, is most useful for keeping a good physical and moral poise.

13 July 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I had a disturbance, but it has passed away and I

New Correspondences of the Mother

find that a greater consciousness has taken its place. It is the consciousness of peace in the vital, and it comes from You.

Yes, I had seen that you were not in your normal condition, but as you had said nothing, I could not speak. I hope that it is quite gone now and that you have recovered your true balance and equanimity.

Always with you

13 July 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I fully understand H's difficulties in the work, but I find no solution except that both the persons involved must rise above the ordinary nature and open themselves to the Force of the Divine. Her proposal to be relieved from the kitchen work cannot be accepted. I wish that the clouds may pass away.

Of course H cannot leave the kitchen. What you say is quite right; it is only by rising above the lower nature that all these petty things can be mended.

My beloved Mother, Peace in Aroum , Peace in the hearts of all in the Ashram. For a beginning, I promise You that on no day will You find me not in my normal balance and poise of equanimity. Given to Your Love and Peace.

Yes, I feel sure you will always keep a good balance and poise, and equanimity will grow in you more and more.

My love, blessings and peace are always with you.

14 July 1935

*

Series One —Dyuman

My dear Mother,

I did not go for marketing today, but I had a long sitting with You during the Pranam after many months. There I realised more clearly that in truth we all belong to You and our true nature is one of Your peace, love, harmony and joy. I know for certain that one day we shall rise above the nature of quarrels, envy, hatred, jealousy, arrogance and pride.

Your experience is true, the essential nature is peace, harmony and love. I hope all will realise it one day.

I am always with you.

14 July 1935

*

My dear Mother,

This too is a training for me: to see how far I stand detached from circumstances, untouched by the jealousy around me and true to the Divine.

Yes, the only thing you have to do is to remain quiet, undisturbed, solely turned towards the Divine; the rest is in His hands.

17 July 1935

*

My dear Mother,

As long as the being does not depend upon the Divine alone, there can never be peace, joy and happiness.

Yes, this is true; it is only in union with the Divine and in the Divine that harmony and peace can be established.

Always with you, my dear child

20 July 1935

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear Mother,

Beloved of my heart, always Your Love has protected me. Today I had the worst kind of attack and again Your Love saved me and gave me a new push towards the realisation of integral peace and equanimity.

Yes, I know from early morning that you were disturbed and my love did not leave you for a minute all day.

I am glad, very glad that you have recovered your normal condition.

21 July 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Now I have a friend and co-worker—it is You, my dear Mother. Even if the whole world goes against me, yet I know I have a friend in You. A friend, a guide, a Mother, all in one, and our union shall increase day by day.

Yes, this is quite true and I am glad that you have come to understand it fully.

21 July 1935

*

My dear Mother,

G has informed me that she is again getting bad ideas; but she is not weak and has taken her food regularly. She is quite strong and keeping quiet.

It is all right, but if S and the others made less fuss about these “bad ideas” they would get them less often!

22 July 1935

*

Series One —Dyuman

My dear Mother,

Here is a desperate letter from G addressed to me and also partly to You. It is nothing but the usual accusations against Your love and the absurd notion of falling into the sea and killing herself. I have answered her letter at some length.

My dear Mother, nothing will happen, rest assured! I shall remain quite alert, and I hope it will soon be over.

Your letter is quite good and nothing more need be said.

Let quietness and calm be with you, not only in the depths but also in the surface consciousness, as I am indeed always with you.

30 July 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Let me tell You very frankly where I am most attached. I am attached to You more than to anybody or to anything.

Let the parts in me which are not attached to You—the parts which have gone astray—return to You; it is only then that they will have true peace.

Yes, this is true.

My dear Mother, completely left to You.

Yes, I know that you belong to me and that is why I am sure to take you to the goal.

31 July 1935

*

My dear Mother,

*[Several problems in the Dining Room described]
For all the problems I have mentioned, teach me to*

New Correspondences of the Mother

*surrender more and more perfectly to the Divine Will;
an integral surrender to the Divine Will alone can
bring peace, joy, happiness, force and vastness.*

Take it all, my dear child, as a test for your equanimity and advance with courage and confidence.

I am always with you.

2 August 1935

*

My very dear Mother,

Today I had a very true experience: While returning from the market this morning, the thought passed in me: "P is a big man in the outside world" and I felt a kind of dissatisfaction somewhere in the vital. Then You appeared before me and showed me: "Look here, here you are." You carried me on Your arm close to Your heart.

Yes, it is surely better than to be a "great man" for the outside world!

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

11 August 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Sir H saw Aroum  and looked quite pleased and satisfied; he also took away 3 loaves of bread. He shall have to pay a heavy price for that, and I shall not be satisfied if it is less than 3 lacs rupees. If he can give a loan of 99 lacs to the government, surely he can also give to You a good and decent sum.

He went away without giving a single rupee! and I believe he does not intend to give anything—only sweet words, that is all.

Series One —Dyuman

My dear Mother, it looks to me as if the disturbance in me has gone. Once more I have regained my normal balance of peace and happiness. I was feeling that my disturbance will pain You much more than any loss of money, and that brought me to my senses very soon.

This is good. Indeed the loss of money is of small importance, but the loss of equipoise is a much more important thing.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

20 August 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Let me tell You that whoever opens himself to the Divine Love feels You very very concretely as the Mother. There comes a humility, a gentleness and a complete surrender and consecration to You.

I am always with you, keeping you in my arms.

Let nothing, no circumstance, no person, disturb you.

26 August 1935

*

My dear Mother,

B tells me: "When I take haricots, I get stomach pains; so all along I have taken only the water and thrown away the haricots." Dear Mother, if You like, they can be prepared a little more watery.

Better keep them a little more watery. I think we shall have to give up haricots when this provision is over, as there are too many people who imagine that they cannot digest them.

My dear Mother, sleep is coming to me more now—it is due to the exhaustion of the nervous system after the Darshan rush.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Yes, sleep well and as much as you can, it is very necessary.
I am always with you.

28 August 1935

*

My dear Mother,

May my sincerity increase and pervade my entire being. That will bring a greater consecration and surrender to the Divine, leading to an integral union.

Yes, my dear child, sincerity is the key of the divine doors.
Always with you

31 August 1935

*

My dear Mother,

May the wideness and depth of Thy seat increase in my heart; may it be Thine, Thine integrally.

Yes, I am always seated in your heart, consciously living in you.

1 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

The Ashram had a dish from M on Monday, an extra dish on Wednesday, soup on Thursday and a fine dish of cabbage on Friday. My beloved Mother, for all this may a sense of gratitude arise in us—this is my prayer.

It seems that this night, between 9:30 and 10 o'clock, some people were speaking against C's bathroom door while she was inside unnoticed. One person was saying something to this effect: how is it possible to work with such bad food? And

Series One —Dyuman

another one answered: you ought to write to the Mother.

4 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Yoga in the cave is easy, but Yoga in life is altogether a different thing. There must be sincerity to the core and absolute self-giving to the goal.

I do not believe that sadhana in the cave is easy—only there the insincerity remains hidden, while in life and action it is revealed. You can look like a Yogi in a cave but in life the humbugging is more difficult, because you have to behave like a Yogi.

Always with you, my dear child

6 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

May the day draw nearer when all the reports of disturbances stop and You are informed only of galloping progress and flights of the being towards the Divine. Blessed will be that day.

It is in a great peace that I am waiting for that day, the peace of the certitude of Victory. You must enter that peace, my dear child, and let nothing affect you. It is only when we are not affected that we can always do the right thing at the right time and in the right way.

Love and blessings to you, my dear child

6 September 1935

*

Dear Mother,

H is sending a letter to You tonight. My reading

New Correspondences of the Mother

*on the subject: there is selfishness and a very cruel
vital, quite intolerant, arrogant and proud. It wants
to control and subjugate others.*

Yes, all that is true, but it is only part of herself, and the other part is quite courageous, sweet and steady.

Let us hope she will soon recover her true being.

7 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

The D.R. workers often have second or third works at different places. They have their main job, and in their free hours they do other things. It should not be otherwise, but it would be better to have a few full-time workers rather than many part-time workers.

People can't do all day the same work; it is most taxing on the nerves and after some time they get tired, depressed, discouraged, speak of suicide, etc., etc.

Even in ordinary life it has been recognised that for the sake of the work itself, a complete change of occupation for a few hours every day is most useful.

Always with you, my dear child

13 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

We have been preparing bread for 3 years or more according to this proportion: 1 kg of wheat for 3 loaves (25 kg for 75 loaves). Since last August we have been using 35 kg for 75 loaves—the difference is 10 kg per day. This difference has always pained me.

As the bread has not risen well recently, the

Series One —Dyuman

consumption of loaves in the D. R. has increased. It is not that the stomachs of the eaters are asking for more food, it is insincerity and a lack of discrimination on the part of the people eating the food.

The loaves are surely much bigger than those we used to have before (I am seeing them every day). But I have no objection to that. After all, apart from the milk, the bread is the most substantial food we are giving, and I do not think it would be fair to reduce it. I think the chief reason why people are eating more bread is because the bread is much nicer than it used to be.

I must say that before we took up cattle, we never separated the bran from the wheat—it went into the bread.

It makes the bread a little too heavy to digest. I have said to give this small amount of bran (only 4%) to the milkmen.

My dear Mother, grant a simple sincerity in the entire being, a sincerity which keeps the full light and consciousness and accepts only the Truth.

The greatest enemies of a perfect sincerity are preferences (either mental, vital or physical) and preconceived ideas. It is these obstacles that must be overcome.

I am always with you to lead you to victory.

15 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

To me it appears that all troubles start from unconsciousness. Desire is the first-born child of this unconsciousness and it can manifest in any form, mental, vital or physical.

New Correspondences of the Mother

What you say here is quite true.

Peace is the base of all Sadhana, and it must pervade all the being.

This also is true.

My love and blessings are always with you in the certitude that you will overcome all difficulties and reach a full and luminous consciousness in a perfect union with the Divine.

15 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

It is a fact that I have a dear Mother always with me and in me and around me, leading me to the Eternal Consciousness.

Yes, it is indeed a fact—I am always with you, my dear child.

16 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

A faith and confidence enlightened by Your love and light has grown since I was quite a small boy and it is still growing more and more.

It is good to have this unshakeable faith—it makes your path easier and shorter.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child.

16 September 1935

*

Series One —Dyuman

My dear Mother,

Can the rice bran go to the milkmen, as the wheat bran does?

Yes, all right.

And the very small bits of rice also? In the Ashram we have no use for them.

Can't the very small bits of rice go to the birds that are in the cage. I suppose they would like them.

17 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I do not understand what was wrong with the previous arrangement of providing wheat flour for the bread. I would get news of the amount of bread consumed at night and would inform the bakery the same night. Now J wants the information in the morning, whereupon he will ask M for the amount of flour required, tell me how much is needed, and then I shall send the wheat. I have agreed to this new arrangement, though I know that it will trouble J, the mill, the granary, Aroum  and me.

I cannot understand in what way it will trouble? Once the thing is properly arranged it can work quite smoothly. In fact it is I who have suggested this arrangement and I never thought it could create trouble.

But if you have a simpler way to arrange things let me know it.

My dear Mother, peace, more peace for me and the Ashram. This is my only prayer to You.

Yes, truly it is badly needed. Without peace the simplest thing makes at once a big fuss.

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear child, let the Peace be manifested in you more and more constantly and integrally.

My help and presence are always with you for that.

19 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I ask for "justice" from You. Here is my appeal! O Lord, the human mind is too ignorant, too obstinate and obscure. May the Divine Grace be granted to it in order to set all things right.

Yes, it is the Divine Grace that must be prayed for. If justice were to manifest, very few would be those who could stand in front of it!

My love and blessings are always with you.

19 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

May the flame of aspiration be steady and one-pointed, may it rise up and up to the Divine and rest only there. May the aspirant see, hear, speak, feel nothing except: O my Divine Lord, O my Divine Mother, may Your Will be fulfilled.

Yes, it would be a fine achievement.

Always with you, supporting you in your efforts, my dear child

20 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

May the personal ego vanish and the Divine Will pervade everywhere.

Series One —Dyuman

Yes, my dear child, you will always find me with you, in you, for this great achievement.

21 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

H has had one of her usual disturbances. She wants me to tell You on her behalf: "I have given up hope, I have nothing in my fate except destruction."

Yes, unhappily there is a vital love in her for you—it is that that has disturbed her balance, aroused in her this violent jealousy and brought upon her, as a consequence, all these fits of depression. But now no drastic or cutting way can lead out of the difficulty. It is by a growth of the consciousness that this entanglement can be solved.

My dear Mother, may my vital consecrate itself more and more to the Divine, open itself and be a perfect instrument of the Divine Force.

Yes, a complete, absolute consecration of the vital to the Divine is the only solution.

Always with you, my dear child, in your effort of progress

21 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

One of the greatest accusations against me is that I side with H and am partial towards her. There is a liking for her, but she has earned it; she has worked hard, done what I told her and taken up many responsibilities. If I had not been with her, she would have found it all too difficult.

Because of the accusations she is breaking with

New Correspondences of the Mother

me now and then, not coming to see me. Yet the closeness and intimacy are increasing. If required, I will stop speaking with her in a friendly manner and cut off all connection with her.

No drastic measure of that kind would be of any use. On the contrary it would make things worse. There is much to say on the subject and there are several points of view. It cannot be solved in such a simple and cutting way. But it is impossible for me to explain all that here. And I am waiting also for the consciousness in each one of you and in all to become more clear and complete. Meanwhile there is only to be very patient.

My dear Mother, I am quietly happy, with only one wish: may I open to the Divine Light more and more.

Yes, my child, my love and blessings are always with you to give you the consciousness and the light.

22 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

As far as I understand, H knows fully well that she has a vital attachment for me and that it brings troubles to her. Several times she has spoken to me about it, saying: "If I turn towards the Mother and if our relation becomes pure, all my difficulties will come to an end."

I feel that she is conscious of the defect, but at the same time too weak, lacking a firm will and confidence.

There is only to be patient. It will become all right with time —when the vital will be convinced that there is no hope for its desires.

Series One —Dyuman

*My dear Mother, may the fire burn more and more,
may it rise in a steady flame and meet the mother-fire.
All the rest will be done in due time. The flame that
meets the mother-fire will bring down the mother-fire
and that alone is capable of creating a new life. I shall
have to wait quietly for that fire to descend.*

Yes, keep the fire burning steadily and wait quietly for the sure result.

My love and blessings are always with you.

23 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

*At this moment a question comes to me: how
is it that my head at once gives a money value to
everything? Only if the money allows it, do I think of
proceeding further!*

It is all right. We must avoid as far as possible all wastage.

Always with you, my dear child

24 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

*Give me a very, very quiet head, for it is into a
quiet head that the true knowledge and consciousness
will descend. Then there will be a true action and a
worthy expression of Your true instrument. Beloved
Mother, a very, very quiet head.*

Yes—it is true, a very, very quiet head is indispensable for a clear understanding and vision and a right action.

My consciousness is always with you to give you a quiet head.

25 September 1935

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear Mother,

Today I saw that my body is strong and that it can work; it is good that it does not remain slothful.

My dear Mother, may peace and quietness increase in my physical.

My dear child, I am always with you, and together we will fight the battle and win the victory.

Do not worry about the reactions of people, however unpleasant they may be—the vital is everywhere and in everybody full of impurities and the physical full of unconsciousness. These two imperfections have to be cured, however long it may take, and we have only to work at it patiently and courageously.

Always near you, supporting and guiding you

27 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Jealousy prevails in Aroum . Here I give You a letter from G and one from H. I have answered them both.

Jealousy comes from a narrowness of the mind and a weakness of the heart. It is a great pity that so many are attacked by it. Your answers are all right.

My dear Mother, what a fine instrument the dark forces have found! Jealousy spoils the entire life, the entire sadhana and brings troubles of every kind. Dear Mother, may it get rooted out.

The only answer is a quiet and luminous patience in the manifestation of the truth and in the consecration to the Divine.

28 September 1935

*

Series One —Dyuman

My dear Mother,

Whatever the circumstances may be, my heart shall always remain turned towards You in all love and consecration and confidence.

Well, surely when unfaithfulness prevails all around it is the time to be truly faithful and to stand untouched and unmoved in the storm.

Love and blessings to you, my dear child

29 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Money can always come to the Ashram in showers, provided that the sadhaks are devoted and consecrated, faithful and sincere. If a sadhak says today: "Mother, I want to leave", and tomorrow: "Mother I want this and that", I feel that money cannot pour in. The Ashram has to turn more and more inward in pursuit of the Divine if it wants to manifest the Divine in all its richness.

What you say is perfectly true, but there is also the divine Patience which waits for the obscurity to vanish.

In humbleness, my dear Mother, I am at Your feet, at Your disposal, always for You, an eternal gift.

Yes, my dear child, I know that you are mine, and it is with full trust that I take you with me on the way.

30 September 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Wheat drying finishes on Saturday. The coolies are showing fatigue from carrying the bags of wheat up and

New Correspondences of the Mother

down. But there are only two more days of this work.

You must be careful not to overburden them. If they get sick I shall have to bear the consequences.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

2 October 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Ah, where is the stability! And the work! Where is the work? It is not even half the work that we used to do in this compound.

Equanimity—equanimity. It is the only practical answer to all this confusion which is bound to come to an end one day.

My dear Mother, pride challenges the Divine Grace whereas humble consecration and self-giving call the Divine Grace; then it becomes effective and protects. By becoming humble and giving myself to the Divine I lose nothing. May the shallow “I” become a portion of the Divinity.

Yes, humility and sincerity are the best safeguards. Without them each step is a danger, with them the victory is certain.

My dear child, humility and sincerity will take you to the goal.

3 October 1935

*

My dear Mother,

It is my earnest wish to have good relations with one and all. Hardly a day has passed in which I have not cried within myself about my disharmonious relation with M. I never meant it to turn out like this.

Series One —Dyuman

Do not worry or be impatient. All the disharmonies will disappear, but it must be on the true basis of a settled luminous consciousness leaving no room to the play of the ego.

My love and blessings are always with you

5 October 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I shall not be in a hurry for harmony, but it is not pleasant to remain in conflict, inner or outer, with someone; it brings so many difficulties into the work.

Surely we must always want the peace and the harmony and work for it as much as we can—but for that the best field of action is always inside ourselves.

Love and blessings to my dear child

6 October 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Let the play of the ego disappear completely. In my case, I know very well that there is pride, arrogance, likes and dislikes. There is also a part of me that wants to be big and great—it is ambition.

My dear Mother, may I become a humble doer of Thy Work.

Yes, my dear child, in truth, sincere humility is our safeguard—it is the surest way to the indispensable dissolution of the ego.

Always with you on the way

6 October 1935

*

My dear Mother,

The other day when I wrote to You about saving

New Correspondences of the Mother

expenses if there is war in Europe, I meant this:

Milk: one cup instead of three. Not three plantains but one. No washerman at all—we can wash our own clothes. No servants. No pocket money—people may not go to the theatre or cinema or buy all sorts of things for pleasure.

Surely if France or England entered the war we would be obliged to do that. For the moment it is not yet necessary.

9 October 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Confidence in the Guru is the key to Victory. Lack of confidence brings complete failure. Confidence, confidence, may an utter confidence in the Divine increase in the Ashram.

Yes, it is so absurd to ask for help and yet to have no trust! On the contrary with confidence everything becomes so easy.

Always with you, my dear child

12 October 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I am quietly happy, yet the fire in me is becoming more and more intense every day. May a deep quietness and Peace remain behind the intensity of the fire.

Yes, the true Agni always burns in deep Peace; it is the fire of an all-conquering will. Let it grow in you, in deep equanimity.

Always with you, my dear child

13 October 1935

*

Series One —Dyuman

My dear Mother,

May the Divine Patience grow in me. True patience can grow only in the true knowledge and consciousness and in full confidence in the Divine.

If the mind remains more quiet in front of circumstances and happenings, the patience will be more easily increased.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

15 October 1935

*

My dear Mother,

May peace and confidence come into the exterior being, may the mind be filled with quietness and trust in You, in Your words and actions.

It is only love that can understand and get at the secrets of the Divine Working. The mind, the physical mind especially, is incapable of seeing correctly and yet it always wants to judge. It is only a true sincere humility in the mind allowing the psychic to rule the being, that can save human beings from ignorance and obscurity.

Always with you, my dear child

16 October 1935

*

My dear Mother,

In these monsoon rains and winds, the cart goes for food distribution thrice a day. The servants give more service than their due time (9 hours), get drenched three times a day and yet not a murmur from them. I feel a happy relation with them.

Yes, it is very good, The servants may be given a tip after the rain is over. You might give it to them yourself as an encouragement.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Recently K is getting very troubled by what people say about her. Often the idea enters her head: "I am bad, I am unfit", etc.

Yes, I will tell her not to mind what people say. In fact I do not know why she is attaching so much importance to all that—so long as we are pleased with her, it ought to be sufficient.

18 October 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I am sorry to inform You that S is reading some letters of K and H to You. S told the contents of them to G, and G told me.

I am not at all sure of G's reports, as I told you already many times. *Nothing* can be decided or judged on what she says, as her statements are not reliable.

It is better to drop all these accusations made by G or others and not to attach much importance to all these rumours which are, at the best, always one-sided and prejudiced. S may or may not have said these things but one cannot act on the reports of any of these women against one another.

It seems evident that S is bent upon doing mischief.

She is not the only one who does mischief and from that point of view many others—including G—are just as bad as she is.

S has created turmoil in the atmosphere of the Ashram, and all against You and me. Against You in the sense that she says You are a puppet in my hands! What a shame!

Do not get so excited—are you sure of the truth of all these rumours and reports? In almost all human beings is not falsehood always mixed with truth?

Series One —Dyuman

Given to You with all sincerity.

My dear child, I know the sincerity of your consecration; that is why I want the peace to come in your mind and also this quiet, patient wisdom which prevents one from jumping to hasty conclusions and judgments.

Always with you, my dear child, affectionately

18 October 1935

*

Beloved of my heart,

*May there be for me a complete identification
with Your Will, Your consciousness, Your work.*

Yes, the identification with the Will and Consciousness is growing steadily and thus you will become more and more aware of my presence.

20 October 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I have always observed that whenever there is some heavy work or extra work to do, somebody or the other falls into a bad depression and it increases the work. The attack of depression comes either directly or through others. I have to remain firm, quiet, unshaken and full of confidence in the Divine.

Yes, when there is an attack it is general and always the blows come on all sides. But the more it strikes the more we must remain calm and undisturbed.

22 October 1935

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Dear Mother,

I have just returned from H's place. Thrice she tried to run away and thrice I chased her and forced her to go to her room. The reason for this seems to be something between her and N.

It is good that you have obtained some result—let us hope that it will be a lasting one. Yes, those who live in their ego live constantly in an ugly drama. If people were a little less selfish things would not be so bad.

Meanwhile we must meet all these adverse circumstances with patience, endurance and equanimity.

All love, trust and blessings to you, my dear child

25 October 1935

*

My dear Mother,

About the present conflict in the Dining Room. As far as I understand it, the reason is this: the workers want to have freedom of action and they feel suffocated under my pressure.

It is not under *your* pressure, it is under the pressure of discipline. These people refuse to be disciplined and that is why there is such a confusion.

Forgive me for the wrongs done by me in the D.R. and the Ashram.

I see no wrongs to be forgiven.

26 October 1935

*

My dear Mother,

J feels "very weak, unable to stand". Those are the very words he told me this evening. Now he has caught a bad cold.

Series One —Dyuman

He wrote also to me telling me his condition. We have stopped the hard work, his energy has relaxed and this is the result.

I too have caught a cold and my nose is running, but I suppose it will be quite all right.

What is this! You must throw that away immediately.

27 October 1935

*

My dear Mother,

If there were even a few in the Ashram whose physical consciousness could readily receive the Divine Force and allow it to be effective in its working, I feel that a greater part of the illnesses in the Ashram would be pushed aside, and there would be sounder health.

May the body consciousness awake, give itself completely to the Divine and allow the Divine Force to work out its Will.

Yes, what you say is quite right. It is of the greatest importance that the body consciousness should open to the Divine; that alone can put an end to all these illnesses rising in the Ashram.

Always with you, my dear child

28 October 1935

*

My dear Mother,

Teach me to rely more and more on You.

In the peace and the inner silence you will more and more become conscious of my constant presence.

30 October 1935

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear Mother,

The cold in my head is bad now; I took green "pastilles" from P and I may ask him for a few drops of oil in the nose. But this is the last time I am thinking of taking medicine. The next time the body should take up the true attitude and depend only upon the Divine Force.

The power that the body must get is to be aware of the illness at the moment of its coming and to reject it before it has time to settle in the body. But once the illness has caught hold of the body, then we must by one means or another help the body to recover.

Always with you

31 October 1935

*

My dear Mother,

This evening M told me: "The moong dal is not clean. Will you get it cleaned by your granary workers?" I thought: "This is too much for me and there will be no end to it!" Also the people asking for Prasad are increasing and M is actively canvassing them!

All the above is purely from the viewpoint of discipline and organisation. But when I see things from a wider angle, I feel totally different: discipline too is progressive; what is good today may not hold good tomorrow. There will be a change in our outer life as a result of our inner progress and the descent of the consciousness from above.

My dear Mother, both these viewpoints are placed before You, the former arising from the egoistic mind, the latter from a wider mind, humble before Your working.

A harmonious combination of the two attitudes, each one

Series One —Dyuman

working at its place and time, is the right thing.

N asks me to tell you that she no more wants to go home in the afternoon and she is ready to do the work that is needed in the kitchen. This is the result of a true progress in her consciousness and it has to be encouraged.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

1 November 1935

*

My dear Mother,

*May I know You more and more as You are, and
not as I think You are.*

Surely, my dear child, you will know me more and more as you become more and more conscious of my presence near you.

4 November 1935

*

My dear Mother,

*G informs me that she gets fever now and then,
and it troubles her much. The only thing that I feel
about all our fevers is this: let us turn ourselves to
our Beloved, the Divine. So long as we have not
turned ourselves fully, we shall have to endure the
consequences patiently.*

Surely all these troubles come from a resistance somewhere, something that opposes the work of transformation.

5 November 1935

*

Beloved of my heart,

*May I get more peace and quietness under all cir-
cumstances and push forward vigilantly and patiently.*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Yes, my dear child, let the peace settle more and more in you, especially in your physical mind and rely more and more on my love and blessings.

12 November 1935

*

My dear Mother,

R tells me that soup from boiled greens will be the best for S's stomach condition. It would be cheap and a tonic also. He wants one cup in the morning and one cup in the afternoon. This means we shall have to prepare it twice a day.

Is it not possible to prepare it once a day and keep it warm in a thermos? As for the "greens", you must be careful about what you buy—some greens, called in French *épinards et oseille*, would not at all fit the purpose as the water in which they are cooked must always be thrown away because it is dangerous, even poisonous.

19 November 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I tried to lift the piano, just to see its weight. I could lift it, but I got a jerk in my joints at the waist, so I quickly left it. I kept a very concentrated quietness and the left-side joint got cured immediately but the right-side joint is still paining.

I am very sorry you lifted the piano in spite of my telling you that 6 strong men were needed for that work. What do you call the "joint"—I hope you have not caught a hernia. If you have still pain in the morning, you must have yourself examined by Dr. M, explaining to him what you have done and what happened.

Series One —Dyuman

Hoping that all will be all right, with love and blessings

26 November 1935

*

My dear Mother,

A need for a complete quietness, even in my exterior consciousness, has arisen now. Inside there is always a force, but to make it more effective in its manifestation a complete quietness in all the being is the immediate need.

Yes, quietness, quietness, a calm and concentrated strength, so quiet that nothing can shake it—this is the indispensable basis for the integral realisation.

With love and blessings always

7 December 1935

*

My dear Mother,

The D. R. lady workers have become such a nuisance: they have begun to spoil the D. R. in many ways. Any number of ladies are now eating 6 to 8 slices of bread. And when they cannot eat them, they take them home, asking for more and more. Then just at the time of work they all fall ill or have some other work, so they cannot do the work in the D. R.

It is all quite true, but there is only one answer: patience and compassion.

9 December 1935

*

My dear Mother,

One conviction has always remained unshaken in me: man or no man, sadhak or no sadhak, the

New Correspondences of the Mother

Divine shall manifest. The Truth exists by itself, the Sun shines because it shines.

My dear Mother, may my exterior nature get deepened by my interior faith; may the intensity which is inside come out and remain in the exterior being.

Yes, the truth consciousness must pervade all the being, dominate all the movements and quiet the restless physical mind. These are the preliminary conditions for the manifestation.

Always with you

13 December 1935

*

My dear Mother,

As a faithful and devoted soldier of Truth, it has always been my one effort to please You. Had each one been making an effort to please You and be faithful to the Truth, the goal would have been nearer to us.

Yes, this is quite true.

In humbleness and simplicity, I bow down to You; may Your work be fulfilled.

Yes, my dear child, I am quite pleased with you and appreciate fully your efforts, aspiration and fidelity.

All love and blessings to you, always

17 December 1935

*

My dear mother,

This short disturbance has given me a good lesson; it has taken away a covering of ignorance and ego and left behind a luminous soul. May it shine more and more luminously.

Series One —Dyuman

Yes, all obscurity must go and leave the being fully opened to the light.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

21 December 1935

*

My dear Mother,

M has put forth a proposal to get the milk in the morning in two trips instead of one. The dairy servant would have to carry the milk can on his head in the dark. The Aroum   servants would have to be made free for the first boiling, which would disturb the kitchen work. Since it is only a matter of a few days, I do not see why so many people should be inconvenienced permanently.

M is much displeased with me because I do not agree with him in his ideas and he is insisting on them.

You are quite right in this affair and it is quite unreasonable to ask for these two trips. But M is very sensitive—he is getting more and more nervous. He says he has lost his peace. He needs affection and kindness. I suppose if you approach him in a friendly way, things will become all right.

23 December 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I am puzzled over the relation between the D. R. workers and me; the whole misunderstanding today burst out after my appearing at the D. R. to help them for lunch.

You need not bother about what they think or say. Do quietly what is to be done and leave the rest to me.

New Correspondences of the Mother

All love and blessings to you my dear child

24 December 1935

*

My dear Mother,

I take the present circumstances at Aroum  as a test of my confidence in You. Under no circumstances must I lose my balance or my concentration on You.

Yes, let us become more and more strong, quiet and patient. All this confusion is bound to come to an end.

Always with you

28 December 1935

*

Dear Mother,

Soybeans. Since You have had a lot of soybeans in Japan tell us how to prepare them or how to take out the soybean milk.

In Japan it was never prepared at home. The various preparations are generally bought ready-made. So I do not know at all how to prepare them.

All love and blessings to you my dear child, and a happy new year

2 January 1936

*

My dear Mother,

D is angry—I have no idea why. But I am thinking of going to her and talking clearly about the work: how much she is to do and where.

Wait a little before going to her—she is not yet in a mood to answer reasonably and she might do some mischief with H.

Series One —Dyuman

It is the same with P—I wish to be clear.

These women are not governed by reason and logic. They decide one thing and the next moment do another.

5 January 1936

*

Dear Mother,

P and D have become more and more unwilling workers. They shirk the work as much as possible.

It is their nature—until the nature changes nothing more can be expected from them.

My dear Mother, may the field of my work be a place for sadhana, may my entire being remain consecrated to You both from within and without.

To arrive at a true, integral and perfect equanimity is certainly a very great sadhana. I am always with you to lead you on the way.

10 January 1936

*

My dear Mother,

It seems that the physical mind has now seen how to stand back during attacks in calmness, quietness and peace, given to the Divine alone. I wish it would put into practice what it has seen.

Yes, when it has understood clearly it is bound to put it into practice.

Always with you my dear child

19 January 1936

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

*My dear Mother,
May I learn to give myself to You.*

It seems to me that you have already learnt. My love, blessings and trust are with you, my dear child.

19 January 1936

*

My dear Mother,

A new force of transformation is descending; we have to keep quiet and allow it to do its work effectively. My dear Mother, I pray for quietness and to remain fixed on the Divine. Adverse forces might try to harass us, but may we remain consecrated to the Truth.

Yes, in the quietness you will feel that our force, help and protection are always with you my dear child.

21 January 1936

*

My dear Mother,

It is the right poise in full equanimity that gives one a clear consciousness. I ask for the right poise and an equanimity full and complete.

Yes, poise and equanimity are the things needed. My help and consciousness are always with you to take you to this conquest.

23 January 1936

*

My dear Mother,

In the beginning of August 1933 the number of inmates was 120. Since then the number has remained between 135 and 150. But the work we used to do in

Series One —Dyuman

those days we are not doing now. We are not willing to work, so we are obliged to have more and more workers. We did not grow within, which brings about the clashes we have with each other. If more inmates had worked in peace and harmony, we would have been much nearer to the goal.

It is because the forces are working in the subconscious which is, in its nature, full of unwillingness and laziness. We have now to wait patiently until it gets transformed.

24 January 1936

*

My dear Mother,

I wish with all my heart to be docile, calm and quiet and to serve You in all humility and in full harmony with all. I have always left myself to Your guidance.

This is my humble prayer to You: May Your wish be fulfilled; may the Divine Light manifest and the darkness and ignorance vanish.

My dear child, I know you and your aspiration well, and I trust you and appreciate your consecration.

My love and blessings are always with you.

24 January 1936

*

My dear Mother,

E has sent this chit to the D. R.: "Henceforth no tiffin box for me please." Tomorrow I shall see him after seeing You, if required.

Yes, he has just written to me that for so many years he has been eating that he is tired of it and will eat no more! I have

New Correspondences of the Mother

written to him that I have said to send him his food as usual and I expect him to take it. It might indeed be better if you go to see him.

Affectionately

25 January 1936

*

My dear Mother,

In the market I generally walk on the footpath. Several times I have been able to avoid accidents. Our negligence, hurry and carelessness always bring troubles—too much for You. May we learn to be quiet, careful and on guard always.

Yes, we must never give a chance to the adverse forces to do their mischief—they take advantage of the slightest unconsciousness.

Always with you, my dear child

27 January 1936

*

My dear Mother,

The work of preparing luchis did not trouble me. What troubled me most was to see people who hardly ate anything else, finish all the luchis or, in order to take them home, took slices of bread. That night we decided never to give so much to eat at one time, but to give special dishes as side dishes. Still I do not understand how so many people got sick. For the first time I feel the seriousness of the responsibility of a hundred and fifty stomachs!

If they behaved normally without vital upsettings and greeds their health would be all right.

My dear Mother, completely given to You with a prayer: Peace, peace, peace in the Ashram, peace in each and every heart.

Series One —Dyuman

Yes, peace is indeed a very much needed thing and without peace nothing can be achieved.

Always with you, my dear child

31 January 1936

*

My dear Mother,

When I stand up for the work, not caring for personal things, the result is that everyone finds me "severe, strict, unbearable, iron-fisted, hard as a rock". The present condition at work is becoming more and more of an impasse. In desperation I sometimes speak out: "Either drive me out or these things must change."

People will always talk like that when there is a discipline to be maintained. You ought not to mind it as you have my love and trust.

1 February 1936

*

My dear Mother,

How can I be more and more useful to You? Grant me a complete consecration, illumine my entire consciousness, purify it so that it may be an instrument worthy of Your Love.

All depends on the progress of the consciousness and that is coming steadily.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

3 February 1936

*

Dear Mother,

This morning there were two accidents in Aroum , almost on the same spot, with an interval of only

New Correspondences of the Mother

a few minutes. The servant Krishna fell down and sprained his wrist. Then K fell down and sprained her ankle. At the same place, a year back, G fell down and got a sprain.

Yes, it is a kind of thing that happens sometimes. A suggestion settles somewhere and goes on trying to realise itself.

4 February 1936

*

Dear Mother,

Today Your flask of soup came back full. Perhaps You missed it or You may have been too busy. I drank it all with Your trust.

No, I did not miss it but did not feel like taking soup at that time and along with the flask I sent a very affectionate thought and the wish that you would take it all.

6 February 1936

*

My dear Mother,

When I saw H's hair quite dry today, I asked her: "Have you no oil?" She replied: "No." I know that H has nothing to keep her head cool; she washes it daily since the last few days, and this is not good for the hair.

I was just preparing some hair lotion to give her. But you must tell her that I had decided to give her hair lotion before you spoke of it.

7 February 1936

*

My dear Mother,

Whatever may be the causes of M's anger, let him remain calm, quiet, fully controlled and self-restrained;

Series One —Dyuman

let him not burst out.

Surely it ought to be like that and I told him so when he came to see me. I told him that the first thing is to remain quiet, composed, peaceful—he simply answered that it was impossible for him—and I had nothing else to say.

With all my heart I wish for the growth of the movement that has taken place in me: to remain quiet under any circumstances, to turn to You and call Your Peace.

Yes, let this movement grow in you and a great strength will grow also to face all difficulties.

Always with you, my dear child

10 February 1936

*

My dear Mother,

Today I was very sorry, so sorry that I could not tell You during the day about the misbehaviour of the D. R. workers. One thought was in my mind: "I have failed miserably in serving the Mother, I am unfit and useless for the D. R."

Whatever it may be, my dear Mother, I live in Your trust, which is my constant companion even in deep sorrow.

I do not see why you should be sorry because the people of the D. R. misbehave. You cannot be responsible for their character. And if they choose not to change their ways and refuse to progress, it is surely not your fault. So you must not listen to the wrong suggestions speaking of failure and unfitness, and remember always that I am quite satisfied with you, your progress and your work.

14 February 1936

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear Mother,

Darshan is coming, but I am having a strong reaction against eating and preparing food. Today the preparing of luchis was mere play and not much work, but still I am tired of eating.

Tired of eating? When you have so many people to feed! It is not the time for this kind of reaction. I was glad to see that all these outsiders will have a good impression of our cooking.

Many Aroum  workers have the impression that I tell H everything. It is false.

What do you care about the impressions they have? Let them think whatever they like, it does not matter.

They accuse me of knowing all the Ashram gossip and passing it on to her. In fact I know nothing of all this.

What does it matter!!

I wish with all my heart for harmony, peace and a clear understanding with the kitchen workers.

This peace and harmony and clear understanding can be possible only when you will remain perfectly untouched by false accusations and strongly peaceful yourself in front of them.

18 February 1936

*

My dear Mother,

L has sent a note to me: "I cannot continue to help M in washing plantains—I am very weak and feel very tired."

Yes. Once more she has gone wrong—and by diminishing her work she will become weaker and weaker. It is the work done

Series One —Dyuman

heartily that was keeping up her health.

19 February 1936

*

My dear Mother,

M lost his temper on the 20th and 21st over nothing; at each step he shows that he wants to rule and govern.

Did you hear him yourself? Were you there when he lost his temper? He is quite capable of doing it, but as a rule never believe the reports of anybody.

22 February 1936

*

My dear Mother,

D speaks of having her work back—so I understand from her chit.

Why that particular work and not any work that is to be done? If people could stop speaking of the work as their work it would put an end to a lot of trouble.

26 February 1936

*

My dear Mother,

This afternoon I felt a conspiracy in the atmosphere formed by hostile forces to trouble me through the Aroum  workers and send me away from here. But, dear Mother, I know that nothing can send me away, for I am in Your hands.

I know that nothing can take you away from here—but the best is to attach no importance whatever to these suggestions and also to the bad will of the workers. If you remain perfectly calm and quiet, these attacks will lose all their strength.

New Correspondences of the Mother

With love and blessings

27 February 1936

*

My dear Mother,

My mind has become very active. It catches all sorts of nasty suggestions, two of which are prominent: "Relieve me from Aroumé" and "Can't You manage to send me away from here?"

What is this nonsense. Surely you will not listen to that!

I do not think that any part of my being will ever accept them, and yet I pray for Your help and protection.

Yes, the help and protection are always with you—but you must quiet your mind or get out of it, look at it from above and control all these absurd suggestions.

Always with you my dear child

2 March 1936

*

My dear Mother,

Whatever the suggestions may be, I know that they are all hostile influences trying to disturb the sadhana. The work at Aroumé needs a very clear mind and vital, free from all likes and dislikes.

When the mind is struck by such adverse suggestions, you must not get nervous or fear but consider them as mere nonsense and push them away as you would push away a fly or a mosquito and then remain very quiet until the attack is over.

All love and blessings to you my dear child

2 March 1936

*

Series One —Dyuman

My dear Mother,

I am getting a negative reaction from the workers about the special dish they have to prepare on Wednesdays. After each cooking of this kind, I find unhappiness, disharmony and bitterness among the workers.

Perhaps it gives them more work and they dislike it. It can be stopped if it is a source of difficulties.

When will a largeness and vastness come into the mind and heart? When will a good feeling come and not the feeling of a scorpion bite?

This can come only when the consciousness of the workers will shift from the mental-vital to the psychic.

5 March 1936

*

My dear Mother,

How is it that P has learnt to utter such ugly things about You? Why such a grudge! Where is the reason for dissatisfaction? She has freedom in work, freedom to move about where she likes. In the kitchen she was required to be exact and regular—but now!

The more a mind is ignorant, the more easily it judges everything it does not know or is incapable of understanding.

12 March 1936

*

My dear Mother,

Here is a letter from Y. As far as I know, he is not the only one who has contempt for the Ashram food—there are a good many. What Yogic and non-Yogic food is, is a mystery to me.

New Correspondences of the Mother

The non-Yogic food is the food very rich or very spiced and, of course, all animal food—but this is just the kind of food we are *not* eating.

14 March 1936

*

My dear Mother,

Whenever I have been stiff, harsh, stubborn or rough, it was all ego. And I see before me many people, both men and women, hurt by that ego. I ask Your Grace for pardon. May my consciousness grow and become a part of Your Consciousness.

Yes, my dear child, your aspiration is sure to get fulfilled and your consciousness to unite with the Divine Consciousness.

Always with you

16 March 1936

*

My dear Mother,

It is a pity that G refused to accept help from P, who offered her help purely out of goodwill. I found G selfish in refusing the offer.

Yes, P had offered to prove her goodwill. But G wants to be obeyed and fears that P will refuse to obey her. This is the substance of her yesterday's letter.

Now G changed her mind and she says that they will work together.

If she tries in a true spirit of conciliation it will be good.

My dear Mother, people are unsatisfied with the food. Was it not good?

It was very good.

Series One —Dyuman

Were there not a variety of dishes? Was the food not clean and well cooked?

All was all right.

Then why were people unsatisfied?

Because it is almost a principle with most of them to be unsatisfied.

According to them we are not spending enough for food and because of economy we are not giving the proper food, etc., etc. You have read Y's note to you—he wrote a much more violent letter to us, and so many of these letters we have received! I felt quite disgusted with it. And what I meant is that I do not want the kitchen workers to take any extra trouble for such ungrateful people.

I pray to you with a quiet force of aspiration for a complete victory over these lower vital and physical forces of desire etc.

Yes, all these lower movements have to be conquered if ever anything divine is to be established upon earth.

All trust, love and blessings to you, my dear child and faithful worker

18 March 1936

*

My dear Mother,

What shall become of the soup? People are always complaining about it and about the vegetable we use for dinner after straining the soup. It is cow's fodder for them. Shall we stop it?

No, this soup is very good and wholesome. It is better to continue.

I have received the nickname "miser" from those

New Correspondences of the Mother

nearest to me. My one consolation has always been Your trust. And whenever I have been called this name, I have gone within me and found that my being is sincere and stands purely for You.

Yes, it is true and you are not at all a miser. Simply you are not wasteful—people cannot tolerate that; they want to waste and waste and waste always (naturally so long as it is not *their own money* that is concerned).

19 March 1936

*

My dear Mother,

Many days back I gave S cumin seeds to clean, but she returned them immediately without cleaning them. I saw sand and other foreign matter in them and sent them back to her. The next day she told me: "The Mother has asked me not to clean the cumin much; it is to be thrown away." I kept quiet for a time and then said: "Do as the Mother has said."

She sent me the cumin a few days back through N, saying that it was too difficult to clean, that she could not do it. I answered through N that she had to take a few grains at a time and spread them and thus it became easy. I showed N what I meant by doing it before him. I never spoke of not cleaning much and still less of throwing anything away. Now what N has exactly told her, I don't know.

30 March 1936

*

Dear Mother,

I told D: "Mother is putting you in Soubou House. Now, no more of this refusal to go—it is all too much." He could not take it rightly and began to shout. But in the afternoon, I found him a little cooler.

Series One —Dyuman

Yes, they do not seem to realise at all how *completely unyogic* is their attitude.

8 April 1936

*

My dear Mother,

What a pity, some people have begun to call the Ashram food “the night soil of the dogs”. It is a wonder to me how such expressions come out. I may be managing badly, H may be cooking badly—but we should have some common sense and some deep regard for You in our consciousness which could never allow such ungrateful expressions to come out.

You are not managing badly and H is cooking quite well. But some people are wonderfully ungrateful.

Always with you, helping, supporting and trusting you

13 April 1936

*

My dear Mother,

Let me tell You very honestly, wherever A has worked he has been treated kindly; nobody has treated him as kindly as You have, and yet he has proved himself ungrateful to everybody. If he finds happiness elsewhere, he can go; but I think he will not.

Each one carries his capacity of happiness in himself, but to tell the truth, I am convinced that those who cannot be happy here can be happy nowhere.

Personally, I was happy nowhere before, it is only here that I am happy. Since 1924 not a single doubt has passed in me. My Mother is the supreme Truth—this remains unchallenged.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Yes, my dear child, you are mine and I am always with you, present near you and in you.

14 April 1936

*

My dear Mother,

How is it that my co-workers think so badly of me that I am deprived of even an ordinary human courtesy! Things are getting worse. Perhaps there would be a lighter air if I were not there.

Do not take these things so much to heart. If you give them no importance they will have none—and if a man truly misbehaves it is he who must feel for it, not you.

My dear Mother, completely given to You.

Let this consecration be for you the means of a complete liberation. My help and protection are always with you on the way—my dear child.

22 April 1936

*

My dear Mother,

H is going through a bad disturbance, but the cause is not known; she does not want to speak. May her normal consciousness come again to the front, the consciousness that feels the loving Presence of her dear Mama.

Yes, surely it is not good when there are already so many difficulties, to open one's door also to disturbance. At the time of the battle the soldiers are expected to pick up all their courage and endurance.

Always with you, my dear child

28 April 1936

*

Series One —Dyuman

My dear Mother,

I understand that we have come here and are allowed to stay here with the clear understanding that we accept Your word, Your guidance and follow You in every way. This is the simple beginning of Yoga.

My dear child, I wish that many would think and feel like you —it would make things so much easier!

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

29 April 1936

*

My dear Mother,

My Yoga means a complete union with You and I know not any Yoga except that.

Yes, my dear child, you are mine completely and I am always with you, around you, in you.

29 April 1936

*

My dear Mother,

Bushy the cat has quietly brought her kittens into my room and put them under my table, just near my feet. I wish she would go to her room.

You can try to remove them, but generally cats are very obstinate.

1 May 1936

*

My dear Mother,

Yesterday great sorrow and sadness rushed upon me with the idea that no one can work with me and people have to leave the Ashram because of me.

New Correspondences of the Mother

It is surely not because of you that some people are obliged to leave the Ashram. It is because of their own defects.

But the mood passed very soon, leaving an aspiration to depend more upon the Divine than upon anybody or anything else.

Yes, this is the true attitude.

2 May 1936

*

My dear Mother,

G said to me in a cutting tone: "Who sweeps the back of the ladies room in the D. R.? It is so dirty —since the last four days no one has swept there." I kept quiet; but when I went to check I saw that it was as clean as it could be and it is swept every day.

Did you tell her: "I went and saw and it is quite clean. Why do you say that it is dirty? Remember what Mother has said: first sincerity and truthfulness."

5 May 1936

*

My dear Mother,

How many bottles of chloride of lime solution will be needed for Aroum  daily? Will You give me an estimate so that I can ask for it accordingly?

It seems to me that one bottle of solution per day ought to be sufficient. It is very corrosive and I do not think it is good to use it in too big a quantity.

7 May 1936

*

My dear Mother,

The Ashram has very few loyal and faithful

Series One —Dyuman

workers devoted to You, workers to whom You are the sole and unique reality. Yet with a full confidence in the Divine I go on. The Divine knows how to manage affairs better than any human intellect. The only thing one has to do is to open oneself to the Divine.

Yes, my dear child, it is quite sure that everything will be arranged for the best finally.

All love, trust and blessings to you, my dear child

8 May 1936

*

My dear Mother,

M has stopped working in the kitchen and B is trying to do the same. H, N and S are the only ones left to work there. I pray for peace, peace, peace.

Well! The fewer the number the greater the chance of peace, I suppose.

9 May 1936

*

My dear Mother,

May each successive year in the Ashram be a year of greater and deeper consecration to You.

Yes, it will bring you closer and closer to me in the true and deep relation.

Always with you, my dear child

11 May 1936

*

My dear Mother,

Today is the day when You first saw me and allowed me to stay in the Ashram as a permanent sadhak. You gave me a new life. In utter gratefulness and devotion I take refuge in You, my Divine Mother.

New Correspondences of the Mother

May the spirit of submission, surrender, faith and sincerity grow in me more and more.

These years have brought upon you a wonderful change and yet still a greater change will come until you have reached a perfection of consciousness and union.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

12 May 1936

*

My dear Mother,

When disturbances or bad suggestions come, my being clearly speaks to them and says: "If I submit myself to you, you gain strength and enter into the atmosphere. Go away, you have no place here." And they do go away. By calling the Divine Force and remaining completely quiet and undisturbed, the bad force is sure to go away defeated.

Yes, this is just the right attitude that is sure to bring the victory.

My dear child, I am always with you and my strength is constantly in you.

13 May 1936

*

My dear Mother,

K is now quite unable to eat and feels sick. Is her nausea not due to the weakness that must have come by her not eating for so long?

Certainly it is that and purely nervous, and the less she eats the more she will be unable to eat.

She says: "Look here, I have full strength in spite of not eating." This I do not believe. The attitude in her letter to You does not seem to be quite good. If she

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does not want to eat in the D. R. she can eat at home. But it would be good if she would take at least one spoonful of food.

Yes, her attitude in this is not helpful—she has not sufficient trust to overcome her own fixed idea and she does not open to the Force that would give her the capacity of eating and overcoming this attack.

H too boasts of her strength in spite of not eating. To me it looks all false.

You are quite right.

She could wreck her body if this condition gets prolonged, and there would be complete chaos in the work.

Yes, what you say is quite true—but the mischief is that both H and K do not accept at all what is told to them, on this subject at least.

May the physical consciousness open more and more to the Divine Light and come under its direct influence.

Yes, it is the only solution.

My love and blessings are always with you.

20 May 1936

*

My dear Mother,

These attacks on the body are travelling from one person to another. No, it must not be; let us force it out of the atmosphere. In the Kitchen H and R are sick; in the Granary it is K and P; in the Canal House D. What does this attack mean? Does it intend to wreck the whole organisation? No, it cannot be, my dear Mother. In all confidence I open myself to the Divine Force and invoke it. It will do its work.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Yes, the more the attacks are violent, the more we must have a strong, quiet and unshakeable faith.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

25 May 1936

*

My dear Mother,

There is an adverse force which moves around in the Ashram and now it is coming out on the material plane. This force has to be conquered or thrown out, and the best way to deal with it is an absolute sincerity and an unshakeable adherence to the Divine.

Personally, I feel that the adverse force should be dealt with in such a way that P may get freed from its clutches. In the Granary there have never been white ants before. The wheat bags have remained intact for six to eight months. But since P has picked up this negative mood, plenty of white ants have come under the planks.

As you say, it is the adverse force itself that must be conquered and destroyed, otherwise it will always find people to manifest it.

28 May 1936

*

My dear Mother,

I have learned that M is arriving on the fourth or fifth of June.

Yes, he is coming back—but if you do not mind, I like much better that you should keep the work of sweeping the terrace. I like the feeling of having you there early morning. He can clean the shutters of the meditation hall.

Always with you, my dear child

1 June 1936

*

Series One —Dyuman

My dear Mother,

H wrote You a letter asking if she could help in the Granary when needed, till a good and trustworthy worker is found.

We have indeed received a letter from H—but we do not think it is wise to mix works like that. Her responsibility is in the kitchen and must remain there alone. Otherwise a big strain could be created in her and her health would suffer much.

The number of persons not doing Ashram work is increasing and increasing. Perhaps they think it is a good sign of their sadhana.

The progress in sadhana comes from the rectification of the inner and outer attitude, not from the nature of the work one does.

2 June 1936

*

My dear Mother,

M told me that when P was working upstairs, he used to sit and meditate near the door opening to the glazed-tiled terrace when Sri Aurobindo was reading letters to You. This seems to me a very objectionable thing. Perhaps that is why You were not feeling well.

Exactly so. He says he heard but was *not listening*—but of this I am not at all so sure.

4 June 1936

*

My dear Mother,

My conviction is that with one K and one H we can very easily feed the entire Ashram. If both join together, the Granary, Kitchen and Canal House will be child's play for them. And above that, they will

New Correspondences of the Mother

move about as if they have no work at all and give you pieces of embroidery as they are doing now.

Let them come definitively out of all mental, vital and physical troubles and then it will be possible.

5 June 1936

*

My dear Mother,

Last night M told me about A: "He feels that his body is completely wrecked and that it will not recover. If he takes up any work, it will immediately be broken again."

Nobody asks him to take up work—and the doctor has forbidden him to work. So...

To me it seems a pity that he does not have confidence in the Divine Grace.

Ninety-nine per cent of his illness is pure imagination.

6 June 1936

*

My dear Mother,

H got burnt in two places today, although blisters did not form. Last year she had violent attacks on the vital; now they are coming on the physical. She seemed much discouraged today, but my feeling is that there is a quiet and steady opening of her physical consciousness to the Divine. She must rely on You completely and quietly go on.

Yes, if she keeps quiet inside and calm outside all these attacks will have to stop.

10 June 1936

*

Series One —Dyuman

My dear Mother,

May we not trouble You, may we not keep You engaged over a crumb of bread, a rag of cloth, a pen nib or a little broom. May the whole field get cleared of the devil and we go forward towards a perfect union with our dear Mother.

Yes, what you say is quite true and it will be indeed a great thing when this condition will be established in the Ashram.

All love and blessings to you my dear child

10 June 1936

*

My dear Mother,

In spite of P's note saying that she would not go for work, she did go. But there was all the anger possible against me.

The poor girl is suffering very much from big boils—this is the cause of the bad temper.

14 June 1936

*

My dear Mother,

Our sadhana is passing through a stage when unshakeable steadfastness is necessary. May we remain calm and quiet in this period and cross over the obstacles of the dark and ignorant physical nature.

Indeed it is only the calm and luminous peace of a higher consciousness that can conquer these difficulties.

15 June 1936

*

My dear Mother,

It is not possible for me to leave the work or to

New Correspondences of the Mother

leave You. This much I know, that even in a disturbed condition I shall serve You up to the last.

I am quite convinced of that, and I have full trust also in your capacity for Yoga.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

16 June 1936

*

My dear Mother,

H is full of sorrow and despondency. But I have noticed that sweetness of the heart and kindness have not left her.

It is a pity she has stopped writing—I think it was helping her to keep open to the force and the influence.

17 June 1936

*

My dear Mother,

I feel that in the last few days I have been crossing the difficulty that Sri Aurobindo found in me. But there is a new will, a greater self-giving to the Divine and a firm faith.

Yes, my dear child, from the point of view of your spiritual progress the past year has been a very good one and I expect the beginning year to be still better. Indeed the Light has to come down in the lower nature, in the subconscious and bring there the knowledge and the right attitude—and it is bound to come.

Always with you, my dear child

17 June 1936

*

My dear Mother,

With all my heart I wish for peace, happiness and

Series One —Dyuman

harmony in the Ashram. This is my humble prayer on the eve of my birthday: let jealousy, disharmony and anger pass away and peace be established in every heart.

Let this year bring you the power of being constantly aware of my Presence for, indeed, I am always with you, in all trust and affection.

18 June 1936

*

My dear Mother,

The coming year is a year of a great promise—a promise for victory. In solemn faith and courage, peace and quietness I enter the year. Victory to Thee, my dear Mother.

Indeed, let this year that begins bring for you a perfect peace and an unshakeable equanimity. Our love and blessings are and will always be with you, my dear child.

18 June 1936

*

My dear Mother,

I can see in my being the resistance of some forces of the subconscious. But there is nothing to fear; knowledge is also there, coming to check them and achieve the victory.

Yes, the Light is slowly but surely coming down in the subconscious.

Always with you my dear child, closer and closer

19 June 1936

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear Mother,

*Let nothing come in my way to You. Let nothing
stop my progress towards You.*

Nothing can stop your progress except your own will—and this cannot happen.

21 June 1936

*

My dear Mother,

*H's cold has worsened and she had a high fever;
she took no food today. She is obstinate in not writing
to You.*

I am very sorry for the cold, very sorry that she did not eat and also very sorry that she refuses to write.

21 June 1936

*

My dear Mother,

*May H turn herself fully towards You and allow
the Force to act on her. May her thinking mind be
quiet.*

The Divine Grace is always with her, but she must open to it and learn to receive it fully.

She has not written tonight, and I am sorry for it. I so hope that she will get all right soon.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child.

It seems that she has written. I had not seen her letter.

24 June 1936

*

My dear Mother,

Somebody has taken my umbrella from Aroumé

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and left an old one in its place. A has put a notice on the board, but no news as yet.

Now we have the name of the owner put on the umbrella so that such a thing cannot happen (B is in charge of that). If your umbrella does not come back, you will ask for a new one.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child.

29 June 1936

*

My dear Mother,

From my very boyhood, my attitude has been one of disgust towards life and its things. But now I accept all life and whatever things come from You.

Yes, I am in the things also and that is why they must be treated with care.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

2 July 1936

*

My dear Mother,

The cause of the outburst between M and L was nothing of importance. If we do not rise above personal feelings and stand for the work, how is the work to be done!

It is the control over oneself that is the first thing needed, and especially the control over one's tongue! If people could learn to keep silent how many troubles would be avoided!

3 July 1936

*

My dear Mother,

I do not understand the troubles in the D.R.—there are angry outbursts for nothing.

New Correspondences of the Mother

The spirit of quarrels is still in the Aroum  atmosphere. Unless the workers make an effort to throw it away, it will always attack them and create some mischief or other.

10 July 1936

*

My dear Mother,

There are plenty of thoughts suggesting my failure both as a sadhak and as a worker and of my being unfit and unworthy.

You know that these thoughts are quite wrong and come from a hostile force. All thoughts of that kind must be rigorously driven away, for to receive them is an unfaithfulness towards the Divine.

The child does not worry about his growth, he simply... grows.

Love and blessings to my dear child

15 July 1936

*

My dear Mother,

N asks me if K can occasionally roast brinjals in the kitchen after the cooking is over.

If it brings no *inconvenience at all*, it can be done, but if it is to create any inconvenience or extra work I do not want it.

15 July 1936

*

My dear Mother,

I have this hope for the descent of the Light into the lower nature and into the subconscious on the 15th of August.

Yes, my dear child, the Light will descend sooner or later and it is bound to enlighten the subconscious. My force, love and

Series One —Dyuman

blessings are always with you—helping you to conquer.

16 July 1936

*

My dear Mother,

Until now it has never happened that I have lost money. But the money is stolen; even before I came here to my room it had been stolen. It looks to me like somebody is making mischief.

It is unconscious movements from the subconscious which allow this mischief to happen. But when these movements come to the surface they can be enlightened and then the mischief has no more hold.

Always with you

19 July 1936

*

My dear Mother,

I saw M delivering a long speech to L and it did not look pleasant. L told me afterwards that it was about the Ashram lemons—they are small in size and without juice, etc.

I suppose there is only to pay no attention to his speech. The best thing is not to answer, not to discuss and not even to listen!...

These are the days for peace; I pray for peace and some tolerance.

When the heart and the mind are at peace the rest naturally follows.

26 July 1936

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear Mother,

What is the matter with N? He looks all right, he moves about and yet he is unable to go for his food!

As far as I know it is a dangerous illness: laziness.

And G also.

G is truly unwell with fever, etc....

30 July 1936

*

My dear Mother,

C's friend is coming tomorrow evening. Perhaps he could help us work in the Dining Room for these busy days before Darshan.

I know nothing about him; we shall see. But it seems difficult to bombard him with work as soon as he arrives, unless he asks for it himself.

My dear child, my force and help are with you, I am always present near you and in you, so that you may pass through these busy days with a quiet and concentrated strength.

4 August 1936

*

My dear Mother,

I asked the Bangalore vegetable vendor to get more cabbage on the 12th, but he got it this week by mistake. So we will serve vegetables for 4 days: Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Monday.

Will it keep up to Monday? The cabbages get rotten very easily. It seems to me that it would be safer to make the dishes of Thursday, Friday and Saturday bigger and to use them all within these 3 days.

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Again, how shall we cook them—in curry or make salad?

I think the visitors will like curry better than salad.

My dear Mother, I hope that we shall pass these busy days quietly. No doubt attacks will come to me, yet I have eternal hope.

To be calm and quiet is the first necessity, and for that do not worry too much about details during these days. I am sure each one will do his best and more can be asked from nobody. Evidently this "best" must progress and become better but that takes time and cannot be expected at once.

Always with you, my dear child

5 August 1936

*

My dear Mother,

I spoke to B about work and he will give an answer tomorrow. So he told me.

He wrote to me saying that he was accustomed to do very light work and to be at the head, but, of course if I order him... etc.... We are writing to him that he need not join the work at all.

11 August 1936

*

My dear Mother,

S is not drinking her milk but preparing curds from it. She may prepare it for You, but I think she should not do so for N and me. If things go on like this, we shall have a second edition of M for cooking.

I think she is too unsteady to go on cooking for a long time. Her health is not quite good and she is feeling much troubled

New Correspondences of the Mother

about it. That is why I am lenient to her little fancies.

6 September 1936

*

My dear Mother,

This noon food for 69 persons was sent to their rooms.

I have nothing to say, if you want to do it—but I find that it is those who are doing nothing all day who ought to go for their food in Aroumé.

20 September 1936

*

My dear Mother,

S is under nobody's medical treatment, it seems, yet he is able to walk in the hot sun to the other end of town to search for manure. Then what is the need of giving him food at home?

Yes, he must come to Aroumé to eat or take his tiffin-box away. All those who are not ill or very busy (with some exceptions, of course, like A, D, R, etc.) ought to eat in the D.R. or to come to fetch their tiffin-box themselves.

21 September 1936

*

My dear Mother,

In regard to the need for coolies, You told me that if I informed C a few days in advance, he could give me the Building Service people required. But what if I suddenly need somebody for only a few minutes?

It is more difficult for the B. S. to give a coolie for a very short time than for half a day. The work of each workman is arranged on the previous evening and told to him before he goes.

Series One —Dyuman

It creates always a confusion to change that afterwards. Moreover just now a new building is started and it occupies almost all of the workmen.

24 September 1936

*

My dear Mother,

*I am very badly constipated since a few days.
And that does not allow me to take my food properly.*

You ought to take an enema, but to eat less because of constipation does not help, on the contrary.

All love and blessings to you my dear child

25 September 1936

*

My dear Mother,

I wish the day would come when You can use me as an instrument in worlds other than this material world. You go into other worlds, worlds of the subconscious, and fight there and conquer and spread the kingdom of light. Is it not possible for us to be Your soldiers even in those dark lands?

There is nothing impossible in the realisation of what you are asking for—a patient, strong, steady and absolutely sincere aspiration can conquer all obstacles—but it takes time.

Always with you

3 October 1936

*

My dear Mother,

I shall try my utmost to change myself. I have understood the hints that Sri Aurobindo gave in his answer to H. I give myself to You for a change in consciousness.

New Correspondences of the Mother

The change is certain; it is only a matter of steady patience and I am always with you to help you and protect you on the way.

6 October 1936

*

My dear Mother,

There is a rivalry between A and S—each claims to be the head of the Granary. One comes and tells me something and the other comes and tells me something else. How to pull on, dear Mother?

You might remind them that both Yoga and work suffer by such miserable little currents.

10 October 1936

*

My dear Mother,

Dr. B will talk with H about her treatment tonight; there is some fear in her mind. The same fear was in K. All these people may be talking and gossiping on the subject and supporting the fear in one another. This whole recent wave of illness in the Ashram is perhaps due to this fear and nothing more.

You are quite right. It is all due to fear and nothing else. It is a wave of fear and falsehood that has passed over the Ashram and each one is answering according to his or her nature. Very few are those who can stand firm on the rock of their faith and trust in the Divine and reject the wave altogether.

11 October 1936

*

My dear Mother,

It is my humble confession that a wave of fear

Series One —Dyuman

and falsehood attacked me. This wave wanted me to be very angry with H. But to all the suggestions and attacks of the hostile forces, I had one answer: "It is impossible; I know all of you very well. How can I be faithless to the love of my dear Mother?" And in gratitude my heart took shelter more and more in Your Love.

I am indeed very happy to hear that you have passed successfully through the experience. Your answer to the attack was the right one. You have only to keep up this attitude and after several attempts the attacks are bound to stop.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

12 October 1936

*

My dear Mother,

C wrote me a letter. She wants to come here and is thinking of using a trick. She will agree to marriage on one condition: that her family allows her to come to Pondicherry before the wedding; then she will not return to Gujarat. She puts this trick idea before You and asks for Your advice.

I do not approve of tricks like that—they can only bring trouble.

13 October 1936

*

My dear Mother,

L goes to Aroum  and wipes vessels in the morning. She told me: "I shall not be able to go in the evening because my body is not well." The need for her was in the evening, but that she has now refused. Here is one more person whom we are "making ill by

New Correspondences of the Mother

heavy work". Those are her words; that is why I have accepted her terms. I know that after some time she will ask for work.

Do not give it.

Then I shall send her to You.

Yes, they seem to be all like that. They ask for work, insist on having it and if anything goes wrong with their body they accuse us of killing them with work!

21 October 1936

*

My dear Mother,

It would help if You could see H and talk with her and let her say freely her things about the kitchen and the cooking. Then You can directly answer her and the horizon will get cleared. It is now three months that she has been struggling over this and that.

My dear child,

I have seen H; she was very nice and spoke quite frankly. She told me that she was not feeling happy but did not put any blame upon you for it; she accused only the weakness and restlessness of her mind. She expressed only one wish for the work, that you should not leave the decisions to her. She wants you to give her exactly what is needed and to tell her plainly what is to be done. She told me repeatedly that she would feel very much relieved if you did that. It seems that you used to do that before and it is only recently that you have changed your ways. I saw clearly that she feels too weak to have more responsibility than that of carrying out your instructions, and it seems to me that she can be given satisfaction on that point.

She did not mention the fact of your telling me that she had finished her work and consequently I saw no necessity to

Series One—Dyuman

show her your books. It seems to me that very easily everything can be all right.

28 October 1936

*

My dear Mother,

When You ask me about something, how should I answer You? I was not pleased with my answer today. Not only today but almost always I feel a shortcoming.

The best thing to do is to give me the correct, precise and complete information about the matter. It is what I am asking from you, to have a ground for my decision.

Love and blessings to my dear child

30 October 1936

*

My dear Mother,

What shall I say about M's disturbance today in the D. R.? The reports differ and I wait for a little more clarity. In any case a life of peace and harmony is also worth living, and anger thrown out falls back upon the thrower and clouds his soul.

I know nothing more silly than this habit of always quarrelling—it is miles away from Yoga.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

5 November 1936

*

My dear Mother,

This evening's meditation has resulted in a great renunciation of the past. My soul has gone to the future and given itself to You to be a perfect instrument in

New Correspondences of the Mother

Your hands for the new creation that You are bringing down upon the earth.

Yes, it is the future realisation that counts.

My being gives itself to You in all devotion and faithfulness.

And the gift is received with my heart's best affection.

Always with you, my dear child

7 November 1936

*

My dear Mother,

A weak point is opening in me: I am becoming over-sensitive to the slightest thing and my first reaction is: "Send me away, relieve me from this work." My faithfulness to You does not in the least tolerate this weakness, and yet I cannot deny its presence. Some months back You told me: "You have not taken full refuge in me; there is something which is not yet worked out." This is true, and this is what brings up all the trouble from the subconscious.

My very dear child,

It is a very great progress that you have become conscious of this weak point in you—for now it will be relatively easy to overcome it.

The first step is not to identify yourself with it—to consider it as some wrong influence from outside, something to be pushed away. And if in spite of that it touches you, call me, call me ceaselessly until you are cured. At the same time it will give strength to the weak point and you will see that little by little it will become strong.

Always with you, certain of the victory

11 November 1936

*

Series One —Dyuman

My dear Mother,

I wish to become humble, very humble and sincere.

Yes, my dear child, You will have this great boon of humility and sincerity.

All love and blessings to you

14 November 1936

*

My dear Mother,

My horoscope says that I shall be friendly towards nobody; even my friends will abuse me and give me up. But this prediction will prove wrong; there will be peace in my heart, sweetness in my speech, gentleness and harmony in every expression. My entire being will live in the Divine, for the Divine and by the Divine.

Surely, by Yoga the horoscope can be mastered—we are no more bound to it—and we can change our nature as well.

Surely, you are my child and will become so more and more perfectly.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

19 November 1936

*

My dear Mother,

A very humble confession. Since 1911 I have denied the sex-instinct in me, refused to accept it. There was a very strong will in me which simply controlled it, crushed it, pushed it out from the surface consciousness. Yet for all the negation it was there, acting in some form or other.

My dear Mother, my being now accepts its past silliness and in all humbleness it opens itself to You.

New Correspondences of the Mother

*May this blot be removed and my entire being be
Yours.*

I am very glad that you have found it out. This is a very great step towards the cure.

Always with you, in the effort and the success

2 December 1936

*

My dear Mother,

Truly I am a pretender and a hypocrite. I showed myself to be what I was not and brought a good many troubles to You by my behaviour, especially because I have to work mainly with ladies. Would the solution be to remove myself from the field of work?

No solution at all. It is not you that you must remove but the difficulty. The weakness must be overcome and my force will be with you and do what is necessary to remove altogether the obstacle, if you let it do so.

My entire being has become grateful today. I was put to a real and true test. If I were not placed in such close contact with the ladies, I would not have found out my weakness. But I must confess, I could not remain sincere to the core. I hope that it is not too late.

Surely it is not too late and the victory is certain.

In spite of all this, I have always felt some unknown protection around me, even before I came here.

Yes, the protection has always been upon you.

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

3 December 1936

*

Series One —Dyuman

*My dear Mother,
May I remain given to You.*

There is surely no question about that—but surely also you could not believe that sadhana could be done without facing some difficulties. As your aspiration is sincere, whatever was in the subconscious standing in the way of the Divine Realisation, has come to the surface in order to be transformed. There is nothing there to make you sad or depressed—on the contrary you ought to rejoice over these occasions to make progress and never forget to lean for support and help on my love, force and blessings.

15 December 1936

*

*My dear Mother,
The clouds passed away this morning and once
more I find myself in the consciousness of zeal, cour-
age and confidence.*

I am very glad about this good news, glad but not astonished for I expected as much.

Love and blessings to you, my dear child

16 December 1936

*

*My dear Mother,
The year ends and a new year begins. May the
new year bring to us God-realisation.*

Yes, the Light must illumine the consciousnesses and the shadows of Ignorance must be dissolved in all.

Love and blessings to my dear child

30 December 1936

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Since months I am tasting the food and find it truly very good —sometimes it is simply perfect.

Always with you, my dear child

1 January 1937

*

Dear Mother,

We have a woman-coolie in the Granary who is unable to cope with the work. It was decided by You to get a man in her place. K's choice is either M, B's gardener, or R who has worked at the Granary before.

M is our best gardener; what would happen to the gardens if he was taken away from that work?

As for R he is one of the very few (4 or 5) coolies who know the concrete work. He will be quite indispensable for the new building. I have asked the mason (a reliable man) to bring us somebody for the Granary work. Strong and honest and if possible knowing already something of the work. I have insisted on these points.

2 September 1937

*

Dear Mother,

Here is the food that we have served this noon for the Ashram. Will You take it? And if You find it worthy of Sri Aurobindo, will You give it to Him also?

The food is truly excellent. I am keeping it for Sri Aurobindo.

4 September 1937

*

Mother,

...But what does P mean by rules! I have not

Series One —Dyuman

exerted any rule on him. In any case, my going to the Prosperity stops from now.

I do not understand what you mean by saying that your going to the Prosperity stops from now. The Prosperity is not P's property. He is there only to keep the things and to distribute them and his personality has nothing to do in the matter. It is I who give the things in Prosperity, it is from me that they are received and to stop going to Prosperity because P is not always pleasant to deal with, is to give an undue importance to his person. I thought I had explained that to you already.

Now get out of your own feeling, step back into a more objective view of things and imagine that somebody—rightly or wrongly—thinks that you have ill-treated him and declares: "Now I will no more take food from the D.R." What would you say to this?

Dear child, my love

Undated

*

Mother,

There are plenty of moods and fancies among the inmates, many unnecessary harassings. I undergo all possible pinchings, tortures and troubles, but our goal is something else—it is the Divine Life.

You are quite right in not allowing the moods and fancies of the people to affect you. You must soar above all that in the constant feeling of the Divine's Presence, Love and Protection.

With you always

Undated

*

It is true, my child, that Nature is very brutal in her ways, but it can't be one of my squirrels that has been eaten, as they have come for food just now...

New Correspondences of the Mother

It must be the babies that get caught like that, those who have, as yet, no experience of life and of its dangers.

But surely we can hope for a world in which the aspiration for unity should not translate itself into a devouring instinct.

Undated

*

Faith is the condition to be frank with the Divine.

A complete frankness with the Divine will allow your faith to be steady.

Undated

Series Two

Correspondence with Champaklal

Born on 2 February 1902, the Gujarati disciple Champaklal Purani first met Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on 1 April 1921, when he was nineteen. Two years later he settled permanently with them in Pondicherry. From the beginning Champaklal worked closely with the Mother and assisted her for the next fifty years. He also served Sri Aurobindo as a personal attendant for about twenty-five years. During the last two decades of his life, he travelled extensively in India and abroad. He passed away on 9 May 1992 at the age of ninety.

Champaklal's correspondence with the Mother covers the period from 1930 to 1973.

Mother, I am really attached to my family a lot and especially to my father. Would you please write down for me whatever you said this morning because it has helped me a lot? Though I am not fit to be your child, by Thy Grace all is possible. Thy Grace is my Mantra. I want to be your faithful child and nothing else. May all the parts of my being be yours.

Take advantage of the circumstances to get rid of all attachment to the members of your family.

You must learn that you have no more brothers, sister, father, mother, except Sri Aurobindo and myself, and you must feel free and unconcerned whatever happens to them. We are your whole family, your protection, your all in all.

I am waiting for the day when I will say very proudly that I am your faithful child and I want nothing but

New Correspondences of the Mother

*you; all the parts of the being will ask only for you;
nothing will remain mine; everything will become
yours.*

Yes, this will be one day.

c. 1930

*

Champaklal,

The offering of your physical being will perfect your skill in works.

Your skill in works will make perfect your physical offering.

2 July 1931

*

Champaklal,

1. Be always faithful to the Divine in your heart.
2. Let nothing interfere with the absoluteness of your consecration or stop your progress which has been up to now quite satisfactory.
3. Take the present circumstances and the coming back of X as a test and face it victoriously.
4. Be vigilant.

12 February 1932

*

For 1932

To Champaklal

Peaceful confidence in the mind, cheerful devotion in the heart, firm resolution in the vital, quiet energy in the body.

13 February 1932

*

G does not come for pranam in the morning. Is this a higher state in his sadhana? If he does not go out

Series Two—Champaklal

of his house one can understand, but I see him going about with others as usual.

How can to abstain from Pranam be the sign of a “higher state of sadhana”?

It is simply a fancy of his mental and vital pride.

20 September 1932

*

I have done this picture without anybody's help. How is it? Will I be able to learn?

To learn means months and months of study before any picture can be done; studies from nature, drawing first for a long time, painting only after.

If you are ready to study hard and regularly, then you can begin, otherwise it is better not to try.

6 January 1933

*

Mother,

Tea was given to N on 24 February. This morning he came at 9.10 and asked for more tea. He wants it before noon. He said to me that he has taken permission from Mother. Shall I give it to him or not?

He asked for the tea but I did not send my sanction. I had told him to write a letter to Sri Aurobindo and he has not yet done it. As soon as he sends his letter, he will get his tea.

16 March 1933

*

My child, your work is what it has always been, worthy of the trust we have put in you and you need not worry at all about that. But be very careful to let no influence diminish your

New Correspondences of the Mother

confidence in me and allow nothing or nobody to separate you from me.

9 March 1934

*

Mother,

When I came up at 8.30 p.m., S was sitting on the stairs facing the door which opens inside. He asked me whose footsteps were being heard? Who was walking inside? I said to him that I did not know. Mother I would like to know whether my answer was all right.

Yes, certainly, they have no right to ask.

15 March 1934

*

The chit for an orange for Seetha, which Mother left for me on the 23rd, was wrongly read by me. I read Sudhir in place of Seetha. As I happened to meet the Doctor I showed him the chit and asked him to read it. He read it and went on insisting and at last convinced me that it was Sudhir and not Seetha. I trusted him thinking that he knew better English and was used to reading Mother's handwriting in his notebook which he sends to her, giving information about sick people. But when I received another chit enquiring about the orange for Seetha I learnt my mistake.

That is how people (the doctor in this instance) make mistakes by having preconceived ideas in the mind. He jumped at once at the idea of Sudhir having an orange—so he saw all the reasons possible for reading Sudhir—and also all the impossible reasons.

April 1934

*

Series Two—Champaklal

P was telling me that if Mother's portrait of me is left as it is, it may fade away and that it would be better to have it fixed with fixing solution. I like to know from Mother what she would like me to do.

No, it will not fade; it is pencil, not charcoal and there is no need of fixing it.

4 February 1935

*

Ma chère Mère,

What did you see in me this morning? After Pranam, when I looked at you, you did not smile at all. Why?

Mon cher enfant,

What I saw in you was as usual very good and it seems to me that I smiled as usual also—at least that was my intention. But if I was not smiling, it must be that I was still deep inside as during meditation. With my blessings

14 February 1935

*

Champaklal,

Les cartes sont très jolies. [The cards are very pretty.]

I am sending one back. I would like you to draw a rose in the corner.

With love and blessings always

18 February 1935

*

To Champaklal with our blessings.

Your flowers are *very pretty*. Surely I hope you will do some more.

25 April 1935

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Champaklal,

I am very much astonished by your questions. Are you not here to serve the Divine and are you not actually doing it? It is when you are doing it in all simplicity and full-heartedly that you are nearer to the goal.

Beware of hostile suggestions or dangerous talks which make your mind restless and blind your consciousness.

Our love is always with you.

26 May 1935

*

Mother, this picture I have done without any help.

It is a good attempt (the sky is rather heavy).

Love and blessings to my dear child

8 October 1935

*

Mother, I tried to draw [the flower] "Light without obscurity", but could not succeed; the flower is spoiled.

It is not so bad. If you give a little shade of crimson lake it will be quite all right.

1935

*

X wants to learn music. Can she learn from a violinist from the town?

Surely not violin; the way in which violin is played here is simply offensive. And to learn true violin, one must begin to learn when 8 years old. But if she finds somebody to teach her the Veena it is all right.

29 August 1936

*

Series Two—Champaklal

Champaklal,

Nowadays I am always late and in a hurry and I am not giving you time as I used to. That is why I want to see you for a few minutes tomorrow. But instead of seeing you at 1.30 as N said, I will call you in when I have finished with A at about 2.15.

It is just to increase your receptivity that I want to see you all alone and quietly.

With love and blessings

4 February 1938

*

For the past few months I get the idea of going from here. Is it from you? If it is Mother's wish I can go.

Your ignorant child, Champak, with Pranam

No, it is a hostile suggestion trying to send you away because your presence is most helpful and necessary.

I hope you will dismiss this wrong suggestion altogether and think no more of it. Your place is near us and you must stay here.

With our love and blessings

19 April 1940

*

The generosity of your absolute self-giving will bring to you the revelation of the generosity of the Divine's Love.

30 March 1948

BIRTHDAY MESSAGES

Red lotus—Symbol of the manifestation of the Supreme upon earth.

New Correspondences of the Mother

White lotus—Symbol of the Divine Consciousness.

2 February 1930

*

To Champaklal,

Let this year be a year of progress and transformation—
one more step on the way leading to the Divine Realisation.

2 February 1930

*

To Champaklal for his birthday.

The things which seem most difficult, most improbable,
and perhaps even most impossible, become wholly realisable
because Thy Presence is our assurance that the material world
itself is prepared to manifest the new form of Thy Will and Thy
Law.

With my blessings

2 February 1933

*

This year make an effort to achieve equanimity.

2 February 1940

*

This year you must wholly overcome and throw out the hostile
suggestion that has been harassing you, rejecting it in such a
way that it will never come back again. Your home, your place
and your fulfilment are here.

2 February 1941

*

In front of the repeated attacks from the enemy you must keep

Series Two—Champaklal

your faith intact and endure till the Victory is won.

2 February 1942

*

Let this year be for you the year of a complete opening and of the breaking of all limitations.

2 February 1943

*

Let this year bring to you the true faith—a faith that no darkness can obscure.

2 February 1944

*

I am glad to be able to say that your openness and your receptivity have increased during last year. Do not stop now and let them become perfect in the year to come.

With my love and blessings

2 February 1945

*

My dear child, now I can call you in truth my dear child as I feel you quite close to me having taken shelter in my arms for good—and you are welcome there with all my love.

2 February 1946

*

My dear child, that which I had foreseen last year has proved to be quite true and this relation of the Mother and the child has much grown in reality, intensity and deepness.

With my love and blessings

2 February 1947

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear child,

Let your receptivity increase this year, to the extent of giving you the power to fully utilise the force that is at work for restoring perfect good health in you.

With my love and blessings

2 February 1948

*

Sri Aurobindo's love and blessings on the occasion of your birthday

2 February 1949

*

My dear child, now it is time for the faith to become truly active and to stand unshaken against all contradictions. Have the faith, the true faith, that you are cured and the cure is bound to come.

My love and blessings

2 February 1949

*

To my most faithful child, the keeper of the true remembrance, I give today the assurance of my full confidence. I did not write in this book in 1950 because it was to be the most important year of your life, the year that has put a seal to what you were and opened in front of you the door leading to what you will be: a true and complete child of our Lord whose presence here is more total than it has ever been.

With my love and blessings

2 February 1950 and 1951

*

Series Two—Champaklal

Patience
Perseverance
Endurance
Faith and an
Unshakable courage...
... We are approaching the goal.
With my love and blessings

2 February 1952

*

A steady progress and a clear understanding of what you must be. These are the gains of the finished year.

Now there is only to continue.
With my love and blessings

2 February 1953

*

In 1940 Sri Aurobindo wrote to you: "Tranquillise and widen your consciousness" and I insisted on achieving equanimity. Many things have happened since then, much progress has been done and yet these things remain still to be fully realised. Let these be accomplished during this year that begins for you. A silent equanimity both inside and outside will be a great achievement for you.

With my love and blessings

2 February 1954

*

This time it is a year of true progress which has brought you nearer to the goal and much closer to me.

With my love and blessings

2 February 1955

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear child,

I can repeat what I said last year—but this time the progress is much bigger and the closeness to me much more true and intimate. You have advanced on the path at a great speed—and I can only tell you, *continue*.

With my love and blessings

2 February 1956

*

Bonne Fête!

To my dear child.

You *have* continued, and this time the progress is much more concrete and complete. I have the strong feeling that I can *rely* upon you and this is very comfortable.

Let this progress spread to the body now and give you good health steadily.

With my love and blessings

2 February 1957

*

To my dear child—

One more year;

one more step towards perfect service in a total surrender.

With my love and blessings

2 February 1958

*

My dear child,

This year, the Grace has arranged circumstances in such a way that you are closer to me than you have ever been—and all through you have proved most reliable and effective, always ready, always there when you are needed, always doing what needs to be done. I am happy to tell you that on your birthday.

With my love and blessings

2 February 1959

*

Series Two—Champaklal

Champaklal, my dear child,

I am glad to be able to say that you are progressing steadily. As you yourself remarked, your consciousness is growing and with one more effort you will soon emerge in the light and become wise.

This one more effort is the control of speech... let it be the boon from the Grace for this year!

With my love and blessings

2 February 1960

*

Champaklal,

My dear child,

Bonne Fête!

Few words are needed.

All is going on *well*.

Steadily we are advancing towards the goal, and you are keeping pace with me.

My love and blessings

2 February 1961

*

Champaklal,

My dear child,

All is well. You are progressing rapidly—there is only to continue steadily and the way will open before you more and more clear.

My love and blessings

2 February 1962

*

Bonne Fête!

Champaklal, my dear child

The way is wide open and it is an artistic one, a fine way of expressing your soul, which will become more and more clear

New Correspondences of the Mother

and powerful with the inner growth and flowering of your heart
as a sincere expression of your eternal Soul.

With love and blessings

2 February 1963

*

Champaklal, my dear child

A big step has been taken, a great change has taken place,
the presence of your Soul is clearly felt not only in what you
do—which is steadily progressing—but in what you are.

This is a decisive year for you, heralding the realisation.

With my love and blessings

2 February 1964

*

Champaklal

This year, I feel clearly that you have become a *part of*
myself.

For ever love

2 February 1965

*

Champaklal,

Let this year see the advent of the true joy of working in
the Divine's Consciousness.

With love

2 February 1966

*

Bonne Fête!

To Champaklal

With love and blessings

The illness has come like a test and gone like a purification
carrying away all that was standing in the way of the joy of an

Series Two—Champaklal

integral consecration.

2 February 1967

*

Champaklal,

I am happy to say that you are my true child and becoming more and more so.

2 February 1968

*

Bonne Fête!

Champaklal

Let the full Light be with you in a silent adoration.

With my love and blessings

2 February 1969

*

Bonne Fête!

To Champaklal the faithful
With love and blessings for
a happy, healthy and useful year
in light, joy and love.

2 February 1969

*

Bonne Fête à Champaklal!

From Mother to Champaklal
Love
Peace
Strength
Silence
Consciousness

2 February 1970

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

To Champaklal

1st Prize of Faithfulness
With my full love
Bonne Fête
Blessings

2 February 1971

*

Bonne Fête

To Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's Champak
One of the hundred¹
With my love, appreciation, trust and blessings for ever.
En route vers la Réalisation

2 February 1972

*

Bonne Fête

To Champaklal
With all my love and confidence and my blessings to reach
the goal.

Let us all be eternally grateful to Him who has shown us
and shows us constantly the way.

2 February 1973

¹ A few days before his birthday, the Mother gave Champaklal a card with a quotation by Sri Aurobindo: "I do not want tens of thousands of disciples. It will be enough if I can get a hundred complete men, purified of petty egoism, who will be instruments of God."

Series Three

Correspondence with Dilip Kumar Roy

Born on 22 January 1897 the Bengali disciple Dilip Kumar Roy joined the Ashram on 22 November 1928 at the age of thirty-one. When he came, he was already a renowned singer; the Mother left him free to sing and write during his thirty-three-year stay in the Ashram. He left the Ashram in 1951 and started an Ashram of his own in Pune, where he lived until his passing on 6 January 1980 at the age of eighty-two.

The Mother's letters to Dilip cover the period from 1931 to 1951.

Dilip,

For God's sake come back to your common sense.

I never said that I would see you no more. Sri Aurobindo asked you only to be patient, and as for the "silent expressionless love" he is not conscious of having written to you anything of the kind.

Now, about my "grudging" smile—I will tell you what I said to Sri Aurobindo when I met him today at 1.30. Relating what happened in the morning at pranam, I told him, concerning you: "There is a letter of Dilip to you and I do not know what he writes, but I can assure you that when he (Dilip) came to me this morning, I gave him a good, long blessing and my best smile."

You can understand that I felt somewhat astonished when I heard that my *best* smile was a *grudging* one. Are you quite sure that you did not look in your head at what you imagined would be, instead of looking at my face?...

Your going away is quite out of question. I want you to

New Correspondences of the Mother

remain here because I know that it is here—and here only—that you can and will be happy.

Why do you ask for my love? Is it not long since you have it already?

17 November 1931

*

Dilip,

Why do you speak of “the ultimate human disappearance of the Mother”? I have—I assure you—not the least intention of disappearing or vanishing, humanly or otherwise, and those who care to see me with their physical eyes can feel quite at ease on this point.

If you permit, I would advise you never to listen to what sadhaks say—especially *advanced* sadhaks.

29 December 1931

*

Dilip,

I have felt and been moved by the sincerity of your letter. Do not be too sorry. In a way what has happened was for the best since it has led you to take a firm and decisive resolution which must help you greatly to get rid of this trouble. Be sure of all the help I can give you.

I will call you again as soon as this flood of departing people has diminished a little. Meanwhile, “bon courage!”

18 August 1932

*

Dilip,

Without waiting for Sri Aurobindo, I answer your letter at once, because truly I cannot make out what is the matter. ... *Nobody is displeased* with you, neither Sri Aurobindo nor

Series Three—Dilip Kumar Roy

myself; we did not dream of it a single moment. Before you wrote yesterday, I had repeated to Sri Aurobindo what I told you in the morning and when he read your letter he saw that you had not understood me, so, in his answer, he explained what I meant. Did you read his letter? If so, it must have been very hastily. Please read it again carefully, quietly, several times if necessary, and you will see that you have no ground to think that we are displeased and to despair, but on the contrary good reasons of being full of life and joy, as all I wanted to convey to you is that *you know the Divine* and have His Presence in His Ananda form, in spite of your thinking to the contrary.

So, I expect you to cheer up at once and to write informing me that the clouds have dispersed and the sun is shining bright once more.

21 September 1932

*

Dilip,

You can be reassured—it is quite certain that Sri Aurobindo cannot make such a mistake! As he says that you are sure to succeed it means that you will succeed and become quite a good yogi after all.

Don't let troubles and difficulties depress you. The greater the difficulties, the greater the victory hereafter. Why did you not come for the pranam? You are mistaken: I did miss you, I said to you again and again: "Dilip, come, come." If you had looked within you would have heard my voice.

1 November 1932

*

Dilip,

I am very sorry you did not come yourself with the money, as I would have had an opportunity to tell you that your impression of this morning was mere imagination and a bad one too. I can assure you that I have been at pranam time *exactly* as

New Correspondences of the Mother

I am every day, but I noticed sadness and dissatisfaction in *your* eyes, so it must be the very expression of your own eyes which you saw reflected in mine,—but it was not *mine*.

You ought to drop altogether and once for all this idea that I get displeased—it sounds to me so strange! If I would get thus displeased in the presence of the human weaknesses, I would certainly not be fit to do the work I am doing and my coming upon earth would have no meaning.

Do give up once for all this idea of defeat and this gloom which is so contrary to the inner truth of your being. I want you to pick yourself up and be perfectly cheerful and confident for your coming birthday.

I hope to see you entirely yourself again this evening from the roof and tomorrow at pranam and to have a happy and intimate talk with you on Monday.

14 January 1933

*

Dilip, (I almost feel inclined to add: big child!)

You are quite mistaken. I enjoyed your music *very much*; indeed it was quite beautiful. But as I am to see you tomorrow, I was keeping the subject for then—as I have some rather interesting details to give which I think will please you, but would be somewhat too long to write. I can also explain better these things orally, give them with the voice a life that the pen can't give. But I never expected that you would take such a short silence for a sign of indifference—as this was extremely far from my consciousness.

Till tomorrow then, *joyfully*.

P.S. I leave it to Sri Aurobindo to answer for himself—but meanwhile I can tell you that he praised your music very much.

20 March 1933

*

Series Three—Dilip Kumar Roy

Dilip,

Why didn't you come yourself with the money? I would have seen you for a few minutes and told you something interesting and helpful as an answer to your letter of this morning. For in speaking it would have been better than anything I could write. At pranam time I felt that you were still depressed and thought that I would try to pour on you some of the Divine forces. I was looking at you for such a long time and it was Divine love that I was pouring in you with a strong will that you should become conscious of the Divine Presence in you and see all your sorrows turn into Ananda. I saw to my great joy that you were *very receptive* to all these Divine forces and absorbing them without resistance as they were pouring down!...

When I read your letter and saw that you thought you had received only some human kindness it struck me that it was only a misunderstanding of the mind, almost a question of vocabulary that was standing in the way, and if you could see this all or most of your doubts would disappear for ever and with them your painful difficulties. For what I was pouring in you was not merely human kindness—though surely it contained all that human kindness can be at its best—but Mahalakshmi's love, Mahasaraswati's care, Maheshwari's embracing and enveloping light. Do not think of Divine Love as something cold or impersonal or distantly high—it is something as warm and close and tender as any feeling can possibly be. It does not abolish whatever is pure and sweet in human love, but intensifies and sublimates it to its highest. It is this love that the Divine has to give and that you must open yourself to receive. I think if you realise this, it will be easier for you to pierce through the mental veil and receive what you are longing to receive.

7 September 1933

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Dilip,

I am sorry you spoke to V instead of speaking to C as I had suggested. C said and repeated that there is *no true objection at all* to your going back to the Trésor from this very day if you like. It seems that there had been already a discussion on the subject between C and V, *before you came to me*, C saying that you could very well move in and V making all sorts of objections.

This quarrel is most regrettable; I have never given authority to V to decide when you can or cannot go back to your rooms, and when I have said that you can go I do not see how anybody can say a word to the contrary.

I agree with you that too much money has been spent on that house, and it is C's opinion also. He was telling me that very thing not later than yesterday; but you will allow me not to follow your reasoning about princes. A house is made nice not for the sake of its occupants but for its own sake, and those who are to live in it have no reason to feel shy or uncomfortable about it.

So, I hope you will brush aside this unpleasant happening and take all measures to move tomorrow to the Trésor as you told me you would do.

19 December 1933

*

Dilip,

What a beautiful bedcover you have sent me this morning! It is magnificent and has given me twice the pleasure, especially because it is the first time you are giving me a personal present.

You may be sure that I am very appreciative of it; I see it as an excellent omen for our relations in the coming year, starting on the 22nd of this month.

18 January 1935

*

Dilip,

After reading your letter now, just a word to tell you that

Series Three—Dilip Kumar Roy

you are mistaken. I actually missed your presence at pranam and am sorry you did not come.

If you had listened inwardly you would have heard me calling you.

17 April 1935

*

Dilip,

I am sending you the translation of “Mahakali”; it was a very interesting thing to do.

Regarding the song of the boy Krishna, I was not really worried—but now you have reassured me altogether.

With our blessings

19 November 1935

*

(*Regarding Dilip’s singing at the Government House, Pondicherry*)

Dilip,

Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!

It was magnificent and our guests were *enchanted*. Your Mahakali has been a triumph.

30 November 1935

*

Dilip,

Just a word to tell you that I am *very touched* by your decision and I will take this opportunity to rest as you are asking me to do.

You may be sure that my force is affectionately with you and will always be there in your effort towards the spiritual heights.

P.S. I would ask you not show this small note to anyone since I

New Correspondences of the Mother

would rather not reveal my feelings.

27 December 1935

*

Dilip,

I just opened your letter and read: "Today Mother at pranam was very cold" and stopped there rather amused.

No, I was not very cold—I had a cold which is not quite the same, and I was struggling with it. I thought you were aware of it. Anyhow, now that you know...

20 January 1937

*

Dilip,

I was with you in thought at the time of the music. I hope you are all right now as a beginning not of a few months but of many years of non-depression—depression of the consciousness is worse than dispersion of consciousness, so do be energetic to throw it away when it comes.

Blessings

25 November 1937

*

Dilip,

It was a very good prayer and I received it at the time, a good part of it in the very words you had used. I'm also glad to know that you felt something of my answer; it shows that the inner connection is growing and that is a very encouraging sign.

Blessings

26 November 37

*

Dilip,

All right—you can have the old friend Baron (I am glad he is here for a time) and also "le Directeur de l'Instruction Publique" and his wife.

Series Three—Dilip Kumar Roy

Blessings on you and the music!

4 December 1937

*

Dilip,

That is all right. I approve your answer about going in March. I hope that you will succeed in all the objects which you have enumerated. You will receive our full help for that.

Indeed you have much progressed both as to the grumbling and in other directions. Yes, one does change and the complete change is sure.

What you said to S about N's death was quite the right thing.

Our love and blessings

8 December 1937

*

(On 24 November 1938 Sri Aurobindo fell in his room and fractured his right leg. For the next three years, he stopped almost all his correspondence with disciples. During this period the Mother answered Dilip's letters on Sri Aurobindo's behalf as well as her own.)

Dilip,

I have communicated your letter to Sri Aurobindo. He asks me to say that he is afraid it is not possible; until the doctors declare the knee cured only those who are necessary for attendance and service are admitted. If this rule were not kept there would be many demands on Him and likelihood of pressure and fatigue. So for the present at least it is not possible to say yes.

He sends you his blessings and along with them are mine.

1 December 1938

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Dilip

I am very sorry but in the present circumstances it is impossible for me to see anybody as I must be always free to go to Sri Aurobindo if at any time my presence is required.

As for M I have no objection to her staying alone with you. But it is quite impossible to give a room to S in the Ashram. In view of what happened to him last time it should be clear that for himself also it would be most risky and undesirable.

Blessings

3 December 1938

*

Dilip

I don't know what has been reported to you. I simply meant that if M sees that you are supporting E in her resolutions to remain here she is likely to yield more easily. I certainly do not want you to quarrel with M, only to use your influence to persuade her.

I read your letter *privately* to Sri Aurobindo.

Blessings

3 December 1938

*

Dear Dilip,

When you came to the staircase after meditation, I could not tell you anything because there were too many people around. But I wanted to express to you our deep and warm sympathy and also our appreciation of your attitude in this painful affair.

Our blessings are always with you as well as all our affection.

5 December 1938

*

Series Three—Dilip Kumar Roy

Dilip,

You say that I don't love you, this is not at all true—but it is inevitable in the present circumstances that my time and attention should be concentrated on Sri Aurobindo and this is a thing which all those who reverence him must surely find quite natural. Neither you nor others should allow yourselves to think or even feel unconsciously that this preoccupation is due to want of love.

Sri Aurobindo asks me to add that it is not at all a fact that we feel your presence a burden or that you are unable to do this sadhana. You should not allow any temporary difficulty to affect you with this feeling or lead you to a hasty decision of this kind. You have already made much inner progress and you have only to stand firm for a greater progress in the future.

Sri Aurobindo sends you his love and blessings to which I join mine.

P.S. I read your letters to Sri Aurobindo alone and never show them to anybody.

15 December 1938

*

Dilip,

You may be sure that we shall not dismiss you rudely or otherwise. I am sorry you still feel the push to go, but I think you will not find it in you either to leave us permanently or to leave the yoga.

Our love and blessings

16 December 1938

*

Dilip,

Of course it was only an untrue dream. I never thought for a moment of asking you for more money after all you have given with a generosity and loyalty I fully appreciate.

New Correspondences of the Mother

As for the departure, it is difficult for me to say anything. It goes without saying that we will be very sorry if you go. But how to stop you if you are so unhappy here?

About the suicide, you are aware that we do not approve of it because we know that it is no solution for the difficulties, on the contrary it is bound to increase them and to throw the departed being into a very miserable condition.

I would so much like that instead of thinking of death you would pray for the removal of the last obstacles and the descent of an all-illuminating peace and joy.

Sri Aurobindo asks me to express his great regret at your decision and the necessity you feel to go. He asks you not to make it as a final decision but to keep the door open in yourself for return and happy emergence from your difficulty.

In all circumstances his love and affection will remain with you. You know that it is the same with me.

20 January 1939

*

Dilip,

Nobody sees Sri Aurobindo except the doctors and those who come for personal work and attendance. If you have heard to the contrary it is quite false, so you must put away from your mind the idea you built on it that Sri Aurobindo has no longer any love for you, nor allow these things or any sense of isolation from us created by them to make you go.

Your dream is also part of the same unreal building.

If you decide to go to A's place to get some relief, we have no objection.

We shall certainly welcome you back whenever you wish to come—the sooner the better.

Love and blessings

20 January 1939

*

Series Three—Dilip Kumar Roy

To Dilip

With my best wishes for your birthday and my affectionate blessings

Love and blessings from Sri Aurobindo

22 January 1939

*

Dilip,

I have just read your three letters to Sri Aurobindo. He is glad to see that you are beginning to recover from this attack. He is very glad that you have seen how unfounded is the doubt of our love for you and that the ideas of death and suicide are not at all called for. We hope you will never allow this doubt and these ideas to take hold of your mind again.

As to the advice you ask for regarding the best course for you to take, the perception expressed in your third letter seems to us the best. To keep yourself occupied with music and writing is always good; for your nature finds there its inborn occupation and that helps to maintain the vital energy and keep the balance.

About sadhana I should like to ask you why not do sadhana through your music? Surely meditation is not the only way of doing sadhana. Through your music bhakti and aspiration can grow and prepare the nature for realisation.

If moments of meditation and concentration come of themselves then it is all right; but there is no need to force it.

I hope you will soon recover your full energy and poise and the clouds pass from you.

Be always sure of our love and help and blessings present with you.

23 January 1939

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Dilip,

We quite agree to your going to A for a short time and you can go with our free consent and blessings.

24 January 1939

*

Dilip,

I read your letter to Sri Aurobindo and he has seen your poems. The translation of "The Soul" especially is fine.

We give our blessings to the poet and to A's wife and to S.

For M blessings are only possible when she has undergone a sincere repentance.

Love and blessings

9 February 1939

*

Dilip,

I was glad to read B's letter; it is beautiful as all his letters are. I have also received one letter from him today.

Certainly you can sing tomorrow and my love and blessings will be with you.

22 February 1939

*

Dilip,

Sri Aurobindo thinks that it is not possible for us to intervene by a wire in a political matter of this kind. At most you might write to him (S) your private opinion about the best course for him to take in these painful and difficult circumstances.

With love and blessings

24 February 1939

*

Dilip,

It is only tomorrow (Monday) that I can read your letter to

Series Three—Dilip Kumar Roy

Sri Aurobindo and then we shall answer.

This is only to tell you that we will surely *not* ask you to go.

Our love and blessings

12 March 1939

*

Dilip,

We were very glad indeed to read your letter. We shall certainly give you all the help possible to carry out your resolution and the aspiration behind it. I feel sure that with an earnest and sustained effort you will conquer and effect the opening for which you have been striving and preparing so long.

Our blessings are with you in your aspiration and endeavour.

With our love

13 March 1939

*

Dilip,

Here is A's letter. Once more we assure you that we shall have no objection to your going to Hyderabad for a short time if you decide to do so.

Our love and blessings

18 March 1939

*

Dilip,

The Rs. 10 are quite welcomed ...

Glad that your work is going on nicely.

Our love and blessings are with you.

2 April 1939

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Dilip

The translation of Mirabai's song is good. The "with" is possible but perhaps "for" would be better.

Blessings are given for the two objects for which you ask them.

"It is strange" will do very well for the title.

You can, of course, come tomorrow after the meditation, for blessings.

With our love and blessings

27 April 1939

*

Dilip,

I have only this to say about the matter. From the point of view of the sadhana it is much more dangerous to go to Tiruvannamalai than to go to Sylhet for giving evidence ...

Our love and blessings

P.S. You can show this letter to B.

10 November 1939

*

Dilip,

Our help and force are with you for the new year of your life.

I am sure that with persevering and sincere aspiration the barrier you feel and the internal difficulties will melt away.

With our love and blessings

P.S. Here are a few candies from France.

22 January 1940

*

Dilip,

What is this strange rumour about our stopping darshan?

Series Three—Dilip Kumar Roy

There is no truth at all in it. We have no intention of vanishing as we do not believe that it can bring in “peace and light” ...

As for your sadhana you had developed a true bhakti and an opening of psychic perception. Keep that and it will bring you what is necessary. Meditation is difficult for you still because there is not yet a sufficient quietude in the mind substance. But that too can come in time.

Don’t let these opposite things come in; keep your mental state bright and clear, which is the best condition for experience.

Our love and blessings

P.S. Sending back the papers with our force.

6 February 1940

*

Dilip,

I am quite ready to shower my grace on this A, but I do not consider it advisable for him that he should come here. I don’t believe half-a-minute “darshan” can change these habits. We have had bitter experience about them already, that they resist even a psychic opening... He must first have the sincere will to change.

I intend to give an interview to C if he remains sufficiently long after the “Darshan”.

Our love and blessings

16 February 1940

*

Dilip,

Our love and special blessings will be with you for the singing tonight and the “darshan” on the 24th.

22 April 1940

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Dilip

I am not aware of being “better pleased” if you did not go to Madras for the records. I quite approve of your going.

For this S the difficulty is always the same, accommodation; if she can stay in the same room as R she can come.

For K there is no difficulty as he is going to stay in a hotel.

The poem is very good.

Don’t worry about Hitler. No asuric force can stand eternally against the divine force and the hour of his defeat is bound to come.

With our love and blessings

27 May 1940

*

Dilip,

Yes, you can come this afternoon on the staircase at 5.45 for pranam and to sign the cheque.

I shall give you then some flowers for H and U.

I have felt all this time your loyalty and faithfulness and have deeply appreciated your feelings and your attitude.

Our love and blessings are always with you.

18 June 1940

*

Dilip,

You are sure to get back the poise, for the progress you have made remains and will come uppermost again.

In these days when lots of people come from outside, there is always some restlessness and disturbance brought into the atmosphere and some disturbance of the poise may easily take place—but it will come back.

Our force will be with you and our help and protection.

With our love and blessings

20 August 1940

*

Series Three—Dilip Kumar Roy

Dilip,

Of course you can come up after meditation tonight for pranam and signing the cheque.

It is certainly not at all true that I don't care for the sadhaks and their sadhana. Why should the world conditions being bad make me cease to care! It would be rather a reason for insisting more on a quick spiritual realisation as the only way out of the impasse. You should not believe in what you hear from people; such constantly nasty and disturbing things are being said which are quite untrue. You are not so empty of the inner surrender as you now think. Cast away your doubts; you had a very long period without them which gives a certainty that you can get rid of them altogether.

All our help and force will be with you
And our love and blessings.

8 October 1940

*

Dilip,

I will speak to B about the repair of the cane chairs. There will be no difficulty.

Don't let yourself be worried by people and their ways. You may be sure that our love, blessings and help are always with you.

10 November 1940

*

Dilip,

We were very glad to read your letter of this morning and to hear of this fine experience—for there can be no finer experience than this state of true bhakti. It is a real and great progress that you have made.

As for Colonel P and his wife I gather that they have not as yet asked to come. It might be better to let the wish to come

New Correspondences of the Mother

rise in them of itself.

3 January 1941

*

Dilip,

Your programme is all right. We will remember your prayer on your birthday. When you are informed of the time of your broadcast do not forget to let us know; we wish to listen to it here.

With our love and blessings

c. January 1941

*

Dilip,

With my best wishes for your birthday and my blessings

22 January 1941

*

Dilip,

Yes you can go after the "darshan" and we approve your programme and our blessings will go with you.

You can send our blessings to H.

Love and blessings

c. February 1941

*

Dilip,

We read your letter only today as yesterday there was too much hurry of the first.

I am sending the three flowers with blessings.

Glad to hear of your good experience in the dream as also of the experience of descent you had the other day. The inner being is evidently awake.

With our love and blessings

2 April 1941

*

Series Three—Dilip Kumar Roy

Dilip,

Certainly you can come tonight after meditation.

I am sending a flower for U with the enclosed written blessings. As for the dream she must not rely upon that, as it is likely to be a mental formation. My force and help are with her but these wordings cannot be from me.

Who is this L? If it is B's wife I cannot send her a flower as it is sure to be misinterpreted. If it is the niece then also it is not prudent to send a flower as I don't want her to come here.

With our love and blessings

Until this evening!

Sri Aurobindo is keeping U's letter to read it.

8 April 1941

*

Dilip

Evidently this world is a bad one but change is its law and as it can hardly be worse than it is now, we may hope that it will soon become better. Old movements obstinately recur and make the sadhana difficult but you have made more progress than you allow yourself to believe and the attainment may be nearer than you think.

Our help is with you and our love and blessings.

I am sending four flowers with blessings.

8 May 1941

*

Dilip,

Yes, it was altogether right. This experience and the result it brought are a great step towards spiritual freedom. Every rejection of desire and attraction brings one nearer to the Divine.

With our love and blessings

18 May 1941

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Dilip,

I am sending herewith the four flowers with blessings for S and his daughter, for H and for R.

Music follows the rule of all things on earth—unless they are turned to the Divine they cannot be divine.

With our love and blessings

25 May 1941

*

Dilip,

We do not think it is necessary for you to go to Calcutta for these records; it is much trouble and effort for what is now a very small return. If at any time you feel like going then you can certainly go with our full blessings.

Don't worry about the difficulty in the meditation. In the end you will come out of it with the consciousness of a spiritual progress made.

With our love and blessings

2 December 1941

*

Dilip,

You should make it a rule never to listen to this voice or accept the suggestions that come with it. It is clear from where it comes; it is a voice of untruth, the voice of the adversary which comes to almost everybody who follows the way of yoga, suggesting doubt and denial and incapacity and defeat. You must meet it always as you did this time. You should also reject such suggestions as those about your being a hindrance and going away for that reason; it comes from the same source and has no truth and indeed no substantial meaning that we can discover. Also you should not attach much value to what you hear—as “we want people to stand on their legs” and therefore cannot help. Certainly we want people to have strength and courage to go through, but we know that they need our support.

Series Three—Dilip Kumar Roy

The special help you asked for in your other letter will be with you.

Our love and blessings

17 December 1941

*

Dilip,

Don't allow your mind to worry you too much about the difficulty of surrender, and don't conclude from it that your nature is unfit; surrender is always difficult for everybody, especially surrender of the mind. Keep a quiet will for it and it will come in time.

On the eve of your birthday let the blue light of hope always burn in your heart.

With our love and blessings

18 January 1942

*

To Dilip.

With love and special blessings on the occasion of his birthday.

"A few consecrate all of themselves and all they have—soul, life, work, wealth; these are the true children of God."¹

To one of them.

22 January 1942

*

My dear child,

You can always be confident of our love and sympathy through everything and in all circumstances. Be sure that we understand fully your difficulties and your will to overcome. Your sincere effort is bound to prevail and, I hope, soon. Believe

¹ This sentence is taken from the Mother's introductory message for the 1941 edition of *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*.

New Correspondences of the Mother

that when trouble does come our reaction will be sympathy and support and nothing else.

Our love and blessings

30 May 1942

*

My dear child,

I must say that I did not expect such a letter from you. I cannot make out what is the ground of your complaint. Is it because for the last week or so having a bad cold I was obliged to keep a little aloof in order not to pass it on to others? Is it because, very hard pressed by increasing work and equally increasing people, I have not been able to give as much time to each one as I used to before? But surely that does not mean that my love and care for each one has diminished or changed. Why do you make a personal case out of a state of things that applies equally to all? I have no intention of making you suffer at all and in fact I do not see *why* you suffer at all—for indeed there is no true basis for such a suffering.

Sincerely hope you will realise the childishness of your reaction and soon get once more in contact with my love and blessings that never fail you.

P.S. As for the work you can do as you feel, best remembering that when work is concerned no special likings or disliking for people must interfere in the accomplishment of one's duties.

1 June 1946

*

My dear child,

I see no good reason why you should leave this place which, after all, has been your home for such a long time... You speak of a "house-problem" but as I have no intention of giving your house to anybody else, I do not see how your departure can ease the problem.... As for helping you in all circumstances, of

Series Three—Dilip Kumar Roy

that you can be sure and it is only your receptivity that can put a limit to this help.

With my love and blessings

9 April 1947

*

Dilip,

Read carefully your letter and understand quite well your point. But I do not see how I can replace you so far as Indira is concerned. She needs *you* and you alone can give her the help she needs. Of course I am always with you and will still more be with you—of that you can be quite certain.

With my love and blessings for you and for her

P.S. I can add that I am quite sure you will always do the right thing in connection with her.

27 December 1950

*

My dear child

You must not be depressed or sad. You know that Sri Aurobindo has not left us and that he will be here tomorrow² as usual.

With my love and blessings

20 February 1951

*

To Dilip with blessings

Let the divine Grace do the work through you and the work will be thoroughly done.

My love

16 March 1951

*

² 21 February, the Mother's birthday and a darshan day.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Dilip,

Sri Aurobindo has made our realisation independent from all world circumstances, and he always considered you as part of the realisation; so there is no true ground for depression.

I expect you to shake it off, with the help of my love and blessings.

28 April 1951

*

My dear child,

Here is what I have just heard from our Lord for you:

“No fears, no anxiety, no doubts, *I am here.*”

With my blessings

27 June 1951

Series Four

Correspondence with Tara Patel

Born on 9 August 1912, the Gujarati disciple Tara Patel joined the Ashram on 21 November 1929 at the age of seventeen. The Mother called her "Little Star". She worked first in the Dining Room and then in the Mother's Kitchen and the Embroidery Department. She lived in the Ashram for eighty-two years, until her passing on 12 June 2012 at the age of ninety-nine.

Tara's correspondence with the Mother covers the period from 1932 to 1942.

Tara,

It would be good if the kitchen was cleaned thoroughly once a week or at least once in a fortnight. Will you take the charge of this work? I am sure that A is ready to help you.

You will let me know what day you have chosen for the cleaning.

22 September 1932

*

Tara,

If you feel tired, it is better to stop the paper work in the evening for a few days. We have informed D. You must not overwork yourself.

7 October 1932

*

My little Tara,

Why did you not send me tonight your usual note in English? I would have been pleased to receive it.

New Correspondences of the Mother

With love

16 December 1933

*

My dear little child,

You have sent me a nice necklace with many sweet words.
I am sending you another one with my love and blessings.

25 January 1934

*

My little child,

I have received your nice letter so well written and the bag
on which you have made such nice embroidery.

Yes, I agree with you that your mind must become quiet
and peaceful and I hope it will happen soon.

With love and blessings

16 March 1934

*

My dear little child,

The three handkerchiefs are so pretty and nice... and what
a sweet little tomato!

With all my love

29 March 1934

*

My little child,

What people say is *not* true. I have given the charge of
the work (and that only partially) to J only for the time of D's
illness. As soon as D will get quite strong he will take back
his work and you can always ask him all you want about the
kitchen and the Dining Room work.

Certainly you can ask for the bowls from the Building
Department.

Be quiet and happy, my love is always with you.

Series Four—Tara Patel

Blessings

10 April 1934

*

Little star-child,

Such a fine handkerchief you have sent me and made for me, my dear little child. I shall take it with me for pranam, this morning, and you will place your head upon it to receive a special blessing of love.

24 April 1934

*

Little star-child,

Do not worry about this morning's kitchen incident. You had no bad intention against T and this is the most important.

27 April 1934

*

Love and blessings to my little star-child.

Do not worry, all the obstacles will fall away.

27 April 1934

*

My little star,

Be quiet and courageous and do not lose confidence; all the difficulties are bound to come to an end one day.

With love and blessings

2 May 1934

*

My dear little star,

It is always our weaknesses that make us sad, and we can easily recover by advancing one step more on the way.

New Correspondences of the Mother

With love and blessings

12 May 1934

*

My dear little star-child,

I received the three beautiful roses, what fine smell they have! They are quite like the soul of my little child.

Love and blessings always

25 May 1934

*

My dear little child,

Indeed what a nice little bird you would make! But your soul is already like a bird and flies to me whenever it wants to see me and then goes back to you bringing from me love and strength.

26 May 1934

*

Dear little star,

I heard that you have finished the nice handkerchiefs, so to you also I shall say how pretty they are. Sri Aurobindo has taken his two in his room.

With love and blessings

3 June 1934

*

My dear little star,

You see the little light is still burning very well to meet my love and blessings.

5 June 1934

*

My dear little star,

Yes, you will become more and more quiet and happy;

Series Four—Tara Patel

your mind also will be calm and silent and nothing more will disturb you.

With love and blessings

June 1934

*

All love and blessings to my little star whom I keep always in my arms

16 March 1935

*

My dear little star,

Yes, all my love and help will always be with you to keep you in a happy and peaceful condition. If wrong suggestions come do not listen to them and call me to help you in chasing them.

With our blessings always

22 June 1935

*

My dear little star,

I am sure you will do your best to remain quiet and happy and have no doubt about the success of your endeavour—our love, help and protection are always with you.

23 June 1935

*

My dear little star,

I am glad you are feeling all right now. The great thing is indeed to be quiet and to remain quiet—when the quietness is established the happiness is sure to follow.

Our love and blessings are always with you.

24 June 1935

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear little star,

I am happy you have taken the decision to have patience until the end of August at least. I truly hope you will feel in a condition to come to me on your birthday.

My love is always with you, I so hope you can feel it...

4 August 1935

*

To our dear little star,

Our best wishes, love and blessings for her birthday and many happy returns of the day

9 August 1935

*

“Mon cher petit”, my dear little star,

It was indeed a very good and intimate meeting we had yesterday. You are truly my dear child, “my little one”, and uniting our strength, I am quite sure we shall overcome all that tries to disturb our sweet intimacy.

My love and blessings are always, always with you.

10 August 1935

*

“Mon cher petit”,

I take you in my arms and keep you on my heart with love and blessings.

18 November 1935

*

Mon cher petit,

I would like to have news from you, won't you write?
Our love and blessings are always with you.

5 December 1935

*

Series Four—Tara Patel

Mon cher petit,

Sri Aurobindo has written to you but somehow the letter
has got lost. He will write to you again this afternoon.

With our love and blessings

28 December 1935

*

Mon cher petit,

Take refuge in my love and blessings which never fail you.

1 January 1936

*

Mon cher petit,

If you have some difficulty to overcome or something to
say, do not hesitate to write.

Our love and blessings are always with you.

4 February 1936

*

My dear little star, “mon cher petit”,

With all my love and affection I answer to your prayer and
take you in my arms on my heart, so that you may find there
protection and peace.

My blessings are always with you.

5 February 1936

*

Love and blessings to mon cher petit—what beautiful handker-
chiefs you have done for me!

17 April 1936

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Love and blessings to my dear little star—I hope the finger will soon get cured.

22 June 1936

*

Mon cher petit,

What a wonderful piece of work! I was truly moved when I received it.

All love and blessings to you, my little star

17 July 1936

*

My dear little star,

I have a very nice work for you if you wish to do it. A chaddar (upper cloth) is needed for Sri Aurobindo on the 24 November. Will you do it for him? D will give the size and the cloth.

Love and blessings to mon cher petit

11 September 1936

*

Dear little star,

Such a long time without a line from you! Will you not write to give us news?

Love and blessings to mon cher petit

3 October 1936

*

Love and blessings to mon cher petit,

Won't you go for a walk on the seashore with L daily? It would be nice...

21 October 1936

*

Series Four—Tara Patel

My dear little star,

Yes, the peace must come down, pure and sweet and settle
in you to never leave you.

Love and blessings to mon cher petit

15 November 1936

*

Dear little star, mon cher petit,

My protection is always with you and nothing bad can
happen. But you must take the decision to shake off the fear
and then my force can work fully.

With my love and blessings

27 October 1937

*

My dear little star, mon cher petit,

You are already sleeping with me and that is why you must
not be frightened because I am always there to protect you.

Love and blessings to my dear little star

31 October 1937

*

My dear little star, mon cher petit,

If the treatment gives you a relief, even if it be temporary,
it might be better not to drop it altogether...

My love and blessings are always with you.

6 November 1937

*

My dear little star, mon cher petit,

If you have finished the medicine for your arm, you need
not take anything more. As for taking medicine to become tall
I do not advise you to do it as it may not be safe.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Love and blessings to “mon cher petit”

7 November 1937

*

My dear little star, mon cher petit,

To say that your cooking is bad would not be fair. At most what I can say is that it is not always equally good, but bad it is not, and some dishes are *quite successful*. It may be that a period of inner difficulty has passed over you, but you are bound to come out of it stronger than before. When the inner difficulty is removed the cooking will be as regularly good as it was before.

Love and blessings to “mon cher petit”

24 December 1937

*

“Mon cher petit”,

It is not correct to say that I have dropped you—I never did—only I had to wait for your physical consciousness to be ready to open itself again.

I think you will understand me better if I speak to you, so I shall see you on the 25th Tuesday at 1.45 p.m.

Love and blessings to my dear little child

21 January 1938

*

“Mon cher petit”,

It is very good that you have become conscious of the mistakes and defects of the nature. Once you are conscious it is always possible to rise out of them and to change the nature. My help will always be with you for that.

Love and blessings to my dear little star

23 January 1938

*

Series Four—Tara Patel

Mon cher petit,

About the embroidery: the time in which it is finished does not matter. You can take all the time that is needed to finish it, but I do not want you to overstrain your eyes by too long embroidery work.

I cannot answer your question in the way you put it, because I make no difference between work and yoga. Work itself is yoga if it is done in a spirit of dedication and surrender.

Love and blessings to my dear little star

25 January 1938

*

Mon cher petit,

It is not that you cannot do the yoga; you were doing it all right at one time. The difficulty is only in the physical mind where the resistance you speak of has a strong hold. If you can keep very quiet, not upset or discouraged and allow our force to work from behind the mind it will after a time eliminate the obstacle.

Love and blessings to mon cher petit

3 February 1938

*

Mon cher petit,

I told you already several times that I do not approve of your going. Do you believe that by insisting you will make me change my mind? I will tell you again and again:

- 1) I do not approve at all of your going.
- 2) I do not approve also of your jealousy which is baseless and meaningless and the best thing to do is to overcome it by thinking a little more of your work and a little less of yourself (I told you the same thing already once). I am not of the same opinion as you about the work you are doing, I find it quite useful.
- 3) I still hope that you will pick up some courage to overcome the present difficulty and to come back to a normal

New Correspondences of the Mother

condition in which you can do your work quietly without disturbance.

My love and help are always with you—you have only to remember them and you will easily find them.

Blessings

20 June 1939

*

Mon cher petit,

I am quite satisfied with your work, both with the quantity and the quality and all I want is that you should go on like that. When I speak of the work, what I mean to say is that when you work in a satisfactory way you ought to feel at peace and happy.

My love and blessings

21 June 1939

*

My dear child,

Do not make mountains out of small things. All this has no importance whatever and ought not to disturb you or your work.

I hope that by tomorrow you will be quite well and that you will do your work as usual.

My love and blessings

24 August 1939

*

Mon cher petit,

It is very good of you to offer your services at this time that there will surely be the need of them. I will let you know what can be done; meanwhile if any good idea comes to you for the work you can inform me of it.

My love and blessings

13 September 1939

*

Series Four—Tara Patel

My dear child,

Now times are difficult for everybody. There is war and everybody suffers.

Those who have the immense privilege of being here quiet and in safety must at least show their gratitude by discarding all petty quarrels and silly grievances.

Everyone must do his or her work conscientiously and earnestly, and overcome all obscure selfish movements.

My help, love and blessings are always with you.

27 September 1939

*

My dear little star,

I have not yet decided on what work to give you—but I appreciate your wish to do the work in the right spirit and I will look for some occupation that will help you in your resolution.

My love and blessings

15 February 1940

*

My dear little star,

I am glad to hear that you are getting better and I hope you will soon be quite all right.

It is not because of the past—let the past be past and no more think of it!—that more work was not given to you; it was because I did not want to make you tired. Now that I know you are better D will give you more work, and when I shall have something to be done I will give it to you also.

The curtains you did are quite well done; they are put in place since the 24th.

With my love and blessings

29 April 1940

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear little star,

Well if you are sure that the servants are robbing, it proves that they are not properly supervised and you will have to look to it more carefully.

My love and blessings

19 July 1940

*

My dear little star,

You must not be sorry or depressed. I am quite satisfied not only with your work which is excellent but also with your spiritual progress.

If somebody has told you otherwise, do not listen to what this person says, because it is not true.

With my love and blessings always

26 October 1941

*

My dear little star,

I trust you fully and know you are capable of fulfilling quite well your responsibilities. As for the difficulties and deficiencies, everybody has some and one is here to overcome them. This is the meaning of the sadhana of works. Moreover I know nobody to whom I could entrust this responsibility—so I must ask you to go on courageously with your duties, keeping all faith in the Divine and relying only on the Divine's help and grace.

With my love and blessings

6 January 1942

*

My dear Mama,

It would be better if somebody helps me in embroidery. If you prefer to give the whole work to someone else than me, I have no objection to it.

Can you propose somebody who could help you? I do not see

Series Four—Tara Patel

how it could be given entirely to somebody else. Even if you could not do at all embroidery yourself you would have to supervise and see that it is done properly.

Among those who know embroidery several have not much work just now and could help you. But I do not know with whom you would like to work. That is why I ask you to suggest one or two names.

Love and blessings to “mon cher petit”

Undated

*

O my dear Mama,

Mama, I pray and pray and pray to You. Come, come, come, O my sweet Divine Mother. Come spread thy light in the heart and make it bright, for it is full of darkness.

Surely, dear little star, you will become all luminous as it is the nature of a star to be.

My love and blessings to mon cher petit

Undated

Series Five

Correspondence with Ambu

Born on 14 June 1909, the Gujarati disciple Ambu (Ambalal Desai) came to live in the Ashram on 19 May 1928 at the age of eighteen. The Mother affectionately called him her "Baby". His main work was cleaning the Mother's kitchen vessels, but he also worked in the Granary, nursed invalids and collected flowers. Later he was the Ashram's hatha yoga teacher. Ambu lived in the Ashram for sixty-four years, until his passing on 18 April 1993 at the age of eighty-three.

Ambu's correspondence with the Mother covers the period from 1933 to 1941.

I do not want the work of slaves; I want the work of free people who work because they feel benefited by it and for whom work is a source of joy and strength.

Whatever you cannot do in that spirit, it is better not to do.

11 January 1933

*

My lovely Ma,

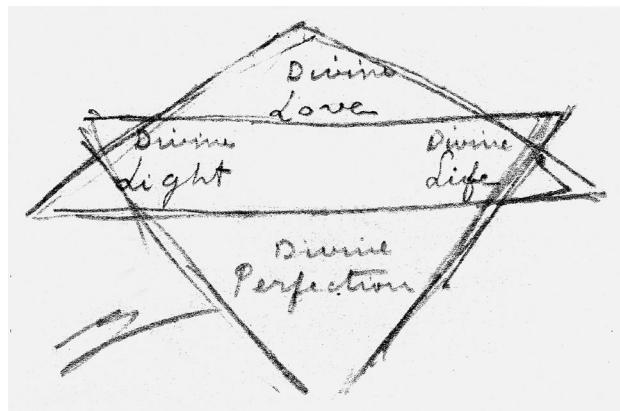
*I have inner eyes, but where are they? O my Ma,
show me my inner eyes and how to open them.*

Your inner eyes are in you as the tree is in the seed, let them grow.

18 December 1933

*

New Correspondences of the Mother



The design is the symbol of the descent of the Divine forces and the answer from the material world. The harmonious combination of both produces the four things I have written on the drawing: Divine Love, Light, and Life manifested in a Divine Perfection.

7 February 1934

*

O my Ma, lovely Ma,

Since two days I have been thinking: "How the hostile forces are playing with me and using me as their instrument." But O Ma, I can't stop their attacks. Only thinking. And through this thinking, sadness and depression are trying to come.

What is this temptation to fall once more into depression! I was so happy that you had surmounted that. The more the attacks are strong, the more we must keep firm in our position of complete trust in the Divine.

Always with you, loving and protecting

5 March 1934

*

Series Five—Ambo

Baby,

I am there, don't you know? Quick, open the curtain of the superficial consciousness and you will clearly see me.

With love and blessings

10 March 1934

*

It is good that you could overcome the attack. A victory in that domain is always the promise of greater victories.

With love and blessings

15 April 1934

*

Baby,

Dismiss the sadness at once; it is not a good friend, you must not make a companion of him.

I am always near you with love and blessings.

17 April 1934

*

To my Baby,

Let all the clouds, depressions and bad sensations disappear, to never come again. Let this day be a new birth and a new opening to the Divine's Light and Love.

With special blessings

24 April 1934

*

My Baby,

If you keep on being happy steadily, you are bound to recover from the weakness also.

With love and blessings

4 May 1934

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear Baby,

Let the clouds go and go for ever. The sun of happiness must shine so bright that they will be at once dissolved.

With love and blessings

12 May 1934

*

(Written beside the sketch of a blue bird)

My dear Baby,

I am so happy that you have overcome the depression and wrote such a nice prayer. Yes, the purity will be yours and the happiness also, and here is the blue bird flying to you in all affection.

My love and blessings are with you always.

13 May 1934

*

(Written above the sketch of a swan)

Dear Baby,

Here is your soul (or rather its image) swimming happiness, strength and purity towards you.

With my love and blessings

15 May 1934

*

I am happy to see that you have decided to send the bad suggestions away. With them almost all of the mischief will go.

With love and blessings

16 May 1934

*

My dear Baby,

There is no impossible miracle as an answer to a constant

Series Five—Ambo

and sincere aspiration.

With love and blessings

17 May 1934

*

My dear Baby,

When I go up, I always want to take you with me and try to pull you up; why do you not follow?...

With love and blessings

18 May 1934

*

My dear Baby,

I did not intend to ask from you something that you cannot do. If you truly let yourself go in my arms without resistance, I would take you anywhere, that is to say, into the Peace, the Strength and the happiness for which you are longing.

With love and blessings

19 May 1934

*

My dear Baby,

We shall light a big fire in which all the difficulties will be burnt down and only the pure gold of happiness will remain.

With love and blessings

23 May 1934

*

Dear Baby,

It is quite possible, if you have a great liking for this picture¹ and you look at it very often, that you may make the substance with which it is done more plastic and receptive. Then it will manifest better the force hidden inside it and consequently

¹ Which picture is not known.

New Correspondences of the Mother

its appearance will be improved.

With love and blessings

24 May 1934

*

My dear Baby,

How can I remove a curtain that I have never put there?
You must open your eyes (like the baby cats!) and then you will
see.

With love and blessings always

26 May 1934

*

There is no message more beautiful than the assurance that the
Divine Grace never fails those who trust in It.

With love and blessings

27 May 1934

*

To my dear Baby,

Cheer up! The weakness is simply a bad habit of the body
and the depression a bad habit of the heart. There is no truth
behind them.

With love and blessings

4 June 1934

*

My dear Baby,

When a box is full you can put nothing in it so it is useless;
it is much better to be like an empty box which can be filled
with all the treasures of the divine Love and Light.

With my blessings

6 June 1934

*

Series Five—Ambo

Surely, my dear Baby, I do not want to leave you in darkness and sorrow and I am pulling hard to get you out of “hell”, but let me catch hold of your hand and do not slip away.

With love and blessings

24 June 1934

*

My dear Baby,

Happy to hear that happiness has come back to you. Don’t let it go any more, hold it tight.

With love and blessings

27 June 1934

*

Yes, my dear Baby, it is rather important to get a *steady* faith, otherwise there is no end to the troubles. And the help is always there, you have only to make a proper use of it.

With love and blessings

13 July 1934

*

Happy to hear that my dear Baby is happy. Happier shall I be if he becomes still happier...

With love and blessings

14 July 1934

*

My dear Baby, I am keeping the one anna piece as a souvenir of a day when you have written that you are happy.

I am so happy when you are happy.

With love and blessings always

21 August 1934

*

My dear Baby,

I hope your happiness does not depend on any exterior

New Correspondences of the Mother

reason but on an inner opening.

With love and blessings

24 August 1934

*

I am not at all angry and want only that you should be always happy and contented.

With my love and blessings

15 September 1934

*

My dear Baby,

Do not resist the force that is working in you to make you happy. Open freely to it and you will see that all uneasiness will go.

With love and blessings always

18 September 1934

*

My dear Baby,

I am not forgetting you, I am not throwing your letters in the wastepaper basket... and my force, love and blessings are always with you to lead you out of your difficulties.

25 September 1934

*

Yes, my dear Baby is sure to get purified not only in his body but in his mind and vital also.

With all love and blessings

28 September 1934

*

O Ma,

...I am not going to write more, but, O Ma, let

Series Five—Ambo

*X know who the inner divinity is. Explain to him
about Thee and my Father.*

O Ma, save him, save him!

Yes, my dear Baby, we are trying our best and have full hope to succeed. The right attitude and the aspiration of his true friends can help him much in the circumstance.

My love and blessings are always with you.

9 October 1934

*

My dear Baby,

If you remain always happy, the body will get all right in time.

With love and blessings always

23 October 1934

*

My dear Baby,

If you remain happy, the desires will not be able to catch hold of you, they will go away.

My love and blessings are always with you.

25 October 1934

*

My dear Baby,

Keep steadily your happiness and peace is sure to come, sending away the restlessness.

With love and blessings always

26 October 1934

*

I hope the “blind Baby” will soon open his psychic eyes and follow the mind no longer.

New Correspondences of the Mother

My love, help and blessings are always with you to obtain that result.

28 October 1934

*

My dear Baby,

Fear not, be not anxious, surely one day you will feel my presence and recognise me as your true mother always with you to help you with her love and blessings.

29 October 1934

*

My dear Baby,

That my words are making you happy now, is surely a great progress and I am glad of it.

My love and help and protection are always with you.

30 October 1934

*

O my lovely Ma,

*Thy Love, Help and Blessings are with me. They
are Thy nurses. Thy nurses are with me, but Thou art
not with me! Thou keepest me with Thy nurses for
care and Thou runnest away.*

My dear Baby,

My "nurses" are *myself*; I do not see how you can make this distinction.

So now I shall say—instead of sending you my love and blessings—I *am with you*.

30 October 1934

*

My dear Baby,

I was not at all angry. I was simply joking. Can't you

Series Five—Ambu

recognise a joke? I am so glad to hear that the happiness is steady in you now.

You can send your book. I shall see if I can write in it as you ask me to do.

With love and blessings

1 November 1934

*

Yes, my dear Baby,

I am always in your heart bringing peace and certitude. I am always above your head pouring down Light and Ananda and I shall penetrate all your cells with an unshakable happiness.

With love and blessings

6 November 1934

*

(Early in November the disciple sent to the Mother a bound notebook and asked her to write something for him every day in it. For the next six months, she wrote one page a day for him. Often she chose a sentence from one of the world's scriptures or from the works of various thinkers and sages. This book of sayings was later published under the title The Lesson of Life. In the following letters these sayings are sometimes mentioned.)

My dear Baby,

I have not waited for your heart to open. I have settled there already. Follow the advice of Saadi: contemplate your heart steadily and you will find me there.

With love and blessings

8 November 1934

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear Baby,

I am very happy to see that, in spite of what you say to the contrary, you have become somewhat *wise* and are able now to reject the wrong suggestions.

You must know that these sentences I send you, convey to you my love and blessings accumulated since centuries.

Always near you

13 November 1934

*

My dear Baby,

I meant that throughout the ages, by the mouth and writings of all the wise people, it is always the same eternal knowledge, the same eternal love, the blessings of the same eternal Consciousness that manifest and express themselves, and again now go to you when I write:

Love and blessings to my dear Baby

14 November 1934

*

My dear Baby,

Fear not, all struggles come to an end, all headaches go and the fire inside can be changed into a powerful means of progress, throwing down the resistance which is the cause of the pressure.

The force, the love and the protection are always with you.

Blessings

15 November 1934

*

My dear Baby,

It is not I who have given you the “blindness and dullness” as you call them, it is the obscurity of the material world which I have come to fight and conquer...

With love and blessings

16 November 1934

*

Series Five—Ambo

Very good, my dear Baby, you can make a shield of my love and an armour with my protection.

With blessings

16 November 1934

*

Ma,

Today I have suffered too much. My body is breaking. In my chest I feel too much weakness.

Do not believe that your body is breaking; it is not true, your body is very strong and will be quite healthy as soon as the inner quiet and poise of your vital being will allow it to remain calm, balanced and restful.

19 November 1934

*

My dear Baby,

Your resolution to be a warrior against the forces of depression and sadness is an excellent one and you will always find me by your side for this good fight.

My love and blessings

22 November 1934

*

My dear Baby,

There is some inner part of your being where there is no struggle, take refuge there and you will be at ease...

With my love and blessings

3 December 1934

*

Shake off the uneasiness—think of something nice—remain my faithful Baby.

New Correspondences of the Mother

With my love and blessings

13 January 1935

*

Ma!

*What is the “Dhammapada”? What does it mean?
It was written by whom?*

The Dhammapada is the book containing the teachings of the Buddha (Cakya Muni). “Dhammapada” is a Pali word which means the foundation of the Law.

Love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

15 January 1935

*

(*The disciple asked the Mother about a sentence she had written in his notebook: “It is said in the Ecclesiasticus: ‘I am the Mother of pure love and of science and of sacred hope.’”*)

My dear faithful Baby,

The Ecclesiasticus is one of the Hebrew sacred books (not part of the Bible) and in the quoted sentence, it is the Mother speaking of herself.

With love and blessings

20 February 1935

*

(*In the disciple’s notebook the Mother wrote: “Thales has said: ‘Wherever you find movement, there you find life and a soul.’” The disciple asked:)*

What does “movement” mean—any kind of movement? It is better to explain the whole sentence.

Series Five—Ambo

Yes, any kind of movement, even in a plant. It is a way of saying that the divine consciousness is everywhere.

With love and blessings to my very dear and faithful Baby

19 March 1935

*

Baby!...

Before inferring that I have done this or that, with no other basis than your own imagination, you ought to think twice and not forget that you have promised to be faithful.

28 March 1935

*

My Love,

What is the meaning of “service”?

The work that is done not for oneself but as a disinterested offering to the Divine.

With love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

29 March 1935

*

Ma,

Who was Hermes?

Hermes Trismegistus is the name given by the Greeks to a great initiate who founded in Egypt the occult science and was deified under the name of Thoth thousands of years ago.

Love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

6 April 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

Why do you call yourself an *unlucky* fellow? Is it so

New Correspondences of the Mother

unlucky to have come here? Let this eighth year bring to you a constant happiness.

With love and blessings always

19 May 1935

*

My lovely Ma,

My body is very tired and my mind also. I feel weakness in all the limbs.

My dear faithful Baby,

I am very sorry to hear that you are so tired. Either you must take rest, or you must see the doctor and let him give you something to cheer you up.

With love and blessings always

22 May 1935

*

My Love,

To rush a little less is possible and also not possible, because I started the work and now I must finish it. Only a few days are left.

My dear faithful Baby,

Yes, I suppose you are right. Now that you have begun it is difficult to stop before the work is finished. But let it be *finished* by the end of this month and after that you must truly "rush less" and not get tired as you are getting now.

Our love and blessings are always with you.

27 May 1935

*

My dear faithful child,

The doctor says that you ought to lead a quieter life, to take more rest and more food. Will you not try to do so?

Series Five—Ambu

With our love and blessings always

7 June 1935

*

(*For the disciple's birthday*)

My dear faithful Baby,

Let this day be a very happy day and the first of 365 very happy days.

With love and blessings.

14 June 1935

*

O my Love,

I am feeling uneasiness in my nerves. I feel weakness. My limbs are tired.

My dear faithful Baby,

How can I not be sorry when I hear that you are unwell? And what to do to give strength to your nerves? It is only quietness, inside and outside, that can make the nerves strong.

My love and blessings are always with you.

22 June 1935

*

O my Love,

Quite happy. Very happy. But during the day some moments pass that are unbearable. In the heart I feel uneasiness.

My dear faithful Baby,

When you feel uneasy, do one thing: take the notebook in which I have written so many sentences and open it at any page. I am sure you will receive therein the answer you need.

With love and blessings always

1 July 1935

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

To my dear faithful Baby,

Not displeased, but astonished that X's will should have more weight with you than mine... Love and blessings

3 July 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

You are not ungrateful and unfaithful, but if you were to go it would be an act of very great unfaithfulness and ungratefulness, so I am quite sure that you will not go.

My love for you will prevent you from doing it and my blessings will carry you safely through the darkness and make you recover your happiness and strength.

5 July 1935

*

*My lovely Ma,
I feel depressed.*

It is the arrival of all these outsiders. Don't worry and keep quiet inside as much as you can and the depression will go.

Love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

8 August 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

Not depressed! Once more opened to my love and blessings, is it not?

11 August 1935

*

If you want me to help you, you must let me know what is the matter.

Series Five—Ambu

Love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

24 August 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

Keep faith and courage, the trouble will soon be over and then you will recover your normal condition, happy and strong.

With love and blessings

29 August 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I see no reason why you should not be happy. Happiness is sure to come when you will become conscious and master of yourself.

My love and blessings are always with you.

4 September 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I am so sorry to hear that your body is suffering. Yet I hope you will soon recover.

Love and blessings

5 September 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I am not at all displeased with you, but I am sorry that you feel yourself sunk down in despair. I wish you would make a strong effort. If you make a resolute effort, you will surely come out of it.

My love and blessings are always with you.

8 September 1935

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear faithful Baby,

I quite understand that you need rest and I would fully agree if you took a few days rest. But I fear the rest you need is not physical; it is your heart, so to say, that needs rest—and that rest, are you ready to take it?

My love and blessings are always with you.

9 September 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I meant by rest, real rest—separating yourself from all contacts that trouble and exhaust you and resting inwardly in me.

It is ignorant to speak of death as a rest. By dying one does not enter into rest; consciousness continues and the same feelings that one had in life. If you died with these feelings of trouble and despondency in you, they would continue after death with greater intensity. Nothing would be gained by that.

To be free from these things you have to overcome them in life here and that can only be done by throwing away their cause.

My love and blessings are always with you.

10 September 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

How much I wish that all this unhappiness and uneasiness should come to an end! But won't you unite your will to mine?

Love and blessings

12 September 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

Take refuge in your *faithfulness*, trust my love and blessings

Series Five—Ambo

and you will feel better.

15 September 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

You know that my help is with you to overcome the difficulties and my love and blessings to give you strength and courage.

18 September 1935

*

Love and blessings to my very dear and very faithful Baby.

Now rest, rest, rest and gather a mountain of strength and energy.

19 September 1935

*

It is the natural consequence of the sudden diminution of work.

Be quiet and all depression will go.

Love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

20 September 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I am quite sure that you might say many times: "I am happy", and truly be so.

Love and blessings, always

28 September 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

Would you not take some cod-liver oil? It might help your nerves to recover. If you agree, ask some from the doctor. Surely we must find a way of making you recover your energy.

New Correspondences of the Mother

With love and blessings always

9 October 1935

*

O my lovely Ma,

*Do not be angry or displeased because I tell Thee
sincerely what I feel.*

*I have no faith, I have no contentment. Always
I feel that Mother is not taking care of me. Really,
Mother, I have no hope.*

*One part of me knows that what I write is
absolutely wrong. But between that part and me there
is a distance of more than a thousand miles.*

My dear faithful Baby,

Yes, it is the usual conflict between the ego and the soul and it is that conflict that makes you tired, in the same way as it is the absence of faith that takes away from our help a great part of its efficacy. I am not angry, my love and blessings are with you.

22 October 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

You must not lose hope in the recovery of your body. You are so young, it is sure to become strong again. Keep faith and confidence, it will help to bring the recovery soon.

Our love and blessings are always with you.

22 October 1935

*

My dear Baby is a faithful Baby. I love him very much and I know he loves me also.

Certainly it would be very sad if your body lost its health

Series Five—Ambu

and indeed very sad also if you joined the troop of those who abuse us.

But are these two calamities quite unavoidable? Still I do not believe so...

My love wishes to keep hope and my blessings try to help you.

I knew quite well that you were late for the pranam and sorry for it.

24 October 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I am quite convinced that to go away from here would not in the least improve the condition of your body.

Love and blessings to you

2 November 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I hope you will courageously go through the struggle and win the victory over depression, gaining back a lasting happiness. My force will always help you in the fight whenever you ask for it.

Love and blessings to you

9 November 1935

*

If you feel so tired, I suppose you will have to stop doing work.

I hope you are not taking less food.

All love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

12 November 1935

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear faithful Baby,

I hope you will feel more and more at home here in my love and blessings.

17 November 1935

*

O my lovely Ma!

For two days the idea of going away from here is giving me trouble. I have a strong desire to go. The idea rises up in me strongly: "Once I have to go, I ought to go. This place is not for me." Ideas of this kind are coming. They make my head hot and restless and trouble me.

I fear these bad ideas are the present X has given you in exchange for all the care and trouble you have taken for him. These ideas are falsehoods; you must not listen to them. Your place and home are here in my love and protection.

Love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

29 November 1935

*

O my Love,

What wast Thou saying to me at Pranam time?

I was telling you not to be sad because of passing friendships and unlasting loves—that you can always take refuge on my lap and feel at home in my arms.

Love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

4 December 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

Surely you must be successful in your fight and the bad

Series Five—Ambo

ideas must run away.

My love and blessings are always with you in the struggle for the Victory.

9 December 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

Keep firm on the side of your soul. The struggle is sure to pass away and the peace and joy will be more firmly established than before.

My help, love and blessings are always with you.

10 December 1935

*

Love and blessings to my dear *faithful* Baby who must be *full of faith*.

12 December 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I understand quite well your case and am full of sympathy, but... what can be done? The only thing I can do is to help you to overcome your desires if you have the will to overcome them.

Love and blessings always

15 December 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I do not see how to go and suffer more can be a solution of the problem...

At least here you can be sure of my love and help.

With my blessings

16 December 1935

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear faithful Baby,

There is between us a bondage of true affection which is stronger than the desires and the dissatisfaction, even the restlessness. I do not think it is a fear of the kind you mention that keeps you here, it is because deep down in your heart there is love for Sri Aurobindo and myself.

And there also you know that we love you.

17 December 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

You have done for me much more than you believe. I know that you are trying your best to please me and get over the depression, and I am sure you will soon succeed.

My love and blessings are always with you.

29 December 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I am so sorry to hear that you are unwell. Are you still following the treatment?

Love and blessings

30 December 1935

*

My dear faithful Baby,

You are very generous and the box is very fine but I am quite sure that you are in need of such a box to put all sorts of small things in it and I would be very pleased if you kept it. So I am sending it back to you with my love and blessings.

P.S. Do you not think, as you are feeling so often unwell, that it would be wiser to resume the treatment and continue it

Series Five—Ambu

patiently for some time at least?

2 January 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

Remember the Gita—let your chariot be driven by the Divine and you are sure of the Victory.

Our love, blessings and help are always with you

13 January 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

Let me light in your heart the fire of the conquering will and the acuteness of the struggle will disappear.

My love and blessings are always with you

14 January 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I hope the mind will soon be able to throw away the sadness and the depression and the happiness will be complete.

My love and blessings are always with you.

16 January 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

The eyes which can see and recognise me are eyes of the heart, not those of the head.

My love and blessings are always with you.

19 January 1936

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear faithful Baby,

Yes, I know that you love me and I also love you very heartily. But it seems to me that it is not me whom you cannot make happy—it is yourself by thinking all sorts of things that are not true; for it is not true that you have been unable to do something for me. On the contrary you have always been useful and in some cases truly helpful—and when you manage to be happy I am fully satisfied.

If only you could feel my love and blessings that are always with you...

22 January 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

No condition is ever lasting, even the bad things come to an end. We have only, when there is a storm, to keep quiet and be patient—the storm will stop and the happy sun will make its reappearance.

My love and blessings are with you to help and strengthen.

23 January 1936

*

You must write what you have to say—and be sure that I will always understand you—even if I do not answer.

Love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

27 January 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

No, I have not any impression that you and X are constantly practising “asanas”. Y simply told me that you were both experts in that art and that he had seen you taking the most difficult postures.

Series Five—Ambo

Love and blessings, always

29 January 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I am not at all angry, I am only sorry not to be able to pull you out of that condition.

My love and blessings always.

1 February 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

All I ask you is to be still patient for some time more.

With all my love I am trying to help you.

7 February 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

If you are so very tired will you stop the granary work for a time and take some rest?

With my love and blessings

15 March 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I have no intention of being cruel and with all my heart I wish to pull you out of your difficulties. But to change the outward nature needs time and perseverance. So you must be courageous and have patience.

Never doubt my love and care.

3 April 1936

*

It seems that you have been again very tired today. I would like you to stop your work for a time.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

9 April 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I do not understand what you mean when you say that you have "betrayed me and deceived me" and also I do not see in all that any clear reasons why you should go. But I am very sorry that you are thus harassed by these mischievous suggestions.

My love and blessings are always with you.

13 April 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I am not at all displeased but a little sorry because of your bad health. Anyhow I hope it will soon be better. We are informing the doctor that you will go to him today.

My love and blessings are always with you.

17 April 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I am very happy to see you at pranam and meditation and so very happy that you are getting better.

With love and blessings always

21 April 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I am quite sure that all your weaknesses will leave you one after the other in due time.

Series Five—Ambu

My love and blessings are always with you.

22 April 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

Do not worry and keep patient—all the clouds and depressions will go little by little and never come back again.

My love and blessings are always with you.

23 April 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

The steadiness also will come in its time, and along with it the peace and the happiness. There is only to be patient for a little time more.

My love and blessings are always with you.

24 April 1936

*

It is not the physical consciousness, neither the vital nor even the mental that can recognise. It is only the psychic when it wakes up and comes to the front. Your psychic has recognised me long ago and it is that that keeps you here. For your usual consciousness it is still behind the veil, but now you must tear open the veil and you will see.

Love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

19 May 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

X has given me your note to him. Be sure that I fully appreciate the kindness of your intention in writing to him; but, to say the truth, the way in which he or any other sadhak

New Correspondences of the Mother

makes pranam to me must remain a matter between him and me and no one can intervene. Nor could any intervention in a matter like that be at all helpful.

Love and blessings

22 May 1936

*

It is not your own feeling, it is a suggestion that comes from outside. You have simply not to pay any attention to it.

Love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

3 June 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

Surely I am helping and will continue to help you until you have found me seated in your heart.

With my love and blessings

28 September 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

All this climbing down the scale of weight is not very satisfactory. I hope next time it will be better.

My love and blessings are with you.

5 October 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

No wonder that you are depressed. It is that you need rest and I expect you will take the rest you need.

With love and blessings

7 October 1936

*

Series Five—Ambo

My dear faithful Baby,

This sensitiveness to the suggestion of fear is surely due to nervous strain and fatigue. With a little rest and perhaps some medicines from the doctor, all that meaningless fear will vanish.

Our love, blessings and help are always with you.

9 October 1936

*

My dear Baby,

If you fear me, how can I help you? Yet my love and blessings are with you.

27 October 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

Don't be discouraged. Let your heart of hearts remain firm and steady in its faith. Try to take refuge there—*the storm will pass away*.

My love, help and blessings are always with you.

7 November 1936

*

Is it not interesting to succeed in difficult things?

Love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

7 November 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

I know that you are trying your best and I appreciate very much your effort. On my side, my love and help are with you to lead you to Victory.

Blessings

9 November 1936

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear faithful Baby,

Persevere in your will to reject the attack and you are sure of the Victory.

My love, help and blessings are always with you.

10 November 1936

*

Indeed, my dear faithful Baby is truly courageous, and courage is sure to win the victory. I am happy for it and send him my love and blessings.

13 November 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

Do not mind the struggle, do not let it make you sad. This struggle is unavoidable but it is sure to come to a happy end. Just now you are progressing very nicely.

Love and blessings to you

21 December 1936

*

My dear faithful Baby,

When I spoke of progress I did not mean a diminution in the struggle but an increase in your receptivity. Since a few days I felt you more open to my force and I could work in you more easily.

Love and blessings to you

22 December 1936

*

My lovely Ma,

You have given me the work of picking flowers and giving flowers to people when they need them. I have been doing all this as best I can. Now X, who has been given only the work of garden organisation, has begun to interfere and give away flowers himself.

Series Five—Ambu

Don't you think he ought to refer people to me and say, "It is his work", for harmony and accurate results? When I told him this, he said, "Complain to Mother and I will answer her."

Evidently all these things have to be adjusted and I shall see to it. But during these days, when the Ashram is filled with visitors, it is surely not a time for quarrels but for work done harmoniously in a spirit of collaboration without insisting on personal considerations.

Love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

21 November 1937

*

To my dear faithful Baby,

Let this 12th year which begins for you be the year of illumination.

Love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

19 May 1939

*

To my dear faithful Baby,

My special blessings for his birthday.

As for the work I am somewhat embarrassed because there are many places where you can do useful work. But is there nothing that you would do with more pleasure?

My love and blessings

14 June 1939

*

My dear *faithful Baby*,

I am not at all displeased with your work and I ask you to go on doing it as before. I told you myself that I wanted you to be free so that if you were needed to help someone or another you would be able to do it.

New Correspondences of the Mother

As for the plucking of the flowers I must ask you not to climb on the “realisation” tree nor on the champa; we shall have to wait for the flowers to fall down to pick them up.

I hope the clouds are quite gone now, with my love and blessings.

7 May 1940

*

Mamma, my Life,

Tomorrow is my birthday. I will finish 31.

Mamma? I want to ask you something. A few years back you told someone, as far as I remember, that I am near to you from within but far far away outwardly from you.

I do not remember having said anything like that, but of one thing you can be sure, it is that you are much closer to me now than a few years back.

I know you have no time, but it comes in my mind so I am asking you: When will you see my asana postures?

I am thinking of asking you to come tomorrow for the “asanas”. The best time for me is 6.30 p.m. when I have finished on the staircase, before going down for meditation. As you are coming tomorrow for your birthday, you can come up and instead of going down you will come in with me and show me your postures in my room.

With my love and blessings

13 June 1941

*

Mama,

What shall I ask you on my birthday? I don't know. I can't think. I can't pray. Give me what you wish. That is my wish-prayer-desire.

Series Five—Ambo

*Let more and more love grow in me, let me
be Thine, Thy faithful baby, Thy eternal baby, Thy
eternal smiling baby.*

My dear faithful Baby,

Let the year which begins for you today bring you the fulfilment of your highest aspirations.

With my love and special blessings

14 June 1941

*

My dear faithful child,

You are *not* taking too much freedom, you are *not* behaving badly, you are *not* misusing my affection and kindness. So remain happy and do not worry.

With my love and blessings

29 September 1941

UNDATED LETTERS OF THE PERIOD 1934–1936

The red lotus is the Avatar.

The white lotus is the Divine Consciousness.

*

In a prayer you ask something from the Divine—in a meditation you contemplate and express a truth.

Love and blessings to my dear faithful Baby

*

Ma, what is perfection?

To be exactly what the Divine wants of us.

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

O Ma!

Ananda, Peace, Purity in me so I can do as Thou wishest. What must I do so I can become helpful to Thee?

Receive fully what I give you; like that you can help me in my work for you.

*

The great secret for receiving is to give oneself. Give yourself unreservedly to the Divine and you will receive fully the Divine's Love and Happiness.

*

You say that you want to become conscious of my presence in you; is it not your goal?

*

First you must want it, and then you must try again and again to concentrate deep inside your heart.

*

Open your mind like a silent cave and I shall come in there also.

*

My dear faithful Baby,

Surely you must feel that I have come... prepare a nice quiet place for me in your mind and I will always remain there.
With love and blessings

*

It is because you allow the discontentment to come that you cannot feel the presence of "Mother" who is always with you,

Series Five—Ambo

helping, protecting and loving.

*

O my lovely Ma,

*Often in the day my faith gets shaken. My days
are passing in struggle. Thy love and presence I forget.*

Yes, you must steadily push away all that stands between you and me, like doubts and restlessness and depression. And then you will feel my constant presence, which is a fact.

*

*Ma! First push out sadness and depression. Establish
Thy Ananda, Peace and Happiness...*

Keep firm and courageous—the attack will pass and you will feel quite well once more.

I am always with you.

*

*O Ma, Your Peace! Give me strength to fight against
hostile forces. O Ma, come! Make the way...*

Let your trust in the help grow and the struggle will soon be over.

*

Yes, if you remain steady and throw away the attacks, they are obliged to leave you and finally they will come no more. Just look carefully and listen silently and you are sure to find me there, in the quiet stillness of your heart.

*

This is quite a good resolution. Yes, we will stand and fight

New Correspondences of the Mother

together and conquer these bad enemies: sadness and depression. They must not be allowed to approach you any more.

*

I also cannot understand why you allow yourself to be in that condition. You must try to become more conscious and less passively open to anything and everything that wants to catch hold of you.

Shake off this unpleasant state and recover your true condition of happiness.

My help and love are always with you, but you must make use of them.

*

My dear Baby will be entirely happy when he will listen to truth instead of listening to falsehood and believing the false things that people tell him against me.

My love and blessings are always with you.

*

I did not mock, I did not laugh. I smiled as usual with all my affection. Is it that something is tormenting you that you felt in that way?

*

Ma, come into my mind. Purify my mind, live within it, make it wide, fill it with Thy thoughts.

*O my lovely Ma, Come! I can't keep patient.
When will it be all right? O Ma, come!*

Why so much hurry? You are progressing well now. Be a little more patient and all will be soon all right.

*

Series Five—Ambu

...suddenly I awoke and jumped from my bed. At this moment I heard a fierce sound outside. My body began to tremble. Again I went to bed but still my body was trembling. In the sleep also I felt unwell.

You are quite right in not getting upset, but you must overcome the fear also. You must learn not to be frightened by anything; and when fear tries to approach you, you must think: "My Mother is with me, what harm can happen to me?"

With love and blessings

*

My dear faithful Baby,

Do not lose courage. One day the Light will catch hold of your body and all your miseries will go.

*

Why do you think that your body is weak? If you are sure that it is strong, it will become quite healthy and strong.

Love and blessings

*

There is no question of your breaking down. Be fully confident: you will reach the goal.

*

Lovely Ma!

Give me your finger and lead me...

I am quite ready to give you the help not only of a finger but of the full hand.

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Come to me in your sleep, my dear faithful Baby. You will be always welcomed.

With love and blessings

*

My dear faithful Baby,

Yes, rest with your head on my lap and my love in your heart.

*

Do you not know that your happiness is *me*? ...

Series Six

Correspondence with Parichand

Born on 30 October 1904, the Bengali disciple Parichand Kothari joined the Ashram on 11 November 1934 at the age of thirty. During the first few years, he worked as a gatekeeper, librarian and English teacher. Then in 1938 he began working in the garden of the Ashram's main building. For the next fifty years he was head of that garden and head also of the Ashram Garden Service. He lived in the Ashram for fifty-six years, until his passing on 27 August 1991 at the age of eighty-six.

Parichand's correspondence with the Mother is arranged in two parts, "Sadhana and Life" and "Gardening Work"; it covers the period from 1936 to 1961.

SADHANA AND LIFE

Mother,

Sometimes the vegetables in the Dining Room have an unpleasant taste, but I am eating them in spite of it in order to break old formations and achieve an equality of taste. Is this what You wish me to do?

Certainly it is indispensable to break down the narrowness and limitations of taste—the vegetables that taste bad to you others find excellent.

c. 1936

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Mother,

In Your prayer of 7 December 1912, there is the following sentence: "Thy Peace is in me, and in that Peace I see Thee alone present in everything, with the calm of Eternity." Does the phrase "the calm of Eternity" refer to "I" or "Thee"?

It is not so clear-cut as that. It is the atmosphere in which the experience takes place.

In Your prayer of 5 December 1912, there is the line "Thou, nothing but Thou, without any analysis or any objectivising". What is the exact meaning of the word "objectivising"?

To consider nothing as being outside the Divine and oneself.

1936

*

Mother,

We are having some difficulty in understanding the true meaning of the following sentence in Your prayer of 17 May 1914: "The first, as though the power of the prayer would not be complete unless it were traced on paper." One makes one's prayer with the help of words, but is a written prayer more powerful than a spoken one? Please clarify the meaning of this sentence.

One should never read this book as if it were giving general rules. Each experience recorded there is a particular case. Moreover, the very form of the sentence implies that it is a particular case, even an exceptional one. These are subtleties of form that no one with a good knowledge of French could mistake.

From the *occult* point of view:

1. Something formulated in words is more powerful than

Series Six—Parichand

something only vaguely thought.

2. Something spoken aloud is more powerful than something formulated in words.

3. And lastly, something written is more powerful than something only spoken aloud. But this concerns an occult action exclusively.

c. 1937

*

Mother,

Half an hour, from 10.00 to 10.30, does not seem to be enough time for my work on the “Visions”. I can work until 11.00 if You permit it. But then I will not be able to join the meditation because I will be on gate duty.

I don't think it would be good to give up the meditation, which is an opportunity to immerse oneself again in the true consciousness.

c. 1938

*

Meditation is a time of recollection during which one should renew one's offering, one's dedication, one's surrender to the Divine. It is important for the poise of the day not to miss it.

c. 1938

*

Mother,

This evening during meditation I felt a sense of suffocation and dizziness on two occasions and I thought that I was going to faint. This sensation interrupted my meditation twice. I noticed that my trust in You was wavering; otherwise nothing could interrupt my meditation. I have felt a similar sensation

New Correspondences of the Mother

*in the past, especially in the midst of a large crowd or
in a room too full of people.*

Perhaps this dizziness comes precisely because the room is too full of people. Wouldn't it be better for you to sit outside in the open air?

c. 1938

*

Mother,

When the outer nature becomes too restless and the spontaneous peace and concentration are lacking, any effort on my part to concentrate turns into a kind of tapasya. Various suggestions are coming to divert me from this effort, saying that this attitude of tapasya is not as effective as an effortless state. But it seems to me that this effort, this tapasya is necessary so long as the outer nature is not purified. Please give me some direction.

Both are necessary and each comes in its own time.

c. 1938

*

Mother,

Something in me says that You should not be disturbed by my asking questions about unimportant things. Is this suggestion true?

It cannot be said that it is either false or true, for each case is different. A general mental rule cannot be true. It is only through the inner contact that one can be guided with a certain sureness. In any case, it is better to ask too many questions rather than too few.

c. 1938

*

Series Six—Parichand

Mother,

Questions in plenty have been cropping up about work and my inner attitude, some clearly and others vaguely. One part of me says, "Catch these questions as best you can, even the smallest ripples, and put them before the Mother." But another part suggests, "That the Mother won't like because She has very little time to spare. Wait until things become clearer from within." But in following this latter suggestion, I have sometimes committed blunders which would not have been done if I had referred to You.

What attitude on my part will smoothen Your purifying work?

A general attitude of *quiet opening* to the Light and the Force is more important than to go into details. Always remember the will to surrender, the precision in details will surely come afterwards.

My love and blessings

c. 1938

*

Mother,

You once told me that the impulses or suggestions which strike the mind first when one sets about doing something were the right and true ones. But so often the perverse forces of the mind and vital lie in wait and bring about a great confusion. As my discernment is not yet clear and sure, I feel I should refer these first intuitions to You physically, in writing, in order to do away with any chance of distorting the movement.

But will this not involve going into details, which You told me is not so important at present as a general attitude of quiet opening? How then can this going into details be avoided?

New Correspondences of the Mother

It is the inner attitude of surrender and consecration which is the most important and must be kept all through day and night, if possible.

The physical referring to me by writing must come only occasionally as a control of what has been received in the inner silence. That is to say, if you have asked a question and received an inner answer and you are not quite sure of the exactitude of your perception, you can write to know from me the truth about it.

My love and blessings

1940

*

Mother,

While at work, unpleasant vibrations keep my mind and heart unsettled and perverse movements blind my vision. Sometimes I feel that I am pushed not by impulses coming from You but from undivine sources, and yet I cannot clearly discern the right from the wrong. Mother, because of the dark forces still reigning over my nature it will take time to turn it into Your instrument.

It is in the quietness of the mind that the discrimination between the forces can come. Keep your mind silent and most of the problems will be solved.

My love and blessings

1940

*

Mother,

There is a growing tendency in me towards lessening rather than increasing work—doing less work but in a better and more careful way. Mother, is my attitude right or is some wrong idea activating me?

Series Six—Parichand

Yes, it is all right, better do well than do much.

My love and blessings

1940

*

Mother,

The constant push to activity after activity has now given place to a tendency to inaction. Exhaustion follows after a little work and the body sinks down forcefully. No zeal, no conquering will. How can I shake it off for good?

Most probably it is only a period and it may leave you soon. But do not worry about it and remain quiet. It is the best way to quicken its departure.

My love and blessings

1940

*

Mother,

The day before yesterday I took tea and other preparations at X's and just after tea I drank a glass of water. That night I could not sleep until 1.00 a.m. The next day and today I suffered from a dry cold, uneasiness, heaviness, feverishness and a slight headache. Are these not due to my accepting tea without Your permission?

No, not for that—most likely it is due to the cold water on the hot tea.

My love and blessings

1940

*

Mother divine,

Although my mind says that even if the Mother

New Correspondences of the Mother

gives no reply to my letters I should not despond in the least, still my vital shrinks and sinks a little. It craves for some stimulant and tries to cloud the mind. Today I have felt a sort of dryness and laxity.

I pray, O Mother, let me know inwardly or outwardly where I stand and let me fulfil Your intention. I want to be Yours, my Mother, take me up.

You must not worry—depression and anxiety are the result of a hostile influence; they must be rejected at once. It is not by a mental brooding on one's own mistake or [sentence incomplete]

c. 1940

*

Mother,

Some parts of my nature are in turmoil. Is it due to some wrong attitude or to subconscious upsurgings? By Your grace my inner poise is intact, but my outer nature is still subject to heaviness, weakness and unrest. I aspire to know how to get over them.

Ignore them and turn your attention elsewhere.

24 December 1945

*

Mother divine,

In spite of enough physical movement, my constipation persists and there is a consequent lethargy in the body. Since my inner consciousness is still subjected to the body, there is often a depression in the vital and mental parts. If a purgative such as Milk of Magnesia is taken, this disturbance may be avoided. But that will mean dependence on an external aid. Moreover, I doubt whether You approve of taking purgatives.

Series Six—Parichand

Mother, I humbly and earnestly pray for Thy guidance and uplifting Grace so that I may be able to shake off these morbidities and become a strong, glad and illumined servitor of Thee.

Take the Milk of Magnesia at once and also the resolution to be (and not to become) “a strong, glad and illumined servitor”; there is no need of waiting any longer for that.

My love and blessings

9 September 1946

*

Mother,

The past failings and falterings of my nature, its insincerities and faithlessnesses, occasionally cut me to the quick. Should I pay any attention to them?

It is better not to brood over these things. A simple detachment is the first step towards liberation.

My love and blessings

c. 1946

*

Mother divine,

Month after month, year after year pass away, yet no decisive opening is made in my being, no definite change in my consciousness. Sometimes my heart shudders at the thought that there is something wrong in my attitude, that there are certain perverse habits in my nature which oppose a sweet, devotional, child-like psychic relation with You.

Today I feel a strong urge to approach Thee, O Mother, for enlightening me on the real nature of the opposition and showing me a rapid way out of this tangle.

New Correspondences of the Mother

The smallest change in the nature, especially in the physical, needs a very long time to be realised—so the first condition is to be very patient.

My love and blessings

9 April 1947

*

My sweet Mother,

*Should I also get my hair cut for marching in the
Playground? If so, should I simply get it bobbed or
clipped closer?*

Bobbed is all right.

31 January 1949

*

Mother,

*Dr. X proposes that on the day of Y's operation
(Friday) and one or two days after, Z and I should
arrange to remain by turns in the hospital both in the
daytime and at night. He says You have permitted it.
Should we act accordingly?*

Y is very frightened by the perspective of the operation. Consequently I advised him not to get operated.

c. 1949

*

Mother,

*These days I meet with a difficulty. Special food
preparations are widely prevalent and occasionally I
am requested to partake of them. Sometimes I refuse,
sometimes I find it hard to do so. But whenever I
accept I feel a prick of conscience. What should be
my attitude?*

Series Six—Parichand

It depends mostly on the people who invite you. I cannot give a general answer.

My blessings

18 March 1950

*

Mother,

X and I were surprised to hear that Y wrote to You for work due to our pressure. I proposed his name to You because I was impressed by his words; I thought he had no objection to taking up the work. Now I hear that You are displeased with our moves. I am not quite conscious of my faults, but it seems I was wrong in my judgment. I pray to You for pardon for any wrong done unconsciously.

I have never shown or expressed the *slightest displeasure* for your moves. *Beware* of what people may say or express in *my name* because usually it is *disfigured*.

In any case do not worry. Everything will be all right.
With my love and blessings

25 May 1961

GARDENING WORK

In preparing the bed of the third plot, it may be found necessary to cut away some roots of the trees.

This is *not* possible. No roots of trees must be cut.

Apart from that—if the trees are respected, you can prepare these plots.

Blessings

1938

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

I explained the whole thing to Z today. Of course this poor Service tree has already suffered much by the last storm and I do not wish to inflict any more difficulty upon it—but in this case it is not the main point. The objection to putting the eucalyptus plant there is that as the Service tree has already grown roots there, especially when some fresh good soil is put, it will grow some new roots much stronger than those of the eucalyptus plant, suck all the nourishment out of the soil and leave the eucalyptus plant starving if not even crushed out of existence.

Hair roots can be cut if indispensable but in small quantity and not often.

Blessings

1938

*

One "Engine" rose plant, received from Calcutta last November and transplanted early in January, was growing nicely, but now the leaves have crinkled and turned blackish. Liquid manure was twice applied within nine days.

I suspect the liquid manure to be the culprit in almost all cases. In France the first thing taught to those who look after rose plants is that liquid manure and in general all *unfermented* manure must never be used.

9 April 1938

*

In the summer many buds become weak, malformed and discoloured. Is it not good to nip them?

You may try on one and see the result.

Do You approve of restricting the number of buds, shoots and fruits so that the remaining ones may be more vigorous?

Series Six—Parichand

It is in the choice of those to keep and those to remove that lies the difficulty.

14 May 1938

*

In the summer we are accustomed to seeing the tips of branches drying, foliage losing its greenness, shoots lacking in vigour, leaves crinkling and plants presenting a weak and sickly appearance. The mind suggests that this is more or less inevitable in places like this where for almost six months the hot season prevails. But something in me counters this suggestion and says, "Plants can remain quite fresh and full of life throughout the year if one knows how to keep them. If proper precautionary measures are taken, climatic changes can have no influence on the plants and it is not indispensable for them to undergo such suffering. Certain plants may take rest in summer, growth may be held in check for that period, but no trace of suffering will be visible."

Certainly, if the necessary care is given the plants need not suffer.

Blessings

28 May 1938

*

... This incident has brought the following suggestion to me: "Put the umbrellas over the plants at 11 or 11.30 a.m. and take them off at 2 or 2.30 p.m. This will be enough protection from the sun. Let the watering also be regulated." I pray for Your direction.

From the point of view of the rose plants it would be evidently better—but what about you?

4 June 1938

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

In the pit unused croton compost is kept. Along the wall and behind the kitchen there is palm compost.

I hope all this is not smelling and making the house uncomfortable.

13 July 1938

*

These rose plants are under the shade of the mango tree and around them foliage plants have been put to provide shade and yet admit diffused light. I am keeping the soil of these plants always moist and on very hot days I am thinking of watering the plants in the afternoon and syringing them in the morning.

Take care not to water too much, the plants may get rotten.

29 July 1938

*

The rain is often so violent that it may be better if they [rose plants] do not receive it directly.

29 July 1938

*

Mother,

In X's house, there is a bael-fruit tree. It is a thorny tree, with some branches at the bottom which are in the way. X suggests cutting the bottom branches and allowing the tree to spread at the top; it is now about ten feet high.

It seems always a pity to cut branches—will it not spoil the tree?—while the convenience cannot be very great.

Blessings

1 September 1938

*

Series Six—Parichand

Mother,

The thirty rose plants in Red House present a most sickly appearance. Even those shifted there from Vigie House are worse than before. One reason for the sickliness of these plants may be their being too near the sea. The moist and saltish air constantly blowing from the sea may have an injurious effect upon them. But is this the real cause? If so, shall I remove them at once without waiting till they are gradually transplanted?

Surely it is the neighbourhood of the sea that is harmful. It is better to remove them as soon as possible.

12 September 1938

*

Mother,

While top-dressing the rose plants, we very often come across roots only an inch or so below the surface; the roots come practically to the surface. In such cases we cannot provide the plants with sufficient manure and soil unless we damage the roots.

I feel that I should not allow the roots to be cut, but the question of nourishment comes in. I am, of course, applying bone meal to almost all the plants. What else can I do?

The roots must be coming at the surface because when pushing downward they meet with the obstacle of the pot. Is it good to bury the pot in the ground like that? I always heard it was not as it favours the growth of worms.

In this connection I should like to know if You approve of the use of chemicals such as sulphate of ammonia, sulphate of potash, super-phosphate of lime, etc. in the case of rose plants. I remember reading

New Correspondences of the Mother

somewhere that such chemical manures should be used very cautiously, otherwise they may spell disaster. So I have refrained from applying them till now. But if You permit me to apply them, I shall inform You of the chemicals prescribed by the Rosarians and also the dose to be given.

It would be better to know first if these chemicals are at all recommended for the rose plants by the experts.

Blessings

15 September 1938

*

Mother,

In Y's proposal, which was submitted to You yesterday and which You have approved, we see that we shall start the work with our own supply of manure and that of a few private houses.

You gave us two alternatives. One was to arrange for the manure supply separately; the other was for the Garden Service to take the whole charge of the manure.

We should like to know which of the two You prefer.

I have no preference for any of the two solutions. It is the way in which it is worked out that is most important. Whatever can be done in good organisation and harmony, avoiding carefully all wastage and all quarrels, will have my full support.

Blessings

17 September 1938

*

Mother,

Certain rose plants are apt to suffer from excessive moisture, either due to bad drainage or to the

Series Six—Parichand

texture of the soil used in transplanting. It becomes necessary for such plants to be sheltered from the rain. This means shifting them to sheltered places each time it is raining or there is a chance of rain and bringing them back for sunning when the sky is clear. Do You like this?

I thought that plants did not like to be carried about too often . . .

17 September 1938

*

Mother,

Now and then the squirrels gnaw away mercilessly at the tender shoots of the rose plants on the Prosperity and Rosary terraces. Today I found a number of shoots lying on top of the pots and on the roof. How can I prevent the squirrels from this ravaging?

It seems impossible. Z tried all sorts of things and never succeeded. We are freely feeding these beasts to diminish their devastation, but without any result.

26 September 1938

*

Mother,

There is a general complaint against one of our gardeners, A. Though young and healthy he is dull in intellect, lazy in habit, prone to idle away his time and apathetic in the work entrusted to him. Moreover, he has expressed his dissatisfaction with the pay he receives and is sometimes irreverent in his attitude towards us. How to mend his habits or effect a change in his nature?

New Correspondences of the Mother

This is perfectly impossible. For a sadhak it is already a big job to change his outward nature; how can you expect it from an ordinary uneducated man?

4 October 1938

*

Mother,

While X was taking rest after his mid-day meal, he saw two paid gardeners, N and M, proceeding towards the broken branch of the sandal tree. M first tried to break a piece out of it but failed. Then N began cutting the branch with his knife when X caught him red-handed. On cross-examining these gardeners and also R, X came to know that R and N had tried to cut bits in the morning also. What do You advise us to do?

A good scolding from Amrita and a warning that if they begin doing again such things, they will be dismissed.

19 October 1938

*

Mother,

Some difficulty has arisen in connection with the heap of manure purchased yesterday. We settled the manure price at Rs. 7 mainly on the owner's assurance than it will be at least seven carts of manure. We also thought that the heap would be seven carts, if not more; but now we find that the heap has come to four carts only.

The owner sent a bearer to collect Rs. 7 from us, but we have paid only Rs. 4 and have written to the owner. "We settled the price at Rs. 7 on your giving us the assurance of getting seven carts but as we got only four carts we hope you will have no objection to accept Rs. 4."

Series Six—Parichand

We have taken a signed receipt of Rs. 4 from the bearer. If the owner comes or sends a man for the settlement, should we try to cut the price or give him Rs. 7 as settled with him?

If he insists on getting the Rs. 7, I do not see how you can refuse. When you arranged the bargain, instead of giving a lump sum for the heap, you ought to have said R. 1 per cart.

Blessings

25 October 1938

*

Mother,

Today at noon two goats entered into Santal House and mercilessly ate away the tender leaves and shoots of four rose plants. It is a pitiful sight. A month's labour spoilt in a few minutes. We shall henceforward try to keep the doors always shut and ask the inmates to do so. One of the doors has no bolt to lock it from outside. Can we ask Amrita to get it done?

Well, I have repeatedly said that gates *must* remain closed. You can ask Amrita about the locking arrangement.

28 October 1938

*

(Regarding differences of opinion among members of the Garden Service Committee)

My decision is that you should all give up your selfish egoistic reactions and face the problems in the spirit of true sadhaks, from the yogic point of view.

Especially Y seems to have made a point to contradict and discuss all that the others have decided. I do not approve of this attitude.

New Correspondences of the Mother

And I will repeat what I have said in the *Words*: When people quarrel all of them are wrong.

Blessings to all

June 1939

*

Mother,

You have asked us to stop discussing and quarreling. Accordingly we have dissolved the daily evening meeting of the Garden Service from today. Is it all right?

Yes, at least for the moment—and until the minds have become quieter and the vital reactions are more under control.

Blessings

29 June 1939

*

Mother,

We wish to inform You that although X had been looking after our Garden Service manure in the capacity of general supervisor, it seems that he has no special experience in this line. We therefore thought of giving charge of this section to X and Y together. But Y fears that there might remain some chance of disharmony in this combination, so we propose instead to entrust the charge to Y and Z.

I do not approve of this kind of fear. Each one's duty is to abolish not only all quarrels but also the very idea that they can take place.

1939

*

Series Six—Parichand

Mother,

In submitting to You this shocking report about the plants I feel like writing something. My heart has borne without much shock the death of an appalling number of plants. This is due, I have often felt with pain, not to a settled calm and equality but a deep-rooted tamasic indifference, insensibility, callousness and apathy. If some day, by Your grace, O Mother, a drop of Your pure love gives a magic touch to my heart, the plants too will get back the elixir of life.

Time and labour have not been spared, but I fear that they have not been applied usefully and systematically. Daily twice or thrice I have paused beside these suffering plants and yet felt helpless in removing their suffering. What a pitiful state!

Among my inner defects are a confused atmosphere of mind and a lack of clear perception, conquering will, boldness in taking steps, sympathetic touch, and openness to the inner guidance. How can I get over these defects and be a more perfect manifesting instrument of Yours?

It seems to me that what has happened is chiefly the result of lack of experience—if you persevere in your efforts you will succeed.

My love and blessings

July 1939

*

Mother,

The condition of the rose plants in my charge pains my heart whenever I go near them. I am ready to spare no efforts for their betterment if only Your will itself manifests more and more clearly and shows me the right way of nursing them.

New Correspondences of the Mother

So many plants have died without giving me sufficient experience! Tell me, Mother, what I should do to fulfil Your will more perfectly.

From the spiritual point of view, in your work, there are two defects that are to be removed. One is a kind of restlessness which compels you to try always new things and to make too many experiments—and the other is a certain rigidity in the mind which prevents the true inspiration from being properly received. Once these obstacles are removed you will more easily feel my force and my consciousness working through you.

With my love and blessings

1939

*

Mother,

My inner being fails to form any decision about how to help my roses, but an immediate decision is called for. One suggestion comes: "When a plant is suffering, meditate upon it. The mind will bring many ideas, but quietly wait. If not at once, eventually the real cause will become evident if you draw near the plant and meditate upon it now and then." Is this a right suggestion?

You can try the meditation but unless you quiet your mind completely it will not be of much help.

In connection with the grubs eating the roots of the plants, I can do two things: either free the mind from fear and develop an inner quiet and confidence in Your grace, or take precautionary measures such as applying soot-water, permanganate of potash etc. In the latter solution I have little faith, but I can do so if that be Your will.

Why this or that? Can you not rely on the Grace *always*, what-

Series Six—Parichand

ever is the exterior step taken?

My love and blessings

1940

*

Mother,

About two months back I prepared some compost for roses with one part activated compost and one part garden soil. But in that compost, too, I have come across grubs. Thus although I have been washing plant after plant to make them grub-free, the grubs may have introduced themselves through the compost.

Mother, is it because I am afraid of the grubs that they appear so often? What should I do to keep the plants and compost free from grubs? Should I not banish these apprehensions and be rather careless of such things?

It may indeed be that by your fear and apprehension you actually attract the difficulties. An attitude of quiet confidence is much more helpful.

My love and blessings

1940

*

Mother,

The watering and sunning of washed plants and new plants from outside still perplexes me.

On 3rd October, we washed, thinned and watered one plant and put it under the shade of the mango tree. Six days later, it was watered again because the soil did not get sufficiently dry. It was brought a little out from the trunk and given three-fourths of an hour's sun, but still under the tree. No eye opened, many leaves yellowed and fell.

New Correspondences of the Mother

From the 12th it began raining. The plant was brought farther out to get three hours' sun, but from the 12th to the 23rd there was practically no sun, but on the contrary heavy showers. As a result of this rain about three-and-a-half dozen eyes opened almost at the same time, and many of them sent forth very tiny shoots. Thinking that the plant would not be able to nourish so many shoots, I nipped one dozen weak ones.¹

On the 24th, the sun was once again bright and hot. I noticed at about 10.30 or 11.00 a.m. that some tender shoots had drooped. This I attributed to the sudden change of weather. I shifted the plant to a still sunnier position so that next day it got about four-and-a-half hours' sun—from 7.30 to 12.00 a.m. I noticed that some shoots had drooped again, but I did not give the plant any shade for two reasons:¹ (1) The soil was still very wet and I feared root-rot if it rained again, and (2) I wanted to accustom the leaves to more sun and thought they would stand up. But what I saw at 1.30 was that some four shoots had wilted badly beyond any hope of reviving.¹

Mother, I have given at length the after-treatment of one plant as an example, but I pray for Your direction applicable to all such plants because it is upon the after-treatment that their life and progress depend.

The above statements you make describe most clearly the mess that the mind can do when it interferes in plant life. How much I wish you could stop thinking! Then, I suppose, the plants will grow and be happy.

My love and blessings

1940

*

¹ Here the Mother put four exclamation marks.

Series Six—Parichand

Mother,

Your reply to my letter concerning the after-treatment of washed plants has come as a revelation to me. It is my mental formations and suggestions that have not been allowing me to hear the small inner voice and distorting and disfiguring the true inspirations and impulses coming from You.

Mother, when it is Your will that I stop thinking I must do so. I pray to Your grace to remove the obstacles standing in the way. For the purpose of work should I not quietly and constantly look up to You for inspirations and follow them boldly, lending a deaf ear to all counter-suggestions? I feel that these two things are lacking in me: boldness and inner certitude. It is by Your grace that they will grow.

It is in *quietness* of the mind that you can get the certitude and the consequent boldness to act.

But before and above all, you must get this *mental quietness*; it is most important for both sadhana and work, inner growth and outer expression.

Aspire for silence and quietness.

The plant I referred to You has, I suppose, got sun-stroke. As a result, a few more tender shoots have collapsed and a few thin branches are dying in spite of my giving shade to the plant after only two-and-a-half or three hours' early morning sun. How to counteract the anxiety this is causing me?

Do not worry—the plants also need quietness to live happily.

My love and blessings

1940

*

Mother,

Now the roses cause anxiety to me whenever

New Correspondences of the Mother

I draw near to them. Should I not throw away this anxiety? Should the least lowering of the consciousness be allowed in the presence of others because of this grave failure?

It is always better not to allow anxiety or depression to overcome you. A quiet, steady, confident will is the thing needed.

1940

*

Mother,

Remove all hindrances, accustom my being to commune more deeply with the plants and hear Your voice through them—otherwise I do not see any way to their improvement.

With much hesitation I am writing to You about roses. Suggestions of incapacity and egoistic persistence on my part have been coming now and then. If, due to my present state of non-receptivity in service to You, it is better that I hand over the charge of roses to X or anybody else, I shall gladly do so, even if the outer nature groans a little. Let the roses grow and be happy.

I do not want you to give up the work—but for the roses to grow happily you must not worry so much about them.

My love and blessings

1940

*

Mother,

Some suggestion discourages me from watering the roses lightly three times a day as advised by You. This has not been found profitable by me for two reasons: (1) It has not been systematically done and not at regular intervals; (2) I have gone on watering

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even when it was not necessary and when a day's withholding would have done good.

I have thought of watering all the new plants according to Your method, rejecting any counter-suggestion as false. Is it all right?

If the method has not proved successful, why continue? It was not my method as I have never tried it myself. It was only a suggestion.

Blessings

1940

*

Mother,

In Arogya House there is a rose plant which is growing nicely. Y told Z to bring it to Santal House, pluck the flowers and send them to You. Z will keep the plant under his treatment. Is it all right?

I do not quite understand why the plant is to be removed if it is growing all right? It is not good to move plants like that.

My love and blessings

1940

*

Mother,

We do this shifting of all kinds of plants—caladiums, maidenhair ferns, etc.—from Your garden without asking for Your permission, thinking that You will have no objection to this regular rotation. Is this idea in tune with Your will?

If the garden remains well decorated with ferns and other green plants I have no objection.

1940

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Mother,

Out of fifteen mangoes kept by me for ripening in Cocotiers, two were found slightly eaten by cockroaches, thus rendering them unworthy of being offered to You. Another mango cracked when it fell from the tree and later got ripe. These three mangoes X and I tasted, following some impulse which was perhaps vital, for I felt some inner agitation when Y refused to share them with us. What ought we to do with such damaged or spotted fruits in future?

You can very well eat them, there is no harm.

With my love and blessings

1940

*

Mother,

This evening I was shocked to hear from Z that You had expressed Your displeasure that none of us were present to supervise the work of the gardener who was found breaking off the dry branches of the Service tree and throwing them roguishly on the ferns below. But he was asked by me merely to remove nests of insects and inject "Agrisol" into their hiding holes. The day before yesterday, when I saw him throw a twig which almost hit a fern plant I rebuked him and directed him to throw such twigs on the concrete floor. X also checked him once. That he acted against our directions proves that he is a knave; he cared little for the plants and thought of stealthily collecting fuel for himself.

Mother, should I take any step against the gardener?

Do not give this work any more to that gardener and if he asks later on for some favour (loan or leave) you can refuse

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saying that these are reserved for the workmen who are honest, obedient and careful.

Blessings

26 January 1945

*

Mother,

Y wants me to see that Z gets the flowers and leaves he needs daily for distribution. Y does not like to have direct dealings with him on this matter because of some disharmony. I was not quite willing because of the existing pressure of work. But I pray to know Your will in this affair.

My will is that people *should not quarrel.*

Blessings

5 January 1946

*

Mother,

There are a lot of dry branches on the Service tree in the Ashram. Can I have them removed?

Just now it is not possible because one cannot distinguish between those which are truly dry and those that have lost their leaves.

For beauty's sake do You approve of our painting with green solignum a few dozen stakes that we use for supporting plants? We could get it done by our workmen?

Who says that it will look more beautiful? Not I.

My love and blessings

29 January 1946

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Mother,

For plucking night flowers such as "Faithfulness" and "Peace in the Vital" from various houses, I would like to send some paid gardener. Do You approve of it?

No.

If you send servants to pluck flowers, soon you will have no flowers at all.

My love and blessings

27 March 1946

*

Mother,

The Renuka House garden seems overcrowded and is kept untidy. One papaya tree is enough for the small place, but X is growing another. Then she has planted a branch of the tree "Psychological Perfection", and this will soon grow big. Finally, she is, I suppose, growing more vegetable creepers than the place can accommodate.

Yes; and you warn her not to increase her garden any more because all the plants will suffer.

My love and blessings

6 April 1946

*

Mother,

We have a small lawn-roller. Y wanted it for levelling the new playground, but I refused, saying that it was meant for lawns. He says he is going to make a lawn there. Should I issue the roller to him? I fear that it may get damaged by shifting, if carelessly done.

I do not advise you to lend the gardening tools to anyone.

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My love and blessings

2 May 1946

*

Mother,

Once I informed You of the regularly irregular attendance of a gardener named A, and the unsatisfactory nature of his work with us. This gardener is about one year in our service. Should we take any steps to rectify his habits?

To rectify the habits of anybody is not an easy thing—but he can be threatened with dismissal if he continues.

13 June 1946

*

Mother,

Z spoke to me about the lawn-roller. He said, "I told the Mother that I needed the roller for a day only. The Mother then enquired if any written permission from Her was necessary. I replied I would speak to you orally."

Should I issue the roller to him, or should I refuse it, saying it is reserved for the Ashram lawns?

In this connection it now occurs to me that I would have done better if I myself had refused flatly and not consented to Z's suggestion to refer the case to You. But as I was not quite sure of Your will, I could not do it with strength. I humbly pray to know for future guidance how I should have behaved.

Evidently if you had at once refused it would have been easier—but it is difficult to get rid of Z. I fear that now we will have to compromise. You can say that it cannot be lent but one of

New Correspondences of the Mother

you will go and do the work himself.

29 July 1946

*

Mother,

Before writing to You I had a talk with Y about the roller affair. This morning I told him what You had written to me; sometimes I am free speaking with him. But I felt later that I ought to have kept to myself what You had written about Z. I pray to know if I acted on a wrong suggestion.

It is always better not to repeat to others what I tell or write to you.

My love and blessings

30 July 1946

*

Mother,

About the garden inside the Ashram courtyard. May we temporarily arrange potted plants around the trunk of the Service tree for decoration till the last week of September?

No, it will not look nice, it is better as it is.

For beauty's sake Dr. X once suggested covering with red earth the portion of the ground unoccupied by pots. Instead of red earth, I think red sand would be better. Do You approve of the idea?

No, it looks too artificial.

My love and blessings

8 August 1946

*

Series Six—Parichand

Mother,

*Under the Araucaria tree in front of X's room,
can we plant in its bed one row of "Generosity"
plants and another row of "Caladium" leaves?*

Is it not bad for the tree to plant these flowers below?

My love and blessings

17 September 1946

*

Mother,

*In dealing with our new young gardeners, who
are somewhat arrogant and defiant, I experience a
weak, timid and confused reaction in some parts of
my nature. I have been opening these parts to Your
force, praying for light and courage and strength.*

It is in perfect *calm* that you can get unfailing strength.

With my love and blessings

6 November 1946

*

Mother,

*Yesterday there was a quarrel between X and Y.
Desirous of harmony, Y wants me to convey some
suggestions to X. He wants my mediation because a
direct approach on his part may meet with a rebuff.
I have been avoiding this because I find the task not
only unpleasant and ineffective but in a way harmful.
But I will refer Y's suggestions to You if it be Your will
that I should take part.*

It is not, indeed, very good to interfere in these meaningless
quarrels.

My love and blessings

4 January 1947

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Mother,

Yesterday when You came to the Cocotiers garden my mind was calm and glad, but later it was overshadowed for a certain reason. As the clouding effect still endures, I approach You for succour and guidance.

I heard from Z that his workmen were all present when You went to his farm. So also at Cazanove and Nanteuil. Thus when You came to Cocotiers and our workmen stayed on at the end of work, instead of going home, I did not object to their staying inside the garden.

After work, some of them went out to smoke without our notice and came back to foul the garden atmosphere. This incident caused trouble in me and then I felt that as the work was over I had better ask them to go home. But they remained, evidently in expectation of tips.

I pray to know the right procedure for future guidance. Also, will it be advisable now for me to tell them anything about the smoking affair?

There is nothing to say about the smoking *provided they smoke outside the working hours* and also outside the premises. For another time those who wish to stay may stay but they must not believe I will give them tips because I refuse to make this a habit.

My love and blessings

8 February 1947

*

O Gracious Mother,

The number of workmen, permanent or temporary, is now sixteen. We can get satisfactory work from most of them only under strict supervision; otherwise they are prone to idle away their time, and the more the number of men the less the output. We need two more supervisors for better management.

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For the moment I have nobody to give you.

The supervision of the workmen and the stores demands much of my time and attention. As a result the cultural and decorative side of gardening in the Ashram and Cocotiers does not get proper care and attention. A suggestion comes therefore to look for a sadhak to help me full-time, preferably a Tamil sadhak or Tamil-speaking one, and gradually entrusting him with responsibility.

Yes, if such a man can be found it is good; but for the moment I see nobody.

But there is another thing. Dealing with the workmen these days has increasingly helped to embolden my weak parts, to strengthen my nerves and to instil faith and courage in my vacillating heart. This seems to be a gain. So a counter-suggestion comes: “Continue till you find that no part shrinks or shudders even in the teeth of opposition.”

I ardently pray to know, Mother, which suggestion to accept in order that I may best fulfil Your will in life.

Do not plan in advance, do not decide beforehand, keep silent and do at each moment the thing that you can do while inside being concentrated on me.

8 May 1947

*

Mother,

Under the Araucaria tree in front of X’s room, may I plant “Sri Aurobindo’s compassion” plants? They are short-lived and surface-rooting and so will not be harmful to the tree, I believe.

New Correspondences of the Mother

I do not care much for plants and flowers under trees.

10 May 1947

*

Mother Divine,

There is something I should tell You in order to be free from all vibrations. Many of our 16 workmen, after the morning work, take their bath and food inside the Cocotiers Garden, then lie down there till they are called for work. Taking advantage of my absence, they may let in outsiders and create noise and other disturbances.

You certainly *cannot* leave the workmen all alone in the garden.

12 May 1947

*

Mother,

This morning when Y went to call the gardeners at 6.30 a.m., he found them all absent, although we had seen some of them sitting and chatting outside before roll-call time. They appeared five minutes later, at 6.35 a.m. When Y informed them that they were late by five minutes, one gardener complained, "Five minutes in the morning—how can it be late?" Another gardener joined him and they grumbled a little.

They were late again today; I suspect it was intentional, and they may try to repeat it.

Z told me that in the Domestic Service five or ten minutes' lateness is not so strictly noted, but if someone is persistently late then he is marked so. It occurred to me that if the lateness is occasional, we too might ignore it. If we dissatisfy the gardeners for a few minutes delay, we may not get good work from

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them during the day. Y, however, seems to be more strict about punctuality in attendance.

I pray for Your guidance, Mother. I confess that I felt weakness and uneasiness in this connection.

It is always better not to make a fuss about small things.

My love and blessings

11 June 1947

*

Mother,

About two gardeners still on trial: S has been absent without authorisation for ten days and M for thirteen days. Both not satisfactory in their work. (They might be working elsewhere.) We propose that their names should be struck off the roll. Do You approve of it?

You must give them first 3 warnings and notices and finally give them one month's pay.

As one of these two gardeners is comparatively better, do you permit us to keep an opening for him in our service if he turns up? We have an order from You not to fill up the vacancy. If he appears in a few days, then we could consider his case.

I advise always to keep people unless it is truly impossible to do so, because if you send one away you are never sure that the one you will get in exchange will truly be better.

My love and blessings

20 June 1947

*

Mother,

About the gardener, P. He is very irregular. He

New Correspondences of the Mother

was dismissed last May, but our work-men went on strike, so he was taken back after he apologised, saying he would no more absent himself without authorisation.

This month he took two days of unauthorised absence. If I take him to Amrita, some drastic step will be taken against him, I believe. As this workman is very lethargic, we will not mind losing him. But I am not sure if You would approve of it.

It is no use dismissing servants and be obliged to take them back again.

27 June 1947

*

Mother,

Five gardeners of the same locality have been absenting themselves for the last three or four days without informing us. Only one of them, after two days' absence, appeared yesterday to ask for three days' further leave.

About this group we have a proposal to make. As they sometimes remain absent in a body, causing much inconvenience to our work, we would like to transfer two out of them to some other section—the two who are the most irregular and not always well-behaved. These gardeners will surely oppose this transfer and may even try to foment a strike, but that we are ready to face because our work suffers much when they remain absent together.

I pray to know Your will.

I am sure that not one out of ten of these workmen can be called honest and satisfactory, but it seems to me wiser to make the best out of the evil one knows rather than to run the risk of a worse combination.

Series Six—Parichand

With my love and blessings

14 July 1947

*

Mother,

As you know two of our gardeners have remained absent from work since the 26th of last month without informing us. X got Your permission to send them away. One of them turned up for work this morning, after 18 days' absence. Amrita has already given me his official letter of dismissal (referring there to an article in the Convention Collective), copies of which have been sent to the Labour Office and the President. This letter I will hand over to the man tomorrow.

This gardener, although he came from a communist quarter and belonged to a group of four other very undesirable gardeners, was not found by us unsatisfactory in respect to his conduct, work and attendance. So the suggestion comes: "Dismiss him and then after some days take him back on trial with a reduced pay." But another suggestion says; "Do not take him back and give him no hope of further employment."

I pray for Your decision.

If the man is a good worker why don't you simply keep him in service?

My love and blessings

13 September 1947

*

Mother,

A question has risen again in me. I pray for Your guidance. The gardener whom You have asked us to keep in service has already been given his official letter

New Correspondences of the Mother

of dismissal. X had Your permission and Amrita had already informed the Labour Office and the President.

Now the dismissed man is again seeking work. May we safely and unhesitatingly take him back into service with his old roll-number and at the existing rate of pay, telling him: "As all of us have been satisfied with your work and conduct, we put your case before the Mother and got Her sanction for your re-employment?"

Yes, but you must add that henceforth he must prove that he is worthy of this treatment by remaining *always very regular* in his attendance and his work.

16 September 1947

*

Mother,

By Your grace, we have got rid of two undesirable workmen. But one still remains, the worst. He is a young but shrewd and mischievous boy. Other workmen soon may fall under his influence. I heard from Y that the man has even killed someone in a political party scuffle. Because of all this, sometimes when I want to curb his wrong movements, plainly expose his misdeeds, refuse him privileges or take steps against him, I feel a nervous shrinking and the suggestion comes: "Be careful. He may do harm to you, he may even resort to violence."

So I open these weak parts in me to You, praying for courage, strength and enlightenment.

Quietness, calm, fearlessness.

My love and blessings

2 October 1947

*

Series Six—Parichand

Mother,

The workman N served as a gardener for about 7 1/2 months, then left the work due to illness. His work was satisfactory, his conduct was fairly good, but his attendance was very irregular. Recovered from illness, he now seeks re-employment. We do not want to engage him because he was very irregular and is not very hardy.

He says he can get work in some Government department if we give him a certificate, and he has been asked to bring one from the Ashram. Should we give him anything in writing?

Yes.

If so, can I write in English as follows: “The bearer, N, worked as a gardener for about 7 1/2 months last year and then left the work on account of illness. His work was found by us satisfactory”?

Whenever a servant asks for a certificate, it must be given, unless the man has proved to be very unsatisfactory.

My love and blessings

11 October 1947

*

Mother,

I approach You for the solution of a problem before me. Two gardeners were dismissed three or four months back. In spite of our repeated refusals, they persist in beseeching us for re-employment. On 1st December both appeared and, when refused employment, made an appeal for certificates saying, “Without certificates, we will not be given work by anybody.”

We did not issue them certificates when they left,

New Correspondences of the Mother

because all of us found them unsatisfactory—at times very unsatisfactory—in respect to conduct, work and attendance. Should I tell them that it is not possible for us to give them certificates because none of us found them satisfactory?

Legally we have to give a certificate stating the kind of work they did (gardener for instance), the date of their entering the service, the date of their leaving the service. If you have nothing favourable to say, *you write nothing*, because you *must not* write anything that would prevent them from finding a job in another house. If you give me the required particulars I shall write down a sample of such certificates.

My love and blessings

5 December 1947

*

Mother,

I have read some articles from the “Rose Annual” of 1925. But the idea came to me this morning that You would not like me to read the articles in the other issues and stuff my mind with a lot of information. If the idea is true, I shall see the pictures only and send the books back to You.

If you find some useful information in the book I do not see why you should not read.

1947

*

Mother,

Last year for Ayudha Puja, our workmen did not approach us for Sri Aurobindo’s and Your photos while doing the Puja. This year may we give them Your photos for worship, even if they do not of themselves ask us for them?

Series Six—Parichand

No.

Love and blessings

9 October 1948

*

Mother,

The palm trees along Your windows are very dirty. Syringing them from below does not clean them properly. Will You permit me to syringe them from the roofs? The gardeners will supply me with water by ladder and I will carry the cans up to the top. Morning-time will be suitable. I pray for Your sanction.

I do not find it advisable with the present scarcity of water.

Moreover there is a risk of the water coming in the rooms through the windows. Let things stand as they are until the rain comes.

Love and blessings

19 May 1950

*

Mother,

The gardener P has been in our service about nine years. This year he has again started absenting himself now and then on some excuse or other. He seldom takes my permission. Each time he is absent like this, I ask him to give his reason in writing and show displeasure and deduct from his pay. But he seems not to care for all these deterrents. Sometimes I am prompted to refer his case to the Labour Office, but then a counter-suggestion comes: "There is a general unrest. So better wait for an opportune moment."

I pray for Your guidance.

All depends on the quality of his work. If he works well, be patient.

New Correspondences of the Mother

If the work he does is unsatisfactory, refer to the Labour Office.

Blessings

6 April 1955

*

Mother,

I have to get three hundred pots made by Z for the winter season. He is busy making fancy pots and other things on a small scale. So I proposed to him to engage an extra potter for a few days and when the pots are ready, to fire them all at one time. Z is ready to do this, provided he gets money for the potter, fuel and clay—Rs. 25/- approximately. I pray for Your sanction.

What is this *commercial* spirit!

The whole of Z's installation and work is paid by me—and his work must be useful to the Ashram. How can he ask for extra money for a work done for the Ashram? This is an intolerable attitude.

11 July 1955

APPENDIX

(Parichand's Garden Service notebook of 1938 contains the Mother's replies to the questions of three other members of the Garden Service. The concluding text is a general note she wrote to the Garden Service.)

It might be better to keep me informed if you make important changes, especially in the entrance garden and the mango tree garden under our windows. But if you speak of the flowers with their significance rather than with their botanical name it will

Series Six—Parichand

be easier for me.

11 July 1938

*

Mother,

Do you have any objection to our using sulphate of ammonia and other such chemicals in liquid form in the main Ashram garden to accelerate the growth of the plants? They have neither any smell nor any colour.

I have no objection provided you use it moderately and with great care as it can destroy as well as accelerate.

11 July 1938

*

Can I remove the branches of shrubs which are overhanging and causing inconvenience to the inmates?

I cannot say yes or no, as all depends on the way it is done. It is not only the welfare of the inmates that must be taken in consideration but also the welfare of the shrubs.

18 July 1938

*

(Asked to choose between three methods of treating crotons, the Mother replied:)

It is by experimenting that one gets knowledge.

29 August 1938

*

Mother,

26 pots of caladium sent here by X are in a very unhealthy condition, due to being crowded together

New Correspondences of the Mother

and kept in deep shade for too long. This has made their leaf-stalks too long; not being able to carry the weight of their own leaves, they have fallen and started rotting. To save the bulb and help new growth, I have cut all the damaged and fallen leaves and kept them in sunny shade, which they like. All the caladiums should be removed from there for some time and kept in a less crowded way and in semi-shade; otherwise they will all perish.

You must, by this time, have received my letter sent to the Garden Service and seen what impression all these poor cut leaves have made upon me. Some were evidently spoilt and faded but *many* were in perfect condition, fresh and strong, and surely did not need to be cut.

These caladium were brought purposely for the decoration of the N.S. garden. I like them very much as they are extremely decorative. It seems to me that they can be put in the N.S. courtyard at least for one month every darshan and also at the Christmas holidays and in between they can be kept in a more sunny place.

Blessings

30 August 1938

*

Mother,

I am extremely sorry for having made this pruning mistake. It would not have happened if I had informed You beforehand and done it myself, instead of asking the paid gardener M to do this work.

Indeed it was a great mistake to give the work of cutting these leaves to a gardener. In future when such a work is to be done it is always better to do it yourself.

31 August 1938

*

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Mother,

*Here is a passage from G regarding the cultivation of Supramental Guidance in Matter (*Hamelia patens*): “It stands close clipping and trimming to any form; trimmed shrubs grown along side-walks or roads are of striking beauty. *Hamelia* makes a very good ornamental hedge, it is propagated from cuttings.” Shall I follow the advice?*

I do not like clipped and trimmed plants, it looks too artificial.

3 September 1938

*

Fruits are better when they are plucked ripe. But this kind of fruit bursts very easily, so it may be better to pluck them a little sooner.

8 September 1938

*

In Deconzanet House the position is very sunny, but the atmosphere is stuffy and the cement floor gets heated.

It is no use putting anything there as the plants suffer.

13 September 1938

*

Mother,

Six palms and one “Purity in the mind” have come for repotting. They are pot-bound and their roots have enveloped the drainage materials. To take out the potsherd, charcoal etc. and put the plant in the next size pot, the lower portion of the roots will have to be cut. Do You allow me to do this?

New Correspondences of the Mother

Is it not possible to repot them without their roots being cut?
With a little care and time it seems to me quite possible.

17 September 1938

*

Mother,

I could not start the transplanting of ferns as yet, but I should not wait any longer as the season is advancing. There are two methods for transplanting them. In both methods they recommend splitting up the fern clumps and planting them thinly, giving ample room for them to spread.

I have noticed that there are two kinds of growth, one like a bamboo clump and the other like the strawberry plant in which suckers are sent far off from the mother-plant. The ferns growing like a bamboo clump can be potted without entire removal of the old soil, but with the strawberry type I have found it impossible to do so. Last time I repotted a few of them by taking the plants out separately and trimming off all their dead stems, roots and broken leaves. Perhaps because of this they suffered a little longer, but after a few months they recovered. The long recovery period may be due to untimely repotting and a little rough handling.

*Do You allow me to follow the above method?
Or do You suggest any other method?*

The only thing I insist upon is care, gentleness, consideration as you would have for a living being—for plants are living and *they feel and suffer.*

Blessings

26 September 1938

*

Series Six—Parichand

Mother,

Water-logged and droopy-leaved crotons, caladiums and other plants are coming here for repotting from the main compound. I have tried repotting a few of them, but they have died. So I am leaving them as they are, using just enough water to save them from being bone dry. If after a few days I find some new growth in them, I intend to top-dress them. Do You approve of the above procedure?

Yes, when a plant is tired or sick give it *rest* for a few days, in a proper place, and it will recover. Repotting is always a blow and to give a blow to a sick plant is just the way of finishing it.

14 October 1938

*

Mother,

I find some difficulty in repotting without cutting the mould just a little. The mouths of almost all the pots are smaller than the middle, so cutting the sides of the moulds is necessary to bring them out easily. While doing this, some roots will necessarily be cut; to avoid this I have to break open nearly all the pots and also the tubs, because the mould in the tub sticks tightly to the sides and does not come out easily unless I cut this mould (with roots) from the sides just a little. Do You allow me to cut only that much in order to bring out the mould?

If there is no other way, I suppose you will have to do it—but I wish you would repot only those for which it is absolutely indispensable.

Blessings

14 October 1938

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Mother,

Y wanted some green mangoes from the Santal House garden and having got Your permission he took some twice or thrice. But the other day, finding very few in the tree, he asked me whether I would like to send them directly to you—ripe or unripe. I answered, “Whatever the Mother wishes.” But I do not know which You like better, ripe or unripe mangoes. Z is telling us that the Mother never takes ripe mangoes. I pray for your direction.

Sri Aurobindo eats the ripe mangoes. So it is better to keep the mangoes on the tree and to send them to me when they are ripe.

Blessings

24 October 1938

*

Mother,

Every year at this time, we used to make cuttings and layerings of shrubs, crotons and other plants which can be propagated. Fearing that the mother plants may not last long, we feel a need to do this. Shall we do it this year also?

Yes, provided you have time to do it carefully. It is better to do a few with much care, than plenty in great haste.

29 October 1938

*

To the Garden Service

I have read X's and Y's letters of this day and take this opportunity to formulate two remarks that I have made since some time already.

When I founded the Garden Service it was to put an end to the old dictatorial regime of a single man at the head of the

Series Six—Parichand

service with all its results of arbitrary decisions and fanciful rules. But I seem to have failed in my attempt, because instead of a single big state, there have been formed several small states each one under a ruler and all the rulers quarrelling among themselves. Indeed since the beginning of the Garden Service scarcely one day has passed without a quarrel being brought to my notice; constantly I was hearing of hot discussions and quarrels about the most insignificant matters, the smallest things, the most petty disagreements—and always these points of dissension could have been settled by themselves, without a word of discussion, if each one had done his work quietly, free from vanity, self-esteem and a domineering spirit.

As a result and in spite of much effort, work and labour the general standard of the gardens seems to have much gone down. At any rate the only garden I see physically—that of the main compound—is far from being what it used to be when at its best. For the past few days, when I walk on the roof, I am seeing with much regret the back garden of the Library House unkept, almost unwatered—as if nobody was supervising the gardeners' work. This is said only as an instance and I am formulating no criticism of somebody in particular. It is the general spirit of the Garden Service that appears to be wrong and I fear that our attempt at democracy has been a failure. The remedy does not appear clearly, as yet. But as a transition it might be better to stop discussing, each one being busy with the portion of the work which is allotted to him and trying to carry it out as well as possible without attempting to impose his will on others. If in carrying out this programme some *real* problems arise they can be reported to me and I shall try to solve them.

Blessings

28 June 1939

Series Seven

Correspondence with Jayantilal

Born on 21 June 1913, the Gujarati disciple Jayantilal Parekh joined the Ashram on 28 December 1938 at the age of twenty-five. A talented artist, he made hundreds of paintings and drawings under the Mother's guidance during his first decade in the Ashram. Then for most of the next fifty years he worked at the Ashram Press. In the early 1970s he organised the publication of the thirty-volume Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, and in 1973 he founded the Ashram Archives and Research Library. He lived for sixty years in the Ashram, until his passing on 26 January 1999 at the age of eighty-five.

Jayantilal's correspondence with the Mother covers the period from 1936 to 1970.

Mother,

I am sending you some art books for your opinion. I want to know your opinion about Cézanne and Van Gogh because they are praised so much by modern critics, especially Cézanne. One very good English critic, Roger Fry, calls him a divine artist, meaning perfect in some of his works.

The pictures by Cézanne and Van Gogh in the books you have sent are very beautiful (especially those of Cézanne). I shall return the books in one or two days—I want to look at them carefully.

12 March 1936

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Such people are capable of turning towards the spiritual life; but their path is never without danger.

What you seek is always there ready for you. Let the psychic turn grow complete and it will of itself bring you to that for which you aspire.

My love and blessings

15 February 1939

*

Mother,

What is the rationale of Divine Grace? Is not the Supreme Mother always ready with Her Grace for those who can call it down?

Yes.

Is it not true that most of the seekers after God cannot call the Divine Grace down, and yet they can receive it if someone, a guru or avatar, has once called it down within him?

Yes.

Can we conclude that the Divine Grace works best when it is established in the earth consciousness? Is it the aim of your endeavour to establish it permanently?

Yes.

Please explain to me the whole principle.

The Divine Grace cannot be explained through words and mental formulas.

Blessings

7 April 1939

*

Series Seven—Jayantilal

If you feel no true urge to paint, I see no necessity of your painting.

Blessings

c. April 1939

*

Mother,

For some time I have been feeling that I ought to concentrate on some work. I feel like drawing and painting, so I have decided to devote some time daily to this work. The rest of the time I intend to devote to study. I will be always prepared to do whatever work you give me.

The drawing you sent is very nice. It is good that you have taken up again drawing and painting. If ever I need you for some work I will tell you.

Blessings

12 May 1939

*

You can go to the lake. I like your sketches very much, some of them are extremely nice.

If I forget, remind me this afternoon of the pocket money.

Blessings

1 June 1939

*

Jayanti,

Your way of approaching art is the right one and if you continue, keeping an absolute sincerity in your attitude and your attempt, you are bound to succeed.

There is something correct in your appreciation of oriental art, but it is incomplete. However we shall leave the subject for the moment, for I have no time to explain all that just now. As for Léonard de Vinci, Michel Ange and Raphaël, I cannot put

New Correspondences of the Mother

them on the same level. The two first are far greater than the last. They both belong to the world of creative force, Léonard with more subtlety and quiet, deep vision and purity, Michel Ange with more force and power especially in his sculptures which are incomparably magnificent. Raphaël is more mental and superficial.

Blessings

30 June 1939

*

Last night when I was about to sleep, my body from the heart above was filled up by some energy. I did not do anything but just observed. It lasted for only a few seconds. Two or three times it has happened to me and on the previous occasions it lasted for some minutes. I would like to know what this is. Is it an experience of the Kundalini Shakti? What is the best attitude to be adopted when under such pressure?

The best attitude is to be quiet and calm, and let the experience follow its course, observing it *without thinking about it*.

Blessings

4 July 1939

*

S told me that you have given permission for the decoration of the meditation hall. I had intended to decorate only the room where you used to sit for Pranam, but I heard that you would like the whole hall and the area up the staircase to be done. This is a very big scheme. But K also intends to do the work and, if asked, S may join.

What I wish to tell you is this: to make the work harmonious and quiet, only one person should design the whole thing, and all others should work in the same manner. I would like to know if you have any

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subject in mind and how the thing should be done.

I agree that one person alone must design the whole thing, the others can join in the execution only.

I have no subject or scheme. I only wish that the decoration should be *quiet* from the point of colour and also of composition.

Do some sketches and projects, and send them to me.

Blessings

31 July 1939

*

Mother,

Would it be good for me to devote more time to meditation than I am giving at present. I spend about two hours, morning and evening together. I am as yet not quite successful in meditation. My physical mind disturbs me a lot. It is so painful to find the mind working like a mad machine and the heart sleeping like a stone. Mother, let me feel your presence within my heart always.

The increase of time given to meditation is not very useful unless the urge for meditating comes spontaneously from inside and not from any arbitrary decision of the mind.

My help, love and blessings are always with you.

17 October 1939

*

Mother

The house I have taken up for my people belonged to a T.B. patient. I came to know this only after I had already paid for the house. But then we got the whole house washed and burnt sulphur in some rooms. In any case the thought that a T.B. patient lived here does not trouble me because he went away nearly

New Correspondences of the Mother

six months back. But as some people have come to know about it and the suggestion of disease has been thrown out, I pray to you for the protection of those who will stay there.

As the house has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, there is no danger at all. People need not fear.

My blessings

19 February 1940

*

Mother,

I wish to devote my time to decoration work, but before that I want to have a clear vision of the theme. Can you tell me how to meditate upon it? Who are the angels? What is their function in the cosmos? How can one come in contact with them? Are there books which can give a starting point?

Your questions are impossible to answer in brief.

I know no books that say anything of value on the subject.

My love and blessings

2 June 1940

*

Jayanti,

I think it is better if you concentrate on painting only as you have already made some good progress on that line.

If you do not like the atmosphere created by taking food with others I do not see why you should do it.

With my love and blessings

13 September 1940

*

Mother,

My parents very often ask me to keep a few

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rupees for pocket money, but I have been refusing it because I did not want them to feel that I suffer here for want of anything. Do you think it desirable for me to keep a few rupees for some small expenses?

You can keep a few rupees as pocket money.

My love and blessings

25 September 1940

*

Mother,

It seems that Dr. A has expressed his desire to take the painters of the Ashram to Gingee fort. I wish to let you know that I am not anxious to go; it is not with me a desire. I always wish to do what pleases you and so I kindly seek your advice. I wish you to express your opinion without reserve or hesitation. It is with me a greater pleasure to fulfil your wish and follow your words than to satisfy a desire.

It is better not to go; this kind of trip is not very wholesome for spiritual life.

With my love and blessings

24 December 1940

*

Mother,

At times I seriously think about what my being wants. Why do I not feel the sense of a real being which has the delight of being and becoming? Why do I not feel any real interest in any creative activity? At times I feel an urge of the heart to seize something which can really satisfy my self, but the urge does not last long. What do you think my real being wants?

New Correspondences of the Mother

THE DIVINE.

I also feel that you are not quite satisfied with me.

Nothing of the kind. Each one has his difficulties and I am here to help him out of them.

My love and blessings

25 February 1942

*

Mother,

Perhaps you have not found time to answer my letter. There was something in your look which I could not fathom today; it looked like a rebuke. If it is so, I do not know what the reason can be.

Nothing of a rebuke. I had sent what I considered as the most important answer through N and I expected you to acknowledge it—hence my look.

I may add that in all human relations there is always such a coating of vital attractions and impulses over what can be hidden there of a psychic movement that one is never too much on one's guard.

Blessings

11 January 1944

*

Mother,

For the last three days I have not been able to read the expression in your eyes when I come for Pranam. I feel you are displeased with me. I may be wrong, but if there is anything I wish you to tell me.

I am not aware of any change in my attitude towards you and also there is no reason for a change. The only thing I see is that I was thinking of S when you came and I was wondering how far

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you are informed of the state of affairs. As for being displeased with you, there is no sign of it anywhere and I can safely say that *I am not displeased.*

With my love and blessings

5 September 1945

*

Mother,

My father wishes me to go and see him for a few days. He is an invalid and cannot leave his bed. Both his legs have become stiff and gradually the hands are also becoming like that. I have an idea that he may live only a few months more. In my mother's case too I have a strong feeling of her coming death. I am very grateful to my father. He has proved an ideal father for me. He has given me the best of everything and has asked for nothing in return.

When I came to you, I had the idea that I would see my parents once before they pass away and that too to satisfy them. I am neither desirous nor anxious nor would anybody question me if I did not go, but this idea propels me. I will be very happy to do your wish.

You can go to see your father—but I would like you to go only when the school closes, that is to say after the 2nd of December, and come back before the first of January when the school reopens—as the lessons must not be neglected.

c. 1946

*

My dear Mother,

I feel I have displeased you. I am very sorry for whatever may be the reason for it. I am feeling very bad about it. I hardly need to tell you about my growing affection for you.

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear child,

Don't feel bad and don't worry—I am not at all displeased. Others may have been a little upset by what seems to be a somewhat light talk, but I do not hold you responsible for it. It has become a habit in the Ashram to speak lightly and inconsiderately of many things that are beyond the usual understanding of people. It would need a great strength and endurance to resist successfully this influence. However I have hope that this strength and endurance will grow in all those of goodwill. Meanwhile my love and blessings are with all.

Be sure that I am quite aware of the growing love and devotion in you and they meet with the full response they can duly expect.

With my love and blessings

22 September 1947

*

Mother,

I have come to a point when I do not seem to understand anything. I do not lack understanding in terms of words. What I lack is a sense of Reality, a force of Being and a direction. It is not at all a happy state of affairs.

You told me all that last night between 10 and 11, and as you were somewhat restless, I told you, "First of all you must be quiet." The whole thing was *very vivid* and I appreciate the power of your thought—but I insist on the necessity of being *calm and quiet. It is indispensable.*

With love and blessings

21 June 1962

*

Mother,

R says he does not know anyone who can do the exhibition work. He wishes to send out a notice

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informing the exhibitors that the exhibition will not be held.

I am very sorry for it.

It is a *defeat of the will*, much more than of the circumstances and it throws discredit on the Ashram.

Blessings

14 February 1963

*

Mother,

May the Divine Mother give me the necessary force so that the following prayer of mine may become effective.

As a son of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, my greatest interest is in Truth. Let not the mountain of pride hidden in my nature distort in any way the movements of this Truth—the Glorious Sun. Lift me above smallness.

Do not let the view of the part hide the perception of the whole, and the details of one step obstruct the concentration on the Goal.

14 May 1963

*

Mother,

The world being what it is, we have to work under the existing conditions. Why not use the available conditions, gather strength and then endeavour to manifest the Divine Will in its purity?

But the very fact of living upon earth means that we “are using the available conditions”, otherwise it would be impossible to live.

Blessings

18 March 1965

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Mother,

Here are some of the painting proofs received from Calcutta. They are not very good. I am asking for some corrections to be made. A few more paintings are left to be sent to Calcutta. Can I ask P to carry them?

These proofs are *not good*. Why do you want them to do some more? They are simply spoiling the work and it is a big loss of time and money. Almost all of these pictures are unusable as they are and have to be remade.

I cannot agree to your giving them any more work to do.
Blessings

12 January 1966

*

I have been feeling for quite some time that I should limit my outward activity and confine myself to quiet work where I do not have to do so much running about.

I am facing some kind of inner crisis. My life is becoming aimless. A persistent dream warns me of my inner instability. It is an urgent necessity that I should achieve some inner poise and stability. The obscurity and heavy inertia should diminish.

If the Mother would permit me, I would like to be free from Press work. However I shall do as the Mother directs me. Kindly guide me.

If you leave the Press, the work will be ruined! As soon as I have a moment free I shall call you in the morning and we shall talk it over.

The more I go, the more I know that it is in work that Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga is *best done*.

Love and blessings

9 October 1966

*

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Mother,

My mind is greatly perplexed; I do not know where I stand. The work we have taken up is huge, the commitments are many. What I have to do is not clear from outside or within. Every day the decisions are altered, new questions posed, the ego confronted with unacceptable situations.

I pray to the Mother that I may be released from the Press work till such time as I have some clear guidance or the Mother's definite directions as to the work I have to do.

This is a personal crisis. I have no quarrels or complaints about people. I wish to keep my mouth closed and wait and learn to read the message of light that should appear before me. I pray for the Mother's light.

It would be so good if you were not affected and continued the work just now that there is so much to do and the help of all is so badly needed.

If you want to see me, I shall be glad to see you, but you know that I am never alone and it is difficult to speak.

In any case, be sure that my love and blessings are with you always.

7 August 1969

*

Mother,

I am facing a personal problem and I pray for the Mother's guidance. As yet, I do not have any sense of inner guidance. My days are not well spent. I am sticking on with the centenary work although I often feel I am not wanted or trusted, but I do not wish to be guided by any ordinary thought or feeling. I crave for isolation at times. I pray that I may have a surer feeling that I am doing what my Master wishes of me.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Let my personal likes, dislikes and egoism not tarnish the purity of action or word. "Mother" has been my mantra and I take refuge in Her.

You are not only wanted but *indispensable* for the centenary work which would not be done properly without you. So I ask you to be patient and not to attach importance to the difficulties on the way.

Love and blessings

3 May 1970

*

I feel very sorry that I have created the impression that I am pulling at money and diverting it from where it should go—the Mother. My attitude is that all wealth belongs to the Mother and we must use it as directed by Her. Wherever I have a say I do this, and I feel sorry that I have created the opposite impression. I write this to take a certain burden off my mind.

I do not know who has spread this rumour, but I can assure you that I know it is not true. So, do not worry and let peace settle in your heart.

With my blessings

Undated

Series Eight

Correspondence with Prithwi Singh

Born in Bengal on 3 June 1898, Prithwi Singh Nahar, for many years a householder disciple, joined the Ashram on 27 May 1938 at the age of thirty-nine. During the next few years all seven of his children came to live in the Ashram. Prithwi Singh worked at first in the Ashram Library. Then in the 1940s, seeing the need to coordinate the sales of the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, he started the Ashram Publication Department and remained its head for nearly forty years. During this time he also did transcription, proofreading, indexing and translation work. He lived in the Ashram for thirty-seven years, passing away on 13 April 1976 at the age of seventy-seven.

Prithwi Singh's correspondence with the Mother covers the period from 1938 to 1967.

(Before joining the Ashram in May 1938, the disciple had to wind up his affairs in Bengal. In order to pay off some debts, he decided to sell a diamond necklace of his late wife. Then he thought of offering this necklace to the Mother. Unable to decide what to do, he wrote to the Mother for advice.)

Prithwi Singh,

I have just received your letter about the necklace. A wrote to his grandfather informing him about the sale of the necklace as a very good occasion and asking him to buy it for L. The old man replied that L was never moving out of the Ashram and what then could she do with the necklace unless it was simply to have it for admiring it. So you can see that my name never came

New Correspondences of the Mother

into the matter. I would never have allowed them to ask it for me.

If you had no debts to pay off or if I were in a position to clear the debts myself for you I would have gladly accepted the necklace, but as it is it seems to me more reasonable to keep to your original plan of selling it.

Hoping all is well with you and the children.

Our love and blessings are with you.

P.S. Your furniture has reached safely and is placed in your room.

24 January 1938

*

Prithwi Singh,

I had advised you to sell the necklace because that seemed in the circumstances the most reasonable thing to do. But since you are moved by your inner feeling to offer the necklace to me, it is not possible for me to refuse it. There are certainly no motives of ego in what you express in your letter, but a very fine, delicate and psychic movement. So I promise you not to scold or chastise you when you bring the gift but accept it and the fine spirit in you which make the offering.

With love and blessings to you and the children

2 February 1938

*

Prithwi Singh,

Well, I surely know very little of a human mother's ways because I never dreamt of getting rid of one of my children by giving him or her something!...

Anyhow I had nothing of the kind in my mind and I had a fan put in your room because I knew that you were feeling hot—for, you believe that I have withdrawn, but it is quite a wrong belief—I am with you as I always was and know quite

Series Eight—Prithwi Singh

well your inner and outer condition.

If you were not hypnotised by appearances you would surely feel my presence living in and around you at all times.

With my love and blessings

P.S. The fan is meant to make your room a little cooler—I hope you will use it for that purpose.

27 April 1939

*

My dear child,

Since several days I was feeling like writing to you that it might be better to speak to N about your health. I was hesitating to do so because I am under the impression that you are not very fond of doctors and medicines, but it is impossible to let your body fall into this bad habit of becoming weak. You did well to write as it has put an end to my hesitation, and now I would be very much pleased if you spoke a little to N about your body's condition. Sometimes a very little push wakes up once more the receptivity.

My love, help and blessings are always with you.

27 June 1939

*

My dear child,

I quite agree with your way of looking at the problem and gladly grant your prayer of trying one year more to get out of the difficulty without calling in the medical atmosphere which—I must confess—is more often a hindrance than a help to the working of the Force. But you will have to keep me more often informed of the results of our attempt and concentration. Twice a week does not seem to me too much—I shall answer only if necessary.

With my love and blessings

P.S. Is there anything to eat that you would find helpful? More

New Correspondences of the Mother

milk? or some fruits? I ask you to answer very frankly.

29 June 1939

*

Mon cher enfant [My dear child],

Your description of the nature of your difficulty regarding your health is quite correct. It is the way in which the subconscious opposes the descent of the Force. But by a very patient and persistent endeavour it is finally conquered.

With my love and blessings

24 July 1939

*

Mon cher enfant,

This is a very good sign that you are beginning to feel the effect of the Force in the subconscious; it indicates a true progress.

My love and my blessings are watching over you.

21 August 1939

*

Mon cher enfant,

The fourth slice of bread is fully approved, but it seems to me that you ought to take it *without discontinuing* the extra milk as I am convinced that the milk is helping in making your body stronger.

You can ask B to take away the fan until the next hot season.

The description of your experience is not quite precise enough (the nature of the touching, from where the kundalini rose to where)—but the disc of light would seem to indicate that you became conscious of the Presence in your centres.

My love and blessings

7 September 1939

*

Series Eight—Prithwi Singh

My dear child,

The collection [of coins] is indeed very well arranged and quite interesting. I am thinking of reserving a special shelf for it and then I will ask you to come and arrange the boxes on the shelf.

With my love and blessings

6 January 1941

*

My dear child,

In the physical the joy of being is the best expression of gratitude towards the Divine.

My love and blessings

16 June 1941

*

My dear child,

The ultimate victory of the Divine is certain beyond all doubt.

With my love and blessings

6 April 1942

*

My dear child,

Your attitude towards work is the right one and I see no changes to suggest.

The work done through love and because of love is surely the most powerful.

With my love and blessings

8 June 1942

*

My dear child,

I understand that it is almost impossible to keep one's patience when hearing all the nonsense that certain people say

New Correspondences of the Mother

here, and I cannot blame you for your hot reply, which, I must say, did not inconvenience me in the least.

With my love and blessings

20 July 1942

*

I am sending you two French sentences written with your pen:

“Seigneur, donne-nous le bonheur véritable, celui qui ne dépend que de toi.”

[Lord, give us the true happiness, the happiness that depends on you alone.]

“Nous avançons sans hâte parce que nous sommes sûrs de l’avenir.”

[We advance without haste because we are sure of the future.]

Undated (1942?)

*

(*The disciple asked whether he should wear glasses.
His letter ends:*)

Please let me know what you think, Mother. I am stopping Agarwal’s medicine. I prefer to invoke your aid, as I have been doing; if I am able to open myself to your Force, a miracle might happen, as also if the Force wishes to act unconditionally. Otherwise what has to happen will happen and there is no reason for any regrets after one has received your blessings. I have written frankly so that you may give your decision without hesitation.

With deep devotion and pranams at Thy Feet

I think that glasses will help you both outside and for your work, so I advise you to take two pairs, one tinted, one untinted;

Series Eight—Prithwi Singh

probably from England they will be more satisfactory.

With my love and blessings

Undated

*

My dear child,

I truly appreciate the feelings and the consideration you have expressed in your letter, and I accept your proposal to write only once in two weeks—but you must continue to come for “pranam” every Tuesday, as you did last year.

With my love and blessings always

4 January 1943

*

My dear child,

I am sorry you are still having these moments of depression. I hoped they were gone for good. You know that even when you do not feel me I am always with you. Keep this faith in you, and my presence will become a living fact.

With my love and blessings

1 May 1944

*

My dear child,

I am glad to have read your letter. X¹ has already spoken to me enthusiastically about the new arrangement and the money they will return to you. All your children are a *fine lot* and I am very happy to have them here. To be truthful I must add that I love them dearly and their father also.

Of course, the books you mention can be ordered from England.

It is understood that whenever, for one reason or another,

¹ One of the disciple's children.

New Correspondences of the Mother

you cannot come to see me on Tuesday, you must come the following evening.

With my love and blessings

3 August 1944

*

My dear child,

I hope you are giving no importance whatever to these silly talks about "spiritual nearness" and the rest. There is *no truth* behind it. No time to answer in details—but I must ask you never to judge on appearances and still less on what people say...

With my love and blessings

6 November 1944

*

My dear child,

I did not even notice that you detained me. I always stand for a minute or two at that place concentrating upon you and others that might be there. So I have nothing to forgive and send you my love and blessings.

19 April 1945

*

My dear child,

It seems to me quite natural that the children wish to have a little privacy, and as soon as it is materially possible I shall fulfil their wish. Only one thing I shall say, that if the rest of the inmates were as your children are my work would be infinitely easier; they are among those who give me the least trouble.

With my love and blessings

23 July 1945

*

Series Eight—Prithwi Singh

Ma douce Mère [My sweet Mother],

S has given me Y's and Z's² monthly progress reports for signature. I had supposed that this business of guardianship ceased with my coming here, but I am told that you particularly want it and the whole thing is initiated by you. If that is so, I shall certainly sign the report. But it seems to me that the School is tending to become rather too officious while the method of real teaching is still very fluidic. The grading of students leaves much to be desired, but perhaps I am treading on forbidden grounds. In any case this monthly system would entail too much useless work for you, and the report could be easily made quarterly.

I had to take that step because of the carelessness, laziness and indiscipline of the children refusing to do their tasks and to obey their teachers. It is unfortunate for I would have liked to avoid all these commonplace measures.

P.S. I should confess to you that I felt sad at the use of the atomic bomb.³ It was too heartless. I should frankly like to know from you, Mother, whether this feeling was right or wrong—for it was a regret felt for the action of the Allies, for those who had stood so gallantly against the barbaric onslaught of the Germans, those who had been on the side of the Divine—even though maybe not consciously. And it was also mixed with a feeling of sympathy for the Japanese in spite of all their savagery and dark treachery for which this swift retribution has overtaken them.

The atomic bomb is in itself the most wonderful achievement

² Two of the disciple's children.

³ An atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945; three days later another was dropped on Nagasaki.

New Correspondences of the Mother

and the sign of a growing power of man over the material Nature. But what is to be regretted is that this material progress and mastery is not the result of and keeping on with a spiritual progress and mastery which alone has the power to contradict and counteract the terrible danger coming from these discoveries. We cannot and must not stop progress but we must achieve it in an equilibrium between the inside and the outside.

My love and blessings

28 August 1945

*

My dear child,

I do not see that the Supramental will act in the way you expect from It. Its action will be to effectuate the Divine's Will upon earth whatever that may be. On men Its action will be to turn their will consciously or unconsciously on their part towards the way in which the Divine's Will wants them to go.

But I cannot promise you that the Divine's will is to preserve the present human civilisation.

My love and blessings

30 August 1945

*

My dear child,

In all opinions there is something true and something false. It is indeed a great and useful thing to be able to listen to the opinions of others without losing one's temper and I am glad you have been able to do so.

With my love and blessings

5 October 1945

*

My dear child,

I am very sorry for the recurrent illness; it evidently shows a lack of receptivity in the body, but no definite cause can be

Series Eight—Prithwi Singh

given to it, except a definite tendency to pessimism and despondency...

However I hope you will soon feel better, and send you my love and blessings.

10 March 1946

*

My dear child,

You did quite well to state your difficulties and that has not displeased me in the least. But you will allow me to say that, along with most of the human beings, something in you dislikes all sudden changes unless your own mind has itself decided these changes. So, in the present case, the best thing is to wait a little and see if, after becoming accustomed to the new arrangement, you do not discover that it has also its advantages...

With my love and blessings

18 March 1946

*

Ma douce Mère,

With regard to filaria, I find that great apprehension persists in the obscure corner of the mind that the attack may be coming again as soon as the body has sufficiently recovered from the effects of the last attack. This is surely bad and not at all helpful in the process of elimination of this poison from the system. Only today I have discovered it. I pray that this may go away by your Grace, Mother; otherwise if the attacks continue at frequent intervals the body will go to tatters. May I accept with joy and happiness whatever be Thy Will for me.

With deep devotion I prostrate myself at Thy Beloved Feet and offer my grateful pranams.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Yes, the first step for all progress physical as well as spiritual is to *eliminate* all fear.

With my love and blessings

15 January 1947

*

My love and blessings.

Catch hold of a deep inner peace and gently push it in the cells of your body. With the peace will come back the health.

20 April 1947

*

Ma douce Mère,

Thou who protectest us ever with Thy divine solicitude, Thou who art our Mother and Friend and Guide, Thou to whom we always turn in our difficulties, to Thee, O sweet Mother, I prostrate myself again and again with salutations of surrender. Humbly I kneel down at Thy Feet and with folded hands pray to Thee for the fulfilment of Thy Will in me—whatever that may be.

With my heart full of gratitude and devotion I offer my pranams to Thee and to my Lord on the eve of my birthday.

Thy child

My dear child,

Sri Aurobindo sends you his blessings and I join mine with all my love on the occasion of your birthday. I shall see you at Pavitra's place at 6.15 p.m.

2 June 1947

*

Ma douce Mère,

It is with great regret that I have to discontinue

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terrace darshan. As it is becoming terribly late for you in spite of the notice and as the Library now opens at 12, I have to go earlier to the dining room or not work at that time. Therefore poor Prithwi Singh has to make his exit except for a rare glimpse of you now and then by the vagaries of some happy chance. At this rate perhaps the Supermind, by the impact of its descending Force, will at no distant date throw me completely out into Nirvana or some impersonal Void or lull me into a somnolent sleep of self-oblivion. However, till that fate overtakes me, I prostrate myself at the sweet Feet of my beloved Mother and offer my pranams, however platonically it may be.

My dear child,

It seems to me that you have a very pessimistic view of things and especially of the working of the Supermind. However it is not quite my experience of it... but facts will speak better than words. Meanwhile I suggest that you should replace the morning "darshan" by an evening "darshan" and come up every day after meditation.

With my love and blessings

Undated (1947?)

*

Ma douce Mère,

As K is insisting on his point in spite of your silence, perhaps it is better to give him a reply—departmentally. I have drafted a reply which you will kindly change, Mother, wherever you think necessary. He thinks that by troubling you thus he will have his point: therefore I thought that it would be better to give him a straightforward reply. Also his constant reference to his offerings "all this money belongs to you" smacks of a typical Marwari mentality. Besides he is trying to exploit too much the money he has

New Correspondences of the Mother

offered for the publication work. However, you will do, Mother, as you think best.

With deep devotion I offer my pranams at your Feet.

Certainly you can send the letter although it may be that K won't like it. It may help him to see the problem through a new angle.

With my love and blessings

3 February 1948

*

Ma douce Mère,

In view of the strong impetus given to games and sports and other aids for the development of the body at the present time, there is a general feeling that it is an indispensable part of sadhana and therefore those who are not taking part in it in some form or another have divorced themselves from the full action of the Force....

I have personally kept myself aloof from these activities, the overriding reason being bad eyesight, though in my younger days, for some years at least, I had done a lot of exercises, dumbbells etc. and some asanas. There is also certain temperamental disinclination.

Do not be anxious—there is no necessity of doing physical exercise for realising the supramental!

To explain in details what is happening now would take too much time—but one thing is certain: each one must follow his own line irrespective of what the others do and the goal is open to all sincere and steady endeavour.

11 June 1948

*

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Ma douce Mère,

Yesterday a big glass pane of one of the doors at the farther end of the room where I work in the Library was broken by the boys while playing. The actual person K who had broken it while pushing aside a spinning top of another boy admitted it himself and cleaned the room full of scattered bits of splintered glass. Fortunately no one was sitting there at the time.

The children play and shout so lustily before S's room that after ten or ten-thirty it becomes difficult to work. When told they move away a little farther, but again return after a few minutes and start their noisy game.

It is not the children so much as the parents who are more to blame. Their contention is that the Mother is looking after the children and they have no responsibilities....

But I hope, Mother, that it may be possible to do something to prevent the Ashram building from being turned into another playground.

All that you say above is quite true—as for the children playing, we shall try to stop them.

With my love and blessings

31 December 1949

*

Ma douce Mère,

I wanted to see you, Mother, because certain things were told in your name that had rather hurt me, I frankly confess. Naturally I don't want to write such things. But I know you have no time and now it is no longer necessary. With a strong effort I think I have freed myself from that painful vibration.

New Correspondences of the Mother

My dear child,

I am not aware of having said anything that could give you the slightest pain—so I advise you not to listen to what people say—most of them take a very great pleasure in disturbing others; and when they have nothing nasty to repeat they invent.

With my love and blessings

8 February 1951

*

Ma douce Mère,

*I have received two bits of hair of our Lord.
They are so precious and sacred that I should not
keep them without your knowledge and permission.*

*I am sending the sacred treasure to you, Mother,
through Dyuman and if you graciously return, I shall
be very happy to keep it. But you will do, Mother, as
you think best and whatever you decide I shall always
be happy to accept knowing that it is for the best.
They are in the envelope enclosed.*

You can keep them, with my blessings and love.

8 April 1951

*

Ma douce Mère,

*Last January—it was on the 3rd, I remember
—when I was laid up with an acute attack of filarial
fever attended with severe pain and shivering....*

*The same night I had a dream-experience, almost
a waking vision. I saw two beings whose faces I could
not see, two tall and sturdily built persons wearing
what seemed to be heavy fur coats (later I thought
they may be carrying on their backs a heavy load of
herbs, as some light was gleaming out at times). They
approached me and looked at me. I had no fear at all,
but simply said, "If you have come from the Mother,*

Series Eight—Prithwi Singh

you can do what you like, if not I have nothing to do with you whoever you may be. I firmly withdraw from your influence and you cannot touch a hair of me.” With that I was quietly taking your name and withdrew into myself. They talked a while with each other, I suspected they smiled at my remarks. They also drew something from behind their backs as the light gleamed. But other details I could not follow. Then they slowly left and I was fully awake.

Well, the only result I notice is that this time the fever and the swelling subsided quicker. But the filarial trouble is still there. The body is still unopen to the Force.

I am curious to know who they were, looking almost like twins riding on horseback. And in such cases what is the attitude to take? Obviously there should be no fear, but is there any particular way by which a sort of occult tact can be developed to discern the true nature of the embodied Force or the Being?

If there was anything wrong in the attitude I had taken, kindly let me know, Mother.

Your attitude was quite correct and the best one to have in the occurrence.

They might have been the Aswins, the twin riders, the healers.

With my love and blessings

18 February 1952

*

Ma douce Mère,

Last night, with the experience of the rising of Kundalini, I saw near the heart centre a large serenely luminous crescent for quite a long while. The experience filled the being with strength and joy and a feeling of deep restful repose.

New Correspondences of the Mother

I now write to you of these things so that if there needs anything to be said, to be corrected or set right, you will please indicate it.

This is a very good experience, the luminous crescent meaning spiritual progress.

With my love and blessings

10 November 1952

*

Ma douce Mère,

Yesterday, for the first time I had the experience of the ascent of Kundalini in the waking state, while I was sitting on the chair, meditating at 11.30 or so in the night. Long had been my aspiration for it, but however hard I might try I had never succeeded before. The Force was ascending from the heart centre to the head and it continued three times, each time as I concentrated at the heart. I could see somewhat the inside of the body, though it was very vague and opaque. In between I saw the open pen and the paper also on the table.

It was not a new experience, but what elated me was that it came in the full waking state. A feeling of strength, restfulness and an inner quietude still continues. The head is cool. But the difficulty is with the thoughts. Unless the mind can be stilled, the effects cannot last. Naturally I remembered you at the time and afterwards prayed to you. Then I sat two minutes at the Samadhi to offer my prayers to Sri Aurobindo and then went to bed.

I just write this to let you know of it, Mother.

This is very good and will surely have excellent results even on the condition of your body

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With my blessings

Undated (1953?)

*

(*The Mother met with the disciple on his birthday, 3 June 1953, and spoke to him about Sri Aurobindo's passing in 1950. One week later he sent to her an account of their conversation. The Mother corrected one sentence of his account and returned it to him. Below is the corrected version of the account and the Mother's comment at the end.*)

In course of my interview with the Mother which she had graciously given me on the 3rd, I spoke to her of an experience a few days before the passing of Sri Aurobindo. In a dream vision a Message had come from him which thrilled me to the depths as I read it and whose last sentence still rings clear in my heart: "I am going down, but I am soon coming up in a radiant form."

The Mother heard it attentively and when I asked her if I could take it that the Master's return is certain, she revealed to me the following wonderful happening. I note it down in her own words as far as I remember. She said:

"At 1:26 in the morning⁴ when I was in his room, he was steadily coming out of his body into mine; it was so much that I felt a physical friction in the cells of my body; with it a great power entered into me and I felt capable of resuscitating him. But when I told him, he said, 'No. It is purposely that I have left

⁴ On 5 December 1950.

New Correspondences of the Mother

my body, I will not come back into it, I will return in a new body, the first body built in the supramental way.”⁵

And she hastened to add: “But he did not tell me the time when he would return.”

Then I told her: “Certainly you know the time, Mother, but if I were to ask, you would not say it and I know it is good not to ask.”

She smiled sweetly.

I am sending you the corrected version—but it is for yourself alone and not to be shown to others.

With my love and blessings

12 June 1953

*

Ma douce Mère,

About 4 or 5 days back during an experience of the ascending and descending force of Kundalini, I felt or rather saw a strong pressure of light pushing through the eye nerves to clean them as it were.

The effect on the external physical is not visible however; maybe the feeling is mere imagination, a sort of wishful thinking. It may also be that this kind of subtle action of your Force may take time to be effective on the material physical plane.⁶ Or it may be a complete misreading of the action of the Force which was for some other purpose. But I just write to you, Mother, because it was so vivid.

Keep quiet in your mind as much as possible and let the Force work. It is bound to have an effect although it may take some

⁵ The Mother corrected this sentence to read as printed here.

⁶ The Mother circled this sentence and wrote in the margin, “This is correct.”

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time before the effect can clearly be felt.

With my love and blessings

18 May 1954

*

Ma douce Mère,

Somebody has told me of a sentence either written or spoken by you. I am writing it down here for verification. The wordings are such that it seems it must be from you. It is also in line with what had been long predicted in connection with the numbers 1 2 3 4 etc.—23rd of April 1956 in the case.

I shall be happy to know, if it has been said by you, Mother. Here it is:

“1956 will be the golden harvest of the difficult sowing now in the rocky soil.”

It reads more like A's style than mine. I can only hope that it will be true!

With my blessings

15 December 1955

*

My dear child,

Up to the night I did not know that you were not coming to the Playground for blessings. Otherwise I would have sent you a written word of blessings.

So now, a little late, but never too late, I tell you

Bonne fête! et Bonne année!

[Happy birthday! and Happy New Year!]

with all my love and blessings.

Let this year be a year of radical progress on all planes.

3 June 1956

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Ma douce Mère,

I wanted to ask about two things:

Last time when I was with you upstairs on my birthday, there was a feeling as if time was not there. Not the experience of timelessness in the spiritual sense, but just a feeling that only I and You were there, and nothing and nobody else existed.⁷

It is exactly the experience I wanted you to have. I am glad for your receptivity.

Just for a few seconds, but an entirely new experience. I suppose it may be due to exclusive concentration on me at the time. But I don't know. And in the evening at the Playground it was not so.

Another thing is about an experience I had on three occasions during meditation on the Playground. After some half-sleep unconscious state, suddenly as the consciousness became fully awake and alert, there was an exquisitely fine feeling or rather acute perception that every cell of the body was throbbing with a Force of Light in a vibrant stillness of the whole being. It was different from the experience of total silence I once had. It was, though lasting for a minute or two at the most, an awareness for the first time of the innumerable cells of the body and the action of your Force in them, pouring in them a stillness so luminous and thrilling that words cannot describe it.⁸ What was it, Mother?

It is the experience I am giving during the meditation. So this

⁷ The Mother underlined the last half of this sentence, from “a feeling” to the end.

⁸ The Mother underlined the last half of this sentence, from “your Force” to the end.”

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also is quite correct and I am glad you were conscious of it.

With my love and blessings

9 June 1957

*

(*In the letter below, the disciple recounts the experience he had on his birthday.*)

I came before You with D—and I made my pranam. I had a feeling that I was kneeling before a divine Presence which was majestic, omnipotent yet gracious. It is only the Divine who can lean so understandingly, so compassionately on man.

It was then that I had a most strange feeling—I could not see Your Face,⁹ but I could see at least something of the form and the wonderful pose in which You were sitting. It was awe-inspiring, yet full of compassion and love. It was then that I felt strongly the Presence of Sri Aurobindo. Also when You caressed my head with Your fingers just before I came away, I had the same feeling that it was Sri Aurobindo's hands with the added sweetness of the Mother-touch. Even now, as I recall the experience, I am overwhelmed with feelings of gratitude.

Prithwi Singh, my dear child,

Your experience, on your birthday, was concretely true.

Sri Aurobindo was there to bless you and I am glad you have been aware of it.

With love and blessings

17 June 1960

*

⁹ The disciple's eyesight was extremely poor.

New Correspondences of the Mother

(*Regarding the disciple's attempt to translate Savitri into Bengali*)

Prithwi Singh, my dear child,

If you want me to express *frankly* my view of this affair, I must say that I consider *Savitri* as *untranslatable* and will never encourage a translation of it except as a personal exercise for the sake of concentration on this unique marvel; but surely *not* for publication. That is why I cannot attach any importance to this contention.

With my love and blessings

14 December 1961

*

Prithwi Singh

Certainly you can continue the translation of *Savitri* for your own benefit and I am sure that the help from Sri Aurobindo will always be with you.

With love and blessings

15 December 1961

*

Ma douce Mère,

The meditation given on the 15th of August¹⁰ was very intense and deep. Just in the beginning I felt a deep silence as if someone was squeezing out thoughts. There was also a feeling as if at some great presence the whole Ashram became still and silent. I don't know what it was but it lasted only for a short while. After some time thoughts began again to disturb the mind.

¹⁰ Sri Aurobindo's birthday. The meditation took place around the Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo in the central courtyard of the Ashram.

Series Eight—Prithwi Singh

I just inform the Mother what I had felt on that grand day.

Sri Aurobindo immense and very concrete (in the subtle physical) was sitting over the whole compound during all the meditation.

28 August 1962

*

Ma douce Mère,

I would like to know about one thing.

It is said that a man has five sheaths or vehicles. The physical sheath falls away at the time of death. The vital and the mental get dissolved when the soul arrives at last at the psychic plane of rest where, in a trance sleep, it assimilates its experiences of past lives for a future birth. Now what happens with regard to the causal body—the supramental and bliss vehicles? Perhaps they are not dissolved, but do they detach themselves from the soul to join with it in its next birth or, as a cause, it is always there, even in the psychic world, so long as the individual retains his individuality and does not lose himself in the transcendence or in Nirvana?

I would like to know, Mother, about this thing.

Alas! as yet there is no supramental body formed! This has still to be realised.

23 September 1964

*

(Regarding the riots of 1965 against the Ashram)

What has happened now does not seem to be due to the anti-Hindi agitation. Taking advantage of it

New Correspondences of the Mother

some unsocial elements have simply turned it to anti-Ashram activities, but against the Divine they cannot stand. This opposition however shows that the time is near when even surface things will change. All this is happening to delay the inevitable destiny of earth. May the Mother's Force be victorious over all obstacles.

Nothing can delay the inevitable realisation.

16 February 1965

*

(Written at the time of the Six-Day War between Israel and Egypt)

Ma douce Mère,

The war in the Middle East is perhaps a direct result of the resistance to the Supramental working.

It seems, in Sri Aurobindo's words, that "Rudra still holds the world in the hollow of his hands."

In this connection I would like to know what attitude one should keep with regard to this developing Arab-Israel war. Whether our thoughts should be on the Israeli side or otherwise. Or we should be indifferent to the victory of either if none incarnates the Divine in its fight. In any case, I am sure it will not affect the realisation, as the Mother had once written to me, "Nothing can delay the inevitable realisation."

Prithwi Singh

Those who serve the Truth cannot take one side or another. Truth is above conflict and opposition.

In Truth all countries unite in a common effort towards progress and realisation.

7 June 1967

*

Series Eight—Prithwi Singh

Ma douce Mère,

I was struck by the power and intensity of Love when I saw You on my birthday. It was the same feeling when I received Your kind message on the Israeli war. All this has made me convinced, not mentally alone, but from the depth of my being, that the power of Divine Love is greater than the power of Divine wrath.

Now I will pray to be enlightened on one point. At present the working is going on with direct Supramental Force. Its immediate action on the world of selfishness, strife and disharmony is not encouraging. We see everywhere clashes; the world is going on in the old way as usual, perhaps worse. One is reminded of the old legend that the first thing that arose from the churning of the Ocean of Life was poison. Nectar came last. The action now looks to be similar. India is going on in the same old way, placating Pakistan and the Mussulmans and Russians.

One sentence in the Mother's reply in connection with the Israeli-Arab war seems to me to be very ominous: "This is not the conflict that will decide the future of our civilisation."¹¹ Does it mean that there will be another bigger conflict in which the present civilisation will be destroyed though the world will be saved? Or it means that there may not be any war at all and the fate of our civilisation may be decided by natural evolution of consciousness? But the last one seems very unlikely except that the complete transformation of the Mother's physical will produce such tremendous effect everywhere that disharmony will become impossible.

I am particularly praying for an answer to this

¹¹ *Words of the Mother I*, CWM vol. 13, p. 382.

New Correspondences of the Mother

question as many, like myself, think that there is a possibility of another war that will decide the future of our civilisation.

It looks evident that if the transformation undertaken could be achieved in its totality, the necessity of another world-war would no more exist.

But purposely, for the sake of the work, the future is not revealed. So your question cannot be answered. Thus for everyone the wisest is to open oneself as much as possible to the force that is pressing for manifestation, to keep sincerely an ardent aspiration and an unshaken faith... and wait patiently for the result.

With blessings

19 July 1967

*

What should we expect in music? How to judge the quality of a piece of music? How to develop good taste (for music)? What do you think of light music (cinema, jazz, etc.) which our children like very much?

The role of music lies in helping the consciousness to uplift itself towards the spiritual heights.

All that lowers the consciousness, encourages desires and excites the passions runs counter to the true goal of music and ought to be avoided.

It is not a question of designation but of inspiration—and the spiritual consciousness alone can be the judge there.

22 July 1967

*

*Ma douce Mère,
I shall be very thankful if the Mother will please*

Series Eight—Prithwi Singh

*ask S to give a typed copy of the recorded statement
of the Mother about the August Darshan. I will easily
get it translated from the French.*

What I have said to S, is not to be published. S is keeping a record of all I say about the body sadhana which I am doing now. But that record is not to be published, at least for the moment, nor circulated.

The parts of this record which are considered useful for others are published in the *Bulletin* under the title “*Notes sur le chemin*” [“Notes on the Way”].

Blessings

12 September 1967

Series Nine

Correspondence with Indra Sen

Born on 13 May 1903 in the Jhelum District of Punjab, now in Pakistan, Indra Sen joined the Ashram in 1945 at the age of forty-two. For many years he was a university professor in New Delhi. As his first work, the Mother asked him to water flower-pots in the Ashram courtyard. Then she placed him in the newly-formed Ashram Press, where he worked for ten years. Later she arranged for him to teach a course in Integral Psychology in the Ashram school. He also established an Ashram centre in North India and helped to set up two Ashram orchards there. His final years were spent in the Ashram. He passed away on 16 March 1994 at the age of ninety.

Indra Sen's correspondence with the Mother deals mainly with the running of the Ashram Press during the years from 1945 to 1947. At the end are several questions about education raised by him in 1965.

The composing section has a lot of work. Feeling the need of regulating the work of the new sadhaks who are learning, I told them that we shall take proofs only at the end of the day, between 4.30 and 5.30. Do you approve of it, Mother?

Is it not possible to teach them some teamwork? That is to say, can they not take up one thing to be printed—like the [New Year] prayers from 1933 to now, and each one will contribute to the general work so that the result will be a whole holding together? It is indispensable to teach them from the beginning to do a collective work in which each one plays his part; otherwise

New Correspondences of the Mother

the whole thing will remain only as an interesting play for a few children.

13 September 1945

*

I assigned one or two of the New Year prayers to each learner and they have finished the job. The proofs are enclosed. There is a proposal to bring out the prayers in an 8-page booklet entitled "New Year Prayers (1933–1945)". The model of the proposal is enclosed.

These prayers are a kind of historical recording of the psychological development of the world's events for the last twelve years or so; they must be read in chronological order.

15 September 1945

*

[At the end of his report, the sadhak wrote:] Excuse me, Mother, I have dictated this report to V, since I am rather tired and my eyes are strained.

I do not want you to get tired—do not take too much work upon yourself and do not forget to take rest whenever you feel the need of it. It is indispensable that you should not strain yourself.

2 October 1945

*

We are planning to search the workmen as they leave the Press premises. I have the impression that you consider this desirable.

I quite agree to the necessity of this measure. But two points need to be settled:

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(1) I would rather if the measure is general and not only for those earning below Rs. 30 a month. A general measure is less offensive for everybody and the only secure one, for obvious reasons.

(2) Who will do the work of searching? The present gate-keepers are too busy taking materials, etc. to attend to that.

You might speak to C about this. I have explained to him in detail what I mean.

10 October 1945

*

The employees of the Press had an interesting celebration at 4.00 o'clock. They worshipped your photo and Sri Aurobindo's, offering flowers, fruits and some other eatables. It was all done in a dignified manner. I was surprised. But what moved them to do this? To please us?

The feelings of these people are always mixed because their consciousness is not very clear. In the present instance there is surely much superstition and calculation but also some genuine goodwill.

15 October 1945

*

I have written to P that you have permitted him and his wife to come here as sadhaks permanently and that you expect of them to be prepared for hard work.

It might have been better to let them know with some details what is expected from them before telling them that they are accepted—generally it is after a few months of trial that sadhaks are accepted as permanent.

18 October 1945

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Confusions belong to our life, but I was not prepared for the one with D. The day before yesterday he showed me his request to Sri Aurobindo regarding the publication of the Hindi translation of your New Year prayers. I told him that he should have mentioned that the translation was not yet ready.

Yes, it would have been better to do so.

It appears he minded my saying so. Perhaps I said it too strongly. In any case I am very sorry for the confusion and hope it will be cleared up before long.

He said nothing to me about it. Surely the confusion is bound to disappear as you are both men of goodwill and cannot keep a grudge against one another. In any case my love, blessings and understanding are with both of you for restoring the best of relations.

27 October 1945

*

There is something else that makes me sad. Mr.P expects everything to go first class automatically, but under the circumstances it is not possible. I also am unhappy that Mr.P is abusing and pressuring the compositors. It creates a very tense atmosphere. I am sorry to have to write this, but I felt it necessary to state it to you while the thing is in its infancy and can easily be set right.

You did well to inform me about it, and I hope you will always tell me when something goes wrong.

5 November 1945

*

It took us about half a day to achieve a working arrangement in our new rooms. From tomorrow, I hope

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we will be able to energetically pursue the various jobs to be finished by Darshan. It appears we need to work on Sunday. Would you permit it?

If all the things you wanted to do for “Darshan” cannot be ready, it is better to do them slowly and carefully and have them ready later on. I think everybody needs a rest on Sunday.

16 November 1945

*

Two senior workers have asked for permission to attend the Darshan of the 24th. What reply shall I give them?

The workmen, servants and local people are admitted for “Darshan” on the 15th of August usually.

22 November 1945

*

Regarding the Darshan tips we will give to the workmen, I had a talk with Mr. P. He agreed to the proposal of giving 16 annas (one rupee) to those earning Rs. 30 or above per month, 8 annas to those getting between Rs. 10 and 30, and 6 annas to those getting less than Rs. 10.

I have always been for a uniform tip given to all.

27 November 1945

*

As a Darshan tip, shall we give a uniform 8 annas per person or 10 or 12? If we give 12 annas per head, we will spend about Rs. 25.

You can give them 12 annas each.

28 November 1945

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

I read X's letter to you, which you sent to me. I must say that I felt sorry about the predominant tone of the letter.

Yes, I noticed it and because of it I hesitated to give you the letter to read, but I knew you would not mind it. Each one has his difficulties and shortcomings. We must be tolerant of the mistakes of others, as we expect them to be tolerant and understanding of our own mistakes.

4 December 1945

*

I wish to get a word of yours as a motto to be put up on the wall in the rooms of the Press. Will you give us a line of prayer and aspiration which will constantly remind us of the right attitude in work?

Let us work as we pray, for indeed work is the body's best prayer to the Divine.

11 December 1945

*

I am not much given to sadness, Mother, but since yesterday I feel heavy at heart. I am pretty conscious of it, but am surprised it is persisting. I submit it to you to be cleared up in my mind.

A sadness of this kind comes always from a resistance somewhere in the being to the transforming force. With a more complete receptivity towards the divine Consciousness, all sadness disappears, to leave in its place a feeling of joy, trust and strength.

15 December 1945

*

In my inner reactions I have observed a tendency to

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expose a fault of nature to you, even with emphasis, because that is the only way of getting rid of it. I would not hide a thing from you, because you know better!

I am very glad of this, as it is indeed an indispensable condition for the working of the consciousness to be effective.

17 December 1945

*

There is a laxity of procedure in the Press work. It is sad to see that half-formed good habits among the workers are now being ignored and neglected. During Mr. P's absence, I was anxious not to do anything that he would regard as contrary to his wishes. Now that he has returned, it seems that he and L would like to handle the whole Press by themselves. I feel superfluous and do not know what to do.

My dear child,

I am sorry but not astonished by what you have written. Much could be said on the subject, [but I do] not feel it would be [.....] to do so.¹ However in a [general way,] although confidentially, I [would say] that when you were organising [things] in the Press, in spite of all the [...] shortcomings and uncertainty [owing] to the lack of experience, on the whole there was the clear feeling of an effort to realise more and more my will and wish. Now this feeling is gone and replaced by the not less clear perception of somebody else's will trying to impose itself. In such circumstances, my position is that of a witness watching and waiting for further developments and the proper time to act.

¹ The manuscripts of this entry and the next are damaged. Words or ellipsis points in square brackets have been supplied by the editors.

New Correspondences of the Mother

I wish you could take a similar attitude. Your presence on the spot will be of great help for information.

24 January 1946

*

Mr. P has talked to me a number of times about your decision to first take up the printing of C's book and said that in your opinion it did not matter if the publication of the periodical Aditi was delayed. I must say I failed to see any sincerity in his argument. I know about his anti-Aditi attitude and his pro-C inclination. I felt definitely irritated listening to him. I aspire for the guidance of the Witness status.

My dear child,

The witness has only one thing to tell you in connection with this affair: "Look carefully, very carefully and honestly, inside yourself and you are bound to find a strongly pro-Aditi [view] and, as a consequence of the present circumstances, an anti-C attitude." [It is only] when we are spontaneously [free from] preferences that we can see fully the truth of things and of events.

26 January 1946

*

Our sadhak-workers talk too much while working and at times forget to return the manuscript sheets. I have deliberately allowed a wide margin of freedom to them so that they might act out of their own sense of responsibility; but I am slowly realising that it is necessary to arrange things with mutual understanding and then firmly carry them out. I present this feeling to you for guidance.

Of course without discipline no good work can be done, and

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silence is a very good condition for work.

11 February 1946

*

V came to the Press and spent his whole day attempting to get the workmen to take up his work. His engaging us in talk was itself a loss of work. I could not help telling him that I did not feel happy about his demands for preferential treatment. In the same way, I told S on the first day he came that he needed your permission to come and on the third or fourth day I said to him very clearly that it was a harmful practice for people to come to the Press, walk about and cause distraction.

Quite good and you did quite well in letting them know that their behaviour is incorrect and unacceptable. Could we not put a notice at the Press which would once and for all discourage such visits?

4 March 1946

*

We haven't yet made proper arrangements for sanitation and cleanliness. For example, the workmen go and smoke in the latrines.

It is very dangerous to smoke in the Imprimerie [Press]. Some “No Smoking” notices must be put at all places where they smoke or might smoke.

13 March 1946

*

Today Mr. P told me to organise the type stacks. This means keeping all types carefully, maintaining proper records, and so on. It is a very laborious task, leaving almost no time for anything else. He also told me

New Correspondences of the Mother

not to take up any specific duty, but generally to act as his deputy. Nothing was decided, but I felt I had been tossed from pillar to post. I don't understand, Mother, why Mr. P does not take back his former responsibility and let me go back to mine.

My dear child, do not do things which you do not feel like doing. I shall try to arrange things.

27 March 1946

*

I really have no special preference for work in any section of the Press. I find pleasure in going from section to section and learning the different aspects of the work. My thoughts contemplate the Press as a whole. If a more or less final arrangement is being attempted, here are a few relevant facts: [five points are listed].

My dear child,

Nothing as yet is decided; the situation seems to me rather confused and before I can see clearly my way in the organisation I will take no final decision. The consciousness is at work to bring out the Truth in the situation and it is bound to succeed one day.

31 March 1946

*

I am sorry to report something that the gatekeeper told me. M left the Press yesterday after 9.00 p.m. and he left the gate open, even after the gatekeeper insisted that he lock it; later he said that it was very dark, so he was unable to lock it. Thus the door remained open for 45 minutes till he came back. J said that this has happened twice before. I feel that in future M should not be given the key.

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I thought it was understood that never the Press must be left unguarded; always one at least of those who live there must be there. If it is like that, the occasion of giving a key to M does not arise.

3 April 1946

*

A worker who was absent two days ago told me frankly that he had gone to attend the labour union conference. I asked him what had happened there and I showed sympathy for the workers' aspirations. Then other workers collected around me and we had a good talk for about fifteen minutes. I explained to them the fundamental offers in your recent "Declaration".² I was surprised that they had not comprehended it very well. In the end one of them asked how they could form a separate union of their own and where they could hold their meetings. I said that you might allow them to meet in the Press itself.

They have already formed a union of their own—they have elected a President and are holding meetings at a place lent to them by me for that purpose.

I felt quite happy to have had that contact with them. But it appeared that they needed a little guidance so that they may not get mixed up with the outside agitators and may realise the benefits of their contact with you.

² In a "Declaration to the Workers of Sri Aurobindo Ashram", the Mother spoke of "the special relationship that exists between them [the workers] and me". She said that she would "receive with goodwill and sympathy" all the requests of the newly formed syndicate of Ashram workers and "act for the best according to the reasonableness of the demand".

New Correspondences of the Mother

Yes, it is good to speak to them from time to time.

9 April 1946

*

I am sorry to say that electric current was used last evening between 5.00 and 7.00. B told me that probably some printing was done after 5.00. Mr. P has been complaining about the electricity restriction during the last few days, but none of us thought he would actually infringe the rule and the effort to save electricity.

I am very sorry for this, not so much for the fact although it is bad enough, but for the spirit which is disastrous.

When Mr. P complained about something in the Advent that was printed in his absence, I told him that I had done the best I could and had sincerely tried to adhere to the style of the previous issue. I do not know whether you approve of my telling him firmly what I thought of the matter.

I fully approve of your answer.

When I spoke to him in this way he became apologetic. But I wish to be able to speak about such things with equality and without disturbance.

Yes, to keep quiet and be understanding is the most important thing.

10 April 1946

*

A little heat was generated in the Press today. L got upset over something Mr. P told him and he repeated over and over that he will not work here. Over any little difference, our first reaction seems to be to want

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to give up work. I feel that whatever our difference with anybody, big or small, we should not really think of giving up work. Is it correct, Mother?

Yes—it is this movement in the nature that runs away from a difficulty rather than facing it and conquering it.

17 April 1946

*

R has been complaining that people do not devote enough time to the Bengali section and therefore the works in hand are not making much progress. This morning Mr. P and I tried to find out from the sadhak-workers their reasons for not attending to the Bengali work adequately. Their reasons amounted to saying that they preferred to do French work and printing in the machine room. But D said that they feel dissatisfied with R's treatment of them.

They all protested to me and do *not* want to leave the work they are doing and which they like, to go to the Bengali section. I will certainly not compel them to do a work they do not like to do. Moreover I *cannot* approve of decisions taken without consulting me.

R and his son are in the Bengali section already. The Governor's speech in a Bengali translation must be printed soon. The Bengali section needs reinforcement. We seek your guidance and help.

Instead of bothering those who do not wish to change their work, he could take in the Bengali section S who is working now in the English section and will be more qualified in the Bengali section.

25 April 1946

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Today D attempted to do a bit of editing of a manuscript. When the thing came to me, I did not know what the author had written and what D had added in between; but later D cleared up my doubts. I am sure a few days' experience will tell him that he is attempting too much. I wish to know the best thing to do under the circumstances.

Continue as you do, it is all right. Each case needs a special solution.

30 April 1946

*

Yesterday D and I agreed that the work dockets prepared by him would come to me along with the manuscripts and I would give them to the compositors. Today he asked for a docket which was with me, saying that it was urgent and he himself would give it to the composing section. That appeared preposterous to me. I said that all he had to do was to make a note on the docket, "Wanted by such-and-such a date" and I would do the rest. He did not agree and said that in the future, as a rule, he will issue the dockets and manuscripts directly to the composing section. Kindly clarify who is to do that work.

It is almost impossible for me to answer your question, because these small administrative arrangements escape from my consciousness unless I am doing the work or part of it myself and in this case the things get no more arranged according to principles or fixed rules, but at each moment the necessity of the circumstance is seen in its truth and the decision taken accordingly.

1 May 1946

*

Series Nine—Indra Sen

I feel very sorry that I took the work-docket incident so seriously and that you had to hear so many representations of it. This morning I was happy to read your note to me. I told Mr. P and D that Mother seems to suggest that D may be given the work he wants.

I must confess that I do feel a little confused and worried because just when we were settling down to our duties and responsibilities, some fresh sensational changes are being attempted. But I have become used to disorderliness and am prepared for all sorts of things.

You must have misunderstood me because I never intended that D (or anybody else) should have things his own way. I am not either against organisation and order. But as yet I have not been told in a clear and exact way the attribution of each one—or rather the reports do not tally—and meanwhile I am objecting to the mental movement that cuts things like with a sharp knife and says this is mine, that is yours.

2 May 1946

*

Many of our sadhak-workers do not come on time at 7.30 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. Naturally the work gets held up or suffers. I have proposed that we keep a register in which each one fills in the time and signs when he comes and goes. It could be presented to you each week. There was general agreement to the proposal, but it has not yet come into effect.

Yes, this can be usefully done.

8 May 1946

*

On a number of occasions I have found myself stuck up when D's help is needed. I don't know what to do

*New Correspondences of the Mother
under these circumstances.*

Let him have his own ways... with a smile.

14 May 1946

*

(*Regarding the Cabinet Mission Plan of the British Government to grant independence to India*)

After listening to today's broadcast, I was filled with gratitude towards the English people and then I thought of you and Sri Aurobindo, who have long worked for India's freedom as a condition necessary for the spiritual regeneration of mankind.

It is not as much as we wanted but it is a starting point from which everything can come.

16 May 1946

*

M brought an order from Mr. P saying that all manuscripts must be carefully stored and he insisted that I countersign it. Later D came to me with that order and asked me about my signing it. When I explained why I signed, he flew into a rage and tore it up.

Yes, these incidents are truly very childish and there is only one thing to do—it is to laugh about them.

22 May 1946

*

Today Mr. P gave me Sri Aurobindo's letter of the 13th. I find that it contains the following instructions for the future guidance of the Press:

1. *There should be "no writing in the Advent or other of our journals embodying political, social or*

Series Nine—Indra Sen

economical controversy”.

2. *In a discussion or controversy, even on subjects like philosophy and art, “there need be no acrimonious debate”.*

3. *“Current Indian politics have to be avoided in our publications.”*

Do you wish me to bear in mind these instructions when I look through the manuscripts and bring to your notice anything that appears to contradict them?

Yes, it is exactly that that is needed.

19 June 1946

*

Washing our hands is a problem since the washing solution does not clean them properly. The hands of those in the composing section get very black and dirty. Perhaps we can try the Ashram soap; even chips would do.

I do not think the Ashram soap is just the right thing for that but you can try. I only wonder if they will be able to spare so much as they are using the chips for the laundry.

They used to have in Prosperity a soap which would have served the purpose. It is called in French “Savon noir” and is made of potash instead of soda. You might ask from H if he still has some.

24 June 1946

*

Today I checked six forms and found that our sense of quality is increasing. In two forms of La Synthèse des Yogas, I found that the proportion between the inner and outer margins is not right. Before trimming, the margins are 5 and 7 ems; after trimming they would practically be equal. In fact, after trimming the outer

New Correspondences of the Mother

margin should be about 2 ems larger than the inner one.

I hope this is only a beginning and our care for perfection will go on increasing until the standard of our production reaches a point worthy of Sri Aurobindo's work.

5 July 1946

*

In regard to the separation of types, I felt that M had made only a partial representation of the matter to you. In my note to Mr. P, I aimed at supplying him with fresh data so that he might present it to you. But, Mother, in a situation like this, should one present fuller data in order to seek a fresh decision from you?

It is always right to throw more light on a problem provided it is done in a quite objective manner with a scientific attitude and not as a personal reaction for the sake of discussion or contradiction.

15 July 1946

*

We will have a combined meeting of the French and English sections tomorrow at 3 p.m. Here are some papers for your perusal.

These rules for breaking up words at the end of lines apply only to English. In French the rules are almost opposite. In French the words must be cut in syllables regardless of meaning.

17 July 1946

*

In making suggestions to you about the Press, I sometimes feel that my mind has been moving in an unfortunate manner which would not have your

Series Nine—Indra Sen

approval. I seek directions from you that would help me to identify the mistake in my working and put myself in right relation with you.

So far as I see, there is nothing that can call for my disapproval. Your feeling must originate in a rather tense and confused atmosphere still prevailing in the Press. Misunderstandings and quarrels are always unfortunate as they prevent the Grace and the Force from working freely, thus creating a feeling of frustration and uneasiness. Mutual understanding, tolerance and goodwill would help much to remove the resistance to the spiritual action.

20 July 1946

*

During the last few months I have had alternating periods of faith, surrender and aspiration and periods when these qualities were put to a test. During the test I have not come off as well as I would like. When I have felt you severe and harsh, I have not entirely succeeded in retaining the perception of your goodwill and love. I believe that when you are severe and harsh, your goodwill and love must be more intense. I earnestly pray that my perception of it may become an abiding experience.

My dear child,

I am somewhat astonished to hear that you have felt me sometimes “severe and harsh” because I am not aware of having shown towards you any severity or harshness. I may have in certain circumstances to act with force and decision in order to counteract wrong influences but that in no way alters my love and compassion.

26 July 1946

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

The proprietor of the Sandhanam Press came here yesterday with a proposal to form a press owners' union or association. Are you in favour of such an association and of our joining it?

As a measure of defence towards the workmen it can be useful. But it was very clearly stated that we must keep entire freedom regarding the inner functioning of the Press. I must be free to make any change in the organisation if I find it necessary without having to refer to a committee or an association.

9 August 1946

*

Unfortunately there was an incident of theft today. A compositor was found at the gate at 11.30 a.m. carrying two pictures of Sri Aurobindo and yourself concealed beneath his clothes. The President of their union and other compositors were witness to it. The accused is under suspension from tomorrow. Meanwhile I await your orders. Should he not be dismissed?

For the theft, I advise you to call with some solemnity the President of their association and speak to him telling him, "This is a disgrace for your association; all those who belong to the labourers' associations and syndicates must give the example of excellent work and perfect honesty, etc. etc. which is a fact among the communists" and after that you can ask him what he thinks the man deserves as punishment. For me, I advise a good warning, make him pay the price of the photographs he has taken and will keep, and tell him that next time he is caught stealing something he will be dismissed.

12 August 1946

*

Series Nine—Indra Sen

Here is the application of the compositor to rejoin the Press. May he be allowed to join the Press upon payment of one rupee for the pictures he took? May he be paid 50% of his wages for the days he was suspended; this would be a concession to him more or less?

I had said immediately that he had to be taken back into service, asking him only to pay the price of the stolen pictures. As for his pay we may have to pay all if we claim the one rupee or else to give him 50% of his wages and not to claim the one rupee. Both things (one rupee plus 50% deduction) seems to me rather too much.

17 August 1946

*

My health depresses me at times. Periodically there are breakdowns when I feel too weak for movement and action. Would it be of any use trying some medicine? So far I have not tried any treatment, except lithine, Brahmi (an Ayurvedic herb) and lemon juice. I had hoped that the trouble would go away by the working of the higher force and my prayers to you. Is there anything that you consider necessary?

Surely the action of the force is far more effective than any medicine. But sometimes in the physical consciousness, or rather the body consciousness, the faith is not sufficient to secure a sufficient receptivity and in that case, to help this receptivity, some treatment or some medicine may be required.

13 September 1946

*

I returned from you in the morning with the feeling that I was still considered guilty of changing the page-headings of Savitri. The fact is, I have no authority over

New Correspondences of the Mother

anybody; I can plead with a colleague, but I dare not get even a glaring mistake corrected by myself. Even to get that inner title page composed, I virtually had to obtain D's consent to it. Divine Mother, I cannot tell you how unenviable I find my position in the Press.

Well, this is unexpected!...

This morning when you came I showed you that I had chosen for the inner page the one you had arranged because I found it good and what was rejected and corrected was the correction M confessed he had done and I could not agree to because it was bad. I sincerely thought you would be pleased to see that your choice had been approved and maintained. I am truly astonished that you did not notice this fact and you left me with the feeling that I was still "considering you guilty". This is a perception I never have; in fact I never look at the work in that way and the notion of guilt enters seldom in my consciousness. For me the work, the thing done, stands in itself by itself, very independent from persons. I judge the work in itself for itself quite independently from the person who has produced it and for the sake of whom I can never change my perception of the value of the result obtained. I fear I have not been able to make myself clear but I hope that little by little I can make myself understood.

I am sorry all these events have unduly translated themselves in your consciousness by sorrow. I say unduly because you ought never to doubt my love and solicitude for you and my blessings.

16 September 1946

*

I heartily recognise that the one right attitude towards you is one of absolute surrender and submission. It follows that when I do not understand things, I should silence the questionings of my mind rather than indulge them. My strongest inclination now is to

Series Nine—Indra Sen

dismiss my questions outright and submit them all to the sovereign remedy of absolute surrender. Is it the right approach, Mother?

My dear child, the best and truer attitude is much more a conscious, willing, loving collaboration with the Divine rather than a dumb and blind submission. It is even this fact that is at the origin of the liberty to wander away from the path with, as its consequence, the condition of the world as it is. It is freely that the divided consciousness must choose to turn to the Divine and to follow His law.

17 September 1946

*

I am glad that R himself will dispose of the leave applications of his workers. I wish that others too would deal with their section workers like this. Reactions sometimes arise in the section heads when I send round some general information, but previously, when I did not do it, many of them missed being informed of things in a regular way! At the moment I feel the need of withdrawing, attending to my work in the type stores and being relieved of general responsibilities, which are irksome to others. I hope you approved of my dropping the designation "Deputy Director" in signing the report yesterday.

Titles in my view are of quite a minor importance. More of a play than of anything serious and most often it has very little connection with the true position that each one occupies in a work.

5 October 1946

*

The descriptive note appended to Words of the Mother needs a change. The sentence "The book has

New Correspondences of the Mother

been happily made available..." could have been used when the first edition was published, but it cannot apply to the third edition. I have rewritten the whole note and present it to you. It is rather long, but the last paragraph can be easily dropped.

I am not very fond of descriptive notes, but if it is considered indispensable, I have nothing to say.

7 October 1946

*

At midday I have been resting at the Press in a room that is rather stuffy and smelly. For the last two days I have gone back home for food and rest. I may have to do this regularly until a more suitable place is found.

I heard that the room that has been built purposely for you is ready now for occupation. Why do you not put your things there and use it for rest? It is for that very purpose that it has been built.

23 October 1946

*

On this Kali Puja day when you appear to us as Mahakali, my heart surges up with one prayer: May I realise that Mahakali's "blows beat what is rebellious in [our] material into strength and perfect truth, hammer straight what is wry and perverse and expel what is impure or defective".

My dear child,

Tonight I gave petals of the Divine's love because no love is greater than that of Mahakali for her children.

24 October 1946

*

Series Nine—Indra Sen

*Since the composing work has been taken up by R,
I have much free time and I request you to give me
some other work.*

I do not want to give you too much work and overburden you as at once your health suffers. But in case of emergency I will not forget your proposal.

7 November 1946

*

Through each crisis in the last few months, I felt sustained and carried forward. I passed through some hard experiences with a fair amount of joy. But now I seem to break down a little too easily. I approach you as a disciple for protection, compassion and help. Gracious Mother, I wish that R would no longer test me. I do not think it is right for me to deal directly with him; I find my body and mind breaking down.

It is long since I warned you not to deal directly with him.

I cannot request you to make the sadhana comfortable, but I badly stand in need of help, a gracious help which will enable me to go through the fires which beset my path.

The help and protection are always there, but much depends on the receptivity.

15 January 1947

*

I would like to know whether the psychic being is not absolutely a witness like the Purusha of the Sankhya system. It is relatively inactive when it is not developed, isn't it? All this is not very clear to me.

New Correspondences of the Mother

It is not at all a question of theory, and the traditional notions of philosophy do not apply to something as true and living as the psychic being. Just as two physical existences do not resemble each other, two psychic existences do not resemble each other either—there are as many different psychic lives as there are beings. But in most human beings who are not conscious of their psychic being and whose actions are not guided by it, the psychic presence is like that of a witness, more or less conscious, more or less awake, which does not intervene in the course of outer events.

7 March 1947

*

The President of the Workers Union was found smoking in the latrines. He says he cannot work without smoking. What should we do?

I told you at the beginning that it was better to let them go out on the street to smoke.

Let me repeat, in order to be clearer, that it is better to give the workers one or two five-minute breaks (all together and at a fixed time) to smoke on the street. Once in the morning, once in the afternoon.

11 June 1947

*

At times I feel like bathing in the sea. I would like to have your clear indications on this.

This sea is not safe; there are water-pockets that are very dangerous and several people have drowned. Moreover, there are a lot of jellyfish whose sting is bad and even snakes that are poisonous. That is why I want to build at the Parc à Charbon a sea-water swimming-pool where one could bathe without danger. If people simply want to take a dip without leaving the shore, there is a very beautiful beach off the Parc à Charbon

Series Nine—Indra Sen

which can be used for that.

13 June 1947

*

I thought that the danger with the workers had passed, but after listening to everything you said, it is obvious that the situation is very serious and that each of us must be absolutely sincere and faithful to the Divine Will, yours and Sri Aurobindo's. Mother, I want to be a true soldier of the Divine and I humbly ask for your clear direction in order to overcome the difficulties that are present in my nature. Free me from my hesitation and reserve.

Keep your sincerity alive in yourself, and from day to day, whenever it is necessary, you will receive the indication you need to guide you on the path.

12 September 1947

*

I would like to understand the nature of a child. The day before yesterday you said that right from the age of three, more or less, a child's psychic being is "in front", but as a result of intellectual education it is pushed behind by mental formations. Is it possible to educate a child by keeping the psychic being always in front?

Yes, it is possible, provided the educator himself remains always in the psychic consciousness.

Isn't a child mainly a vital being?

He is vital in the sense that the mind is not sufficiently developed to govern—it is the vital that has the upper hand.

19 September 1947

New Correspondences of the Mother

EDUCATION IN INDIA

(In 1965 the Government of India sent an Education Commission to the Ashram in order to evaluate the educational aims and methods of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. The following correspondence of the disciple is related to the visit of this Commission.)

For Mother's approval:

Whether we may prepare a programme of going round and seeing things for the Education Commission, primarily centred round the idea of a national system of education for India.

Our aim is not a national system of education for India, but an education for the world at large.

July 1965

*

Sublime Mother,

Our aim is no exclusive national system of education for India but an essential and fundamental education for all mankind. But, is it not true, Mother, that this education, because of India's special fitness (by virtue of its past cultural striving and attainment), is India's privilege and special responsibility towards herself and the world? At any rate, this essential education is India's national education to my mind. In fact, I regard this as the national education of each great country with characteristic differentiations peculiar to each nation.

I wonder whether this is correct and Mother would endorse it.

Series Nine—Indra Sen

Yes, this is quite correct and part of what I would have said if I had had time to answer your questions.

India has or rather *had* the knowledge of the Spirit, but she neglected matter and suffered for it.

The West has the knowledge of matter but rejected the Spirit and suffers badly for it.

An integral education which could, with some variations, be adapted to all the nations of the world, must bring back the legitimate authority of the Spirit over a matter fully developed and utilised.

This is in short what I wanted to say.

With blessings

26 July 1965

BASIC ISSUES OF INDIAN EDUCATION

1. In view of the present and the future of national and international living, what is it that India should aim at in education?

Prepare her children for the rejection of falsehood and the manifestation of Truth.

2. By what steps could the country proceed to realise this high aim? How can a beginning in that direction be made?

Make matter ready to manifest the Spirit.

3. What is India's true genius and what is her destiny?

To teach to the world that matter is false and impotent unless it becomes the manifestation of the Spirit.

4. How does the Mother view the progress of Science and Technology in India? What contribution can they make to the growth of the Spirit in man?

New Correspondences of the Mother

Its only use is to make the material basis stronger, completer and more effective for the manifestation of the Spirit.

5. The country feels much concerned about national unity. What is the Mother's vision of things? How will India do her duty by herself and by the world?

The unity of all the nations is the compelling future of the world. But for the unity of all nations to be possible, each nation must first realise its own unity.

6. The language problem harasses India a good deal. What would be our correct attitude in this matter?

Unity must be a living fact and not the imposition of an arbitrary rule. When India will be one, she will have spontaneously a language understood by all.

7. Education has normally become literacy and a social status. Is it not an unhealthy trend? But how to give education its inner worth and intrinsic enjoyability?

Get out of conventions and insist on the growth of the soul.

8. What illusions and delusions is our education today beset with? How could we possibly keep clear of them?

- a) The almost exclusive importance given to success, career and money.
- b) Insist on the paramount importance of the contact with the Spirit and the growth and manifestation of the Truth of the being.

August 1965

Series Ten

Correspondence with Surendranath Jauhar

Born on 13 August 1903 in the Jhelum District of Punjab, now in Pakistan, Surendranath Jauhar first met the Mother in December 1939 at the age of thirty-six. Though he continued to live in New Delhi, he visited the Ashram regularly. Many of his family members came to live in the Ashram. In 1956, with the Mother's blessings, Surendranath founded the Delhi Branch of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and its school, the Mother's School in Delhi. During the last thirty years of his life, Surendranath developed the Delhi Ashram and its school and also established a centre near Nainital in the Himalayas. He passed away on 2 September 1986 at the age of eighty-three.

Surendranath's correspondence with the Mother covers the period from 1951 to 1972.

Surendranath,

Never forget that you are not alone. The Divine is with you helping and guiding you. He is the companion who never fails, the friend whose love comforts and strengthens. More you feel lonely more you are ready to perceive His luminous Presence. Have faith and He will do everything for you.

27 September 1951

*

(The disciple asked the Mother about the future of the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre (later renamed Sri Aurobindo International Centre of

New Correspondences of the Mother

Education), inaugurated in 1952. In reply she sent the following letter:)

Surendranath,

I am perfectly sure, I am quite confident, there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that this University, which is being established here, will be the greatest seat of knowledge upon earth.

It may take fifty years, it may take a hundred and you may doubt about my being there; I may be there or not, but these children of mine will be there to carry out my work.

And those who collaborate in this divine work today will have the joy and pride of having participated in such an exceptional achievement.

With my blessings

28 May 1953

*

Gracious Mother,

Some regular authority is very essential to carry out the work of the Ashram at Delhi, and open a bank account and sign various letters and documents concerning the affairs there.

Without this, Mother, the position is always difficult and ambiguous. Indirect ways have to be adopted to carry out the work. Sometimes, I am put in an awkward position and a lot of harassment is caused.

Mother, I pray for your kind decision.

Praying for thy kind grace and blessings.

Thy child.

Surendranath,

I see only one way; it is that you should keep in your hands the financial management of the whole affair. Two separate accounts must be opened in a bank of Delhi; one for the Ashram and one for the School, and both accounts will be operated by you.

Series Ten—Surendranath Jauhar

And naturally you must have a voice in the matter of School expenses.

Blessings

25 August 1960

*

To Surendranath Jauhar, New Delhi

Surendranath,

You are hereby authorised to carry out the work of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Delhi Branch and all its activities and those of the Mother's School; at the same time you are authorised to open a bank account and sign all letters and documents in this connection.

You are authorised also to act as my representative for all the works of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Delhi Branch and those of the Mother's School and you are directly responsible to me in all these matters.

Blessings

4 September 1960

*

Surendranath,

If the Ashram, Delhi Branch, is to fulfil its office of receiving guests on their way to Pondicherry and back from here, it must present the advantages at least of a decent hotel, that is to say, reasonably comfortable accommodation, cleanliness, sanitation, good hygienic food and proper service.

Counting that you will do the needful for it.

I send you my love and blessings.

4 September 1960

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Gracious Mother,

I wanted to tell you that in compliance with your instructions, I have been trying hard and making serious efforts to make some reasonable improvements in Delhi Ashram to give it a better look and provide minimum facilities and comforts to the visitors. I was continuously working on these before I left.

Shabby constructions and the floors of the kitchen and the dining block and the latrines and bathrooms have been completely changed.

All shabby and old tin sheds have been removed and new concrete roofs have been put, walls have been plastered, cement concrete floors have been laid. All these now give a good and respectable look.

Some constructional changes and adjustments have been made in the residential building to provide more amenities. The entire main Ashram premises have been white-washed and colour-washed and all doors and windows painted.

Now when I return I have to work on suitable furniture and respectable crockery and utensils etc.

Mother, I can assure you that henceforth visitors will get much better facilities and I will do my best for progressive improvements.

Gracious Mother, this has all cost near-about seven to eight thousand rupees in these few months and perhaps another three to four thousand rupees will be spent in completing the work and the scheme in hand.

Mother, water is still a serious problem without which many improvements suffer and the work cannot be properly and gracefully carried out.

Praying for your Grace, always, I am your child.

I am very glad to be able to send you visitors now whenever the opportunity comes, and feel sure that now they will be quite satisfied.

Series Ten—Surendranath Jauhar

With my love and blessings

1 April 1961

*

Gracious Mother,

J stayed out of the Delhi Ashram perhaps for about eight months with one H, his Divine Collaborator as he always calls him. He was living there under great pressure and in most dirty conditions. He was badly sick and reduced by 18 lbs.

I had a dream and I went to him and brought him back to the Ashram on 1st January 1967. He was so happy. He accepted it as a miracle and grace. He said that he did not have courage to come to us as he was thinking that we had given him up for good and will not accept him back.

Mother, he is mad after politics, which of course he does not accept. He is conducting a "Poorna Swaraj Movement", working very hard, begging for funds, etc. In spite of all their serious efforts, they are unable to meet even their own living expenses. Of course J is now living with us as your child without any payment. But someone is also supporting him with Rs. 100/- per month for his personal expenses.

*Praying for your kind grace,
Your child.*

I am glad you are feeding the poor man – often I felt sorry for his miserable condition.

Love and blessings

18 May 1967

*

Gracious Mother,

Mother, you know that J is conducting a "Poorna Swaraj Movement". He has been writing and insisting

New Correspondences of the Mother

upon us all to help and collaborate in this movement. He says that he is doing all this work under your instructions and command and he has shown to us that you have written to him “Go Ahead.”

He further says that he is doing all this work under command of “The Master” Sri Aurobindo who has said in the postscript chapter of “The Ideal of Human Unity” that his work must be carried on by us to save the world from the crisis and fulfil the Master’s desire.

Mother, as J is living in the Delhi Ashram he is always anxious to put his viewpoint to the visitors and everyone else. In that case what is our position? What should be our attitude and how should we act and behave?

*Praying for your kind grace.
Your child.*

Each one is free to conduct his life as he thinks best and to say what he believes to be true.

The only thing we can do is to insist on the fact that the Ashram has nothing to do with politics, has no political views and no political activities – that is all.

18 May 1967

*

Gracious Mother,

We would like to translate into Hindi “The Great Sense” by S and also get the same printed here as a small pamphlet, mostly for free distribution but we will fix the price also for sale. Mother, kindly let me know if you can graciously permit us to do the same.

*Praying for thy grace and blessings,
Your loving child.*

Series Ten—Surendranath Jauhar

Provided the translation is good and keeps the meaning intact,
it is all right.

Blessings

14 December 1969

*

We (human beings) are not living for the satisfaction of our ego;
we live to fulfil God's Will. But to be able to perceive and to
know the Will of God, we must be without desires and without
preferences. Otherwise we mistake for God's Will our own
limited ideas and principles.

It is in the wide peace of an absolute and devoted sincerity,
free from fixed ideas and preferences, that we can realise the
conditions required to know God's Will; and it is with a fearless
discipline that we must execute it.

3 April 1971

*

To Surendranath

I will be always with you.
With love and blessings

21 July 1972

*

All nations must unite in a common effort for a common
progress.

Undated

*

Life could be quite simple and easy if man's mind did not
introduce in it so many useless complications.

Undated

New Correspondences of the Mother

BIRTHDAY MESSAGES

Without heroism man cannot grow into Godhead; courage, energy and strength are among the very first principles of the divine nature in action. —Sri Aurobindo

Bonne Fête!
To Surendranath
With love and blessings

13 August 1963

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Bonne Fête!
To Surendranath
With my blessings for this year to be a peaceful and luminous one, and my love

13 August 1964

*

Bonne Fête!
To Surendranath
With love and blessings
He who lives to serve Truth is not affected by outward circumstances.

13 August 1966

*

There is a Supreme Divine Consciousness.
We want to manifest that Divine Consciousness in the physical life.

Bonne Fête to Surendranath.
With love and blessings

13 August 1969

*

Series Ten—Surendranath Jauhar

No joy can be greater than that of serving the Divine.

To Surendranath
With love and blessings

13 August 1970

*

Above all preferences we want to be at the service of the Divine.

Bonne Fête!
To Surendranath
With love and blessings

13 August 1971

*

Bonne Fête!

To Surendranath
With love and blessings to smooth the way

13 August 1972

MESSAGES FOR
SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM, DELHI BRANCH

(*The first message below is the inaugural message. The rest are anniversary messages, with one exception.*)

Opening of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Delhi Branch

Let this place be worthy of its name and manifest the true spirit of Sri Aurobindo's teaching and message to the world.

With my blessings

12 February 1956

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

No institution can live unless it is progressive.

The true progress is to come always closer to the Divine.

12 February 1957

*

Teach us to be really sincere in our effort towards the Truth.

23 April 1957

*

Truth does not depend on any external form and shall manifest in spite of all bad will or opposition.

Blessings

12 February 1966

*

Gracious Mother,

At this juncture we very much need your help, a powerful message from you to inspire all of us who are working here.

Therefore, once again I pray and beg of you that a command from your side may graciously be sent to us to lift us up.

Praying for Your Grace and Blessings.

Thy child.

Be more eager for truth than for success.

Blessings

12 February 1969

Series Ten—Surendranath Jauhar

MESSAGES FOR
THE MOTHER'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, DELHI

*(The first message below is the inaugural message.
The rest are anniversary messages.)*

A new Light has appeared upon earth. Let this new School opened today be guided by it.

Blessings

23 April 1956

*

Teach us to be really sincere in our effort towards the Truth.

23 April 1957

*

Let yesterday's realisation be a springboard for tomorrow's achievement.

23 April 1958

*

Let us prepare ourselves for the new life that is manifesting upon earth.

23 April 1959

*

The best students are those who want to know, not those who want to show.

23 April 1966

*

The Mother's School.

Sincerity.

23 April 1967

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

The measure of the sincerity is the measure of the success.

23 April 1968

*

The Future is full of promise.

Prepare yourself for it.

Blessings

23 April 1969

Series Eleven

Correspondence with Maude Smith

Born on 17 May 1910 in the United States, the disciple Maude Smith joined the Ashram on 25 March 1953 at the age of forty-two. At first she worked in the Ashram Library and then for the quarterly journal World Union. In 1965 the Mother placed her in charge of the Ashram Book Stock. Around this time she also became manager of the quarterly journal Equals One. Maude lived in the Ashram for forty-eight years, until her passing on 30 December 1991 at the age of eighty-one.

Maude's correspondence with the Mother covers the years from 1955 to 1970.

Gracious Divine Mother,

You have talked to me and explained many things about humility and openness, about the things in me that hide you from me, about confidence and letting go. But it is very hard for me to be patient and wait gladly and let you do the sadhana. Yet I feel that if I can ever surrender completely to you, it will bring a great sense of relief and peace and joy.

You told me recently that I don't need to seek you within, for when the being is ready you will reveal yourself. You told me that I can't even aspire, because aspiration is something given. Are these things true? Because in class and in the books, you and Sri Aurobindo are always saying that we must aspire.

There must be some omission in the mental transcription, because as it is put here it is not quite true—at least one aspect of the problem is missing.

New Correspondences of the Mother

It must have been a reaction against an excessive reliance on aspiration alone.

Then last week you said, "Surrender, too, is given." I asked, "Then is there nothing I can do but wait?" and you answered, "You can do nothing. Everything is given. But you must try. Try to aspire, to pray, offer and open. Try to surrender, remembering that it is not your efforts that will avail anything. All is given; still you must play the play; you must try."

Obviously all this was said to relieve an excessive tension of the will—but it is only one aspect of the problem.

Help me, Mother, I pray. Teach me what I need to know. Open me to thyself and bring me to thee.

With love and devotion and joy, I offer myself at your feet.

A more smiling confidence in the Grace would surely lead you sooner to peace and joy.

With my love and blessings

c. 1955

*

My dear child,

I considered, from the beginning, that you had given materially all you had, and that from that point of view your surrender was total—the rest comes little by little with the growth of the consciousness.

I accept the pretty little vase you gave me yesterday as a symbol—but I wish you should keep all the things you are using or can be of any use for you, as in our yoga we are not expected to deprive ourselves of the necessities of life.

With my love and blessings

15 January 1956

*

Series Eleven—Maude Smith

Gracious Divine Mother,

Should I ask for a servant to come three or four hours a week to clean my room? I have always preferred not to have a servant in the house, but nowadays I have no time for cleaning. Or should I take house-cleaning time out of my library or exercise hours?

It seems to me that to bring a servant inside your house is not quite advisable. But also to take time out of what is reserved for exercise is not at all advisable...some other arrangement?

Love and blessings

25 November 1956

*

Gracious Divine Mother,

I cannot believe that in the Integral Yoga the darkness and ugliness and suffering I have been immersed in for almost three years are necessary. Nor do I believe that it is beyond the power of the Divine to help. Only, something is dreadfully wrong somewhere.

In our last interview you said I should stop doing sadhana.¹ The partial stopping I have done since then seems to be ineffective, so now I shall stop completely everything that to me means sadhana (going to you at balcony, going to class and meditation, reading, marching, seeking guidance, trying to be quiet and relaxed). Little good seems to come from these things anyway.

I never told you to stop any of these things which are, on the contrary, the indispensable frame of the life here as they are the means through which I am working to help the inmates in their inner and outer life. There is surely some misunderstanding

¹ The Mother underlined this sentence and put a question mark after it.

New Correspondences of the Mother

of what I can have said and on the contrary I wish that you should continue all that in spite of all the resistance you can feel in your lower nature, as it is the best way of conquering this resistance. For instance I expect that you will attend this evening meditation at the playground and I hope you will benefit by it.

If life is all a game of hide-and-seek instituted for the Divine's delight, naturally the more difficult it is and the longer it takes, the greater the delight. So why should I expect anything more than just enough help to keep me in the game?

This is only a way of saying and need not be taken too literally.

I did not come here with the idea that this way is so difficult that the goal can't possibly be achieved in a lifetime. But if things must be that way, I shall try to resign myself to it, I shall do the work given me to do and put far behind me as a foolish and mistaken ambition the dream of aspiration, childlike trust and joyous self-giving, of peace, light, oneness, and of the yoga as a means of becoming an instrument worthy of service to the Divine.

It is *not* an ambition and far from being foolish it is the right aspiration and the right attitude which must one day be fulfilled.

With my love and blessings

19 January 1957

*

Look at the Sun and not at the darkness, and the darkness will melt to an insignificant fly...

Love

23 July 1957

*

Series Eleven—Maude Smith

Mother,

A year ago you said you wanted me to be quite free from M, and not let him push me, to do only what I saw was to be done. Now he wants me to type a screen version of Adam and Eve which he is preparing. It seems to me that this play is entirely unsuitable; it is full of ugliness and horror that much outweigh the little bit of human aspiration for a better future. I'd rather not have anything more to do with it.

Quite right.

But is this the kind of non-cooperation which you meant by what you told me? How can I pass judgment on everything he may ask me to do? After all, I am only a secretary.

Certainly you have *not* to submit to M. Your surrender must be to the Divine alone.

The day before he left he asked me to take the responsibility for seeing through the press the compilation Food and Life. I was astounded at his asking me, for I was dead tired after almost a month of nursing him and preparing food for him, and I was behind in all my other work. I felt a need for a time of quietness and a chance to "possess my own soul".

This is *quite* right.

I felt I should not let him push this job onto me. Yet he was a sick man and had no one else to turn to—how could I refuse? I stopped and called for your help. Then the sense of the Presence came so strong and warm and assuring that I felt you must want me to accept this new job. So I said, yes, I would do it. Was I right?

New Correspondences of the Mother

No. You ought not to have accepted.

What did the Presence mean?

To give you the strength to refuse by remembering that you belong to the Divine alone.

It would have been wiser to ask me about it before giving an answer.

Now I must ask you *not* to do this work and to take for a time a much needed rest.

7 October 1957

*

Mother,

I found a suggestion in your book On Education about how to deal with vital rebellion and depression: "At these moments one must remain quiet and refuse to act." Do you mean what these words say? What happens to one's work etc. on such days?

This is a misunderstanding. The sentence in French was clear enough. I meant that at these moments of depression and revolt, *no fresh decision* must be taken under the impulse of the wrong movement—but practically one must go on with the usual routine quietly and undisturbed.

Mother, can't you tell me whether or not I should persist in my efforts until success comes?

YES, undoubtedly.

You have often said we should persist stubbornly, tirelessly: "Do it ten times, a hundred times, a thousand times." But I am always prevented from doing this because, among other things, you once told me to stop doing sadhana, relax and take a holiday. (You didn't say for how long.)

Series Eleven—Maude Smith

This was only for a time to relax.

Something within stops me from persisting, but I don't know whether it is you or some hostile force or my own laziness.

Surely it is not me.

Why do you have to be so unapproachable? I can't talk to you, I can't write to you. Many times I have tried but am stopped by a feeling of its utter futility.

Why not write? I have not banned writing and am always ready to answer any reasonable questions.

With my love and blessings

8 October 1957

*

Gracious Divine Mother,

I am so grateful for your letter, for your touch, and for the warm, sweet feeling that I belong to you again.

I'm sorry to bother you again, but I'm still confused about the matter of persistence; the question has troubled me for so long that I feel I must get it straight this time. Here is an example of what I mean:

Just now I'm interested in concentrating in the heart; I also feel the need of a change in my attitudes. Should I continue to work on these two things² persistently until the inner doors open or until I see that my attitudes have changed? Or if my interest wanes and something I read or something you speak of in class awakens an urge in me in another direction—such as remembering the New World, stepping back,

² Beside this phrase the Mother wrote in the margin: "Yes, but why be exclusive?"

New Correspondences of the Mother

controlling my thoughts, etc.—should I drop what I'm working on now and take up the new direction?

The best is to keep all these aspirations *living in your heart* simultaneously, ready in the background and insist on this one or that one or several at a time when they become prominent in the consciousness. The idea is to be able to follow all without rejecting any, in an all-embracing movement.

At the Playground the evening before I received your letter, thoughts came to me which I felt must be your answer:

"When there is not sufficient support in the will or the nature for a certain movement to continue, it is dropped and the work is shifted to another angle. But your mistake has been in feeling failure and discouragement because of it. You should just keep aspiring and wait until another urge comes. Trying to force yourself is the wrong thing."

"It is like growing plants: you cultivate them a little, fertilize them a little, water them a little, each activity in turn. You can't give a whole season's water at one time. Or it is like climbing a steep mountain. You grab at bushes, stones, anything to help you climb. And if the next time a stone gives way under your hand, that is no sign that the first use of the stone was a mistake. Everything you try, even once, is a help, a step forward, a progress. But if a thing doesn't continue to help you, you mustn't give up or get discouraged—try something else."

Indeed this is a mental translation of what I tried to make you feel and can be used until a better one comes to replace it.

This of course means to persist, but not at any one particular thing. Was this from you?

Series Eleven—Maude Smith

Yes, in its essence.

Should I do this way?

Yes, but to understand truly you must as far as possible avoid the cut and dry mental rigidity.

With my love and blessings

13 October 1957

*

Gracious Divine Mother,

There is something I need to ask you about M before he comes on the 1st. Should I confine my work with him strictly to New Horizon work or should I also do other things I have been doing for him—such as personal and business correspondence, running errands, taking care of him if he is ill?

You might help him as he badly needs it—but not to the extent of taxing your own health.

Another question: What should I do with the suggestions that come to me about various things in the Ashram? When I dust my shutters, I think how windows could be made so they could be more easily cleaned. When I watch the doctor cut and fold gauze for small bandages, I figure out how ready-made plasters can be prepared by his helper to save his time. When servants come to the library who don't know how things should be done, or why, I work out a brief course of training which new domestic servants might be expected to pass.

Suggestions of this kind are always useful. You can make them to those in charge, leaving them free to make or not to make use of them.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Mother, I have given up taking exercise because almost always I was so tired I had to drive myself to do it, and you have told me so often not to push myself. Shall I wait till I have enough quietness and equanimity that I am not constantly fatigued by violent emotions, assuming that when the time is right you will give me the urge to take up exercise again?

Yes.

You spoke once in class about consciously aspiring so that each physical movement involved in our work and other activities may help towards our bodily strength and harmony. Should I try to do this instead of exercise just now?

Yes, provided it does not become an obsession.

My throat infection still bothers me. I went to Dr. N because it was not getting better. After several days of his treatment it seemed better, but now it is as bad as ever. I don't know whether it is serious, but I'm not going to him again unless you tell me I should. After all, if disease is caused by inner disharmony, I don't see the sense of going to a doctor about it. I shall go back to depending on your help alone, praying for your healing, purifying Force, and aspiring for confidence in it and openness to it.

If you can do this sincerely, it is surely better.

With my love and blessings

19 November 1957

*

Gracious Divine Mother,

The realisation has come to me that silence has nothing to do with the absence of sound, but is

Series Eleven—Maude Smith

something in itself, a positive quality almost living and vibrant, almost visible, part of the essential nature of things.

Quite correct.

Everything I see—clouds, leaves, flowers, walls, clothing, people, food, the cells of the body—all are silent, and in that silence they do their work according to the law of their nature. The effect of their movement—the rustling of leaves, the striking of hammer on steel—is something quite apart from this silence which is in the nature of the things themselves.

Sometimes I feel like a person alone in a silent world. For a short time I felt that in a few things, especially trees, there was an intense joy of silence and I also could feel that joy.

Mother, O Mother, I aspire to become aware of this silence in myself and, if it be the truth, as myself.

Good.

A long time ago, when I was trying to find you within myself, you seemed to say that if the inner road was blocked I might try the outside path for a while—opening myself to beauty and wonder, joy and laughter, as when I was a child. But I was not able or not willing, and I kept crying and pounding at the locked inner door, closing my eyes and my heart to all the things around me which I had always loved.

But Mother, my windows are all on the outside, and the Divine is universal as well as immanent. Surely if I remain open and sensitive to these things which you are showing to me in a new light, responding to them with joy or simply observing them with the wide-open, quiet eyes of a little child, not only will I

New Correspondences of the Mother

find you in them, but in the right time and way the inner doors also will open.

Quite true.

All is in your good hands. I trust myself to you utterly.

My dear child,

Your experiences are excellent and quite on the right track. Go on opening your eyes and your heart to the whole world and you are sure to meet the Divine there.

With love and blessings

18 January 1960

*

Gracious Divine Mother, Mother of Radiances,

Is it possible that in a former life I found You —found the Self, became a free soul? Is that what You meant when You said in an interview long ago that there is a contact with the psychic being which my mind refuses to acknowledge; and again that I have already surrendered and my heart is joyful and ecstatic? Might that also be why so much of this life has had to be lived before I could “remember”?

My dear child,

Yes, you are a conscious and living soul, come back upon earth to do the Divine Work.

With my love and blessings

3 March 1961

*

Mother,

Here is my offering—some little paintings on cards. They are not as gay as the others, but this time they came this way. Are they too simple? Would you prefer the painting in a particular place, at the left,

Series Eleven—Maude Smith

for example? Are the sizes suitable? Please tell me any way in which I can make them more useful.

They are all *very nice* and useful. Variety is good, I'm not for a fixed rule—and as they are they bring a touch of joy. I shall be glad to utilise them.

With love and blessings

23 September 1962

*

Mother,

I have always been able to sleep at night, almost from the time my head touches the pillow. But now sometimes I lie awake for two or three hours before I can go to sleep. I don't know why.

How to use this time of quiet? I have tried many things—calling You, Your Force, the peace, trying to go inside, trying to go upstairs and sit with You, trying just to be quiet inside. But nothing comes from anything I do, only a constant train of thoughts which are often depressing.

What is to be done?

Adopt any of these methods (the one which is most easy and spontaneous) but go on with it *steadily* even if it has not any immediate result, go on *night after night*—one night either you will have an experience or you will fall asleep (*both good*).

With my love and blessings for a progressive new year

24 December 1962

*

Gracious Divine Mother,

Everything in my being wants to give itself to You. Why is there no way, no help? Why can't it be now instead of in some vague indefinite future! Many

New Correspondences of the Mother

times I have asked You, in interview, in writing and in prayer about now, and You have never answered. Why? I am not “expecting great results in a short time”, I ask only the minimum essentials—and it is no longer a short time; it is ten years!

I do not see why it could not be *now, immediate*. It may be much closer to realisation than you believe.

With love and blessings

11 January 1963

*

Mother,

How can I keep on? I can't live in the old world—it gets more difficult all the time—and there is no way for me to live in the new world yet.

Sometimes quietness comes and I can work happily, but then I feel guilty to keep on calling You, thinking I should just trust You instead. I have tried that for months at a time, tried to let You do everything. And then I always remember Your message about the importance of faithfulness, plasticity, surrender and self-giving. I recall the time we talked about the “baby kitten” way and I asked You, “Then I don't have to do any sadhana at all?” and You answered, “Do what your heart demands.” Ah! Mother, that's just it—that's just what I can't do and what is so necessary.

All my attitudes are wrong. I seem to be closed to the Light and the Force that are pouring down, to the Love all around me, to the world of Delight—and I can't see any way to begin changing things.

Mother, what kind of game is this where there is never any solution, where everything I do is wrong, and doing nothing is also wrong, and there is no way

Series Eleven—Maude Smith

even to surrender!

Yes, if you could just be simple and spontaneous, and not *look at yourself* all the time criticising and judging what you do—leave the criticism and the judgment to the Divine—it is not *your business*.

You are much closer than you think—it is just one *personal* door to break open without personal effort.

With love and blessings

15 March 1963

*

Gracious Divine Mother,

Is this hunger that I feel so much of the time aspiration? When I told You about it in an interview long ago (although then I think I described it as a homesick feeling), You turned Your head away as if in disgust or impatience.

I am not conscious of having had disgust or impatience at anything you told me.

So because of that, and because year after year this hunger was never satisfied, I felt that it must be a wrong movement, a vital desire or demand or impatience, and so I fought against it, tried to quiet it, surrender it, forget it. And since I could never do that, but was only tormented by it, I have hated it and myself and the sadhana.

But lately it has occurred to me that perhaps this hunger is aspiration, aspiration being done in me rather than my doing it.

Certainly hunger is aspiration; the only important point is to know what is the object of the hunger. If it is *hunger for the Divine* it is quite all right. In the same way in a homesick feeling all depends on the *home* for which you are sick—if it is for

New Correspondences of the Mother

your *Divine Origin*, it is undoubtedly a very good help for your consciousness to reach there soon.

Mother, is this true? If so, then my whole attitude has to change; I must learn to welcome this hunger instead of dreading or resenting it, and quietly and confidently let it do its work in me.

Is it not that which I meant when I asked you to be more spontaneous?

With all my love and blessings

5 May 1963

*

Mother,

Several months ago I started helping M with the proof-reading for the World Union journal. I have continued to do this, feeling rather responsible for it, especially trying to have the manuscripts in proper condition before they go to the Press. I like it, but it takes a lot of time and almost always it has to be done in a great hurry.

I have begun to wonder if I should continue this work. I would rather paint, but for a long time I have felt little inclination for painting. Perhaps there is in me too strong a feeling that painting is play, and play should be done only when work is finished—and with me work is never finished!

What shall I do?

Never exert yourself and never hurry. Do what can be done in the time you have but *without* strain—in a quiet flow of peace.

All work must be play, but a Divine play played for the Divine, with the Divine.

Love

22 June 1963

*

Series Eleven—Maude Smith

*To Mother—an offering sent with all my love, I wish
it were a million times more.*

May I be all Yours and only Yours.

Your heart is worth many million times more and I cherish it
very preciously.

With all my love and blessings

30 October 1963

*

Gracious Mother,

*Often these days I find in books and magazines
signs of a consciousness one could hardly have seen
ten years ago—new images, new ways of looking at
things, a new seeing, a new sense of relationship, uni-
ty and harmony, a new direction.*

*Almost immediately I think: “This would be good
for the World Union journal” or “I wish everyone
could read this” or some other utilitarian idea.*

*The last few days I have begun to feel that such
thinking almost shuts a door on my receptivity and
limits my absorption of the message and power of
these writings. Even copying or making notes seems
to change the mood; it is no longer pure delight, but
something I want to do or ought to do.*

*Mother, would it be better just to enjoy these
things, drink them in, open and stretch to make place
for them within myself—so that perhaps some day
what I absorb will pour out through me like perfume
from a flower?*

Yes, my dear child,

You have caught the right thing. To make use of your experience you come down from the pure height of it. To be “useful” you descend to a mental level, and as the mind is still very much mixed up, the purity of the experience goes.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Let the “utilisation” come in its time—later on.
With love, much love, and blessings

16 December 1963

*

Gracious Divine Mother,

It seems more and more clear to me that if there is nothing really but the One; if all our seemingly separate existences and actions are only an appearance, then the only way to do anything effective for World Union is first to get out of the consciousness of appearances and onto the Other Side, into the Reality.

Until then all our attitudes, our speech, our planning and our relationships are superficial and artificial. Even the desire to work for the Divine and the desire for oneness are results of the same false consciousness of separateness. And whatever work we do can have little value in itself.

So to go over to the Other Side, to live in the Reality, to lose my separate self-ness in that vast movement of Being which manifests the One—only this seems to have any importance or value for me right now.

Mother, is this true? If so, what can I do to hasten the crossing over?

Live, yourself, more and more in the consciousness of the One and let Him³ guide you in your daily action; this is the best we can do, at once for ourselves and for the world.

With love

9 January 1964

*

³ Mother underlined the words “One” and “Him” and drew a line connecting them.

Series Eleven—Maude Smith

Mother,

All last night I was with R, who was very ill. Most of the time I was lying down, but I could not sleep except from 4 to 6 this morning. Yet after only two hours of sleep, today I have been less tired than usual and less sleepy in the afternoon. Can it be related to the fact that all night long I kept calling the Peace? Or is it that the Force you were sending to help R gave me strength also?

Yes, obviously, you received well the Force that was sent to cure her.

Or perhaps I don't need as much sleep as I've always thought I did!

No—once in a while not to sleep is all right, especially when you are bathing in Force, but it would not do to make a habit of it.

My love and blessings

5 February 1964

*

Gracious Mother,

I am grateful that I feel almost well again so soon. The weakness I had after my other heart attacks has not come this time—only sometimes a slight headache.

Since the last heart attack two years ago I have enjoyed the dancing in A's class. And lately I have been taking exercises with F to strengthen my weakest muscles. After so many years I have begun to hope that the body can become graceful, plastic and full of joy. But I realise that I must go about it very slowly and patiently.

The last weeks there has been an unusual sense of joy and physical fitness. But I have not yet learned how to work and exercise without exerting myself.

New Correspondences of the Mother

There must be a way to let the Force do it. Can you teach me?

Is it all right to start to work again on Friday, as the Doctor suggests?

My dear child,

Keep your confidence and hope in the body's possibility. But learn not to exert yourself and to let the Force work harmoniously through the body with a minimum interference of the mind.

You can start work as the Doctor allowed but without any effort, in an unshaken inner peace and calm.

With all my love and blessings

3 March 1964

*

Simplicity is of all things *the best* to express harmony.

9 April 1964

*

Mother,

Regarding the repainting of the World Union office—is it all right to use the same colours we had when you visited the office at its opening?

The outside gray and white, of course.

The courtyards white.

Inside—white walls, pale blue ceilings, pale blue-gray woodwork, and one deep blue wall and door.

We want most to approach your ideal of beauty and simplicity.

The fewer different colours, the greater is the simplicity!

Blessings

10 July 1964

*

Series Eleven—Maude Smith

Gracious Mother,

A few months ago I was wondering why we can't grow more fruit in the Ashram, and I aspire intensely to do something to help the situation. Now a direct answer seems to have come.

A month or so ago I received an avocado (butter fruit) in my fruit bag, and I planted the seed. Now it is a fine little tree. So I told R, and now he is giving me the seeds of all the fruits he prepares for you. I have planted about 100 in sand and water on my terrace! Some have sprouted. When they get big enough to be transplanted safely, shall I send them out to Lake Estate? How good it will be when we can have a whole orchard of these nutritious fruits!

Bravo! I am so glad of the good news! With all my love I will help you and the future orchard to grow and flourish.

Blessings

11 September 1964

*

Mother,

While this emergency lasts, I shall be glad to help in the nursing home for about an hour every evening, or in the bakery early morning—trying always not to hurry or strain!

You are working already quite enough.

With love and blessings

30 September 1964

*

Gracious Mother,

My body and mind are very tired. How can I continue unless I learn to work without exerting myself?

New Correspondences of the Mother

Getting the first issue of the World Union journal out of the Press and the next issue in at the same time, as well as trying to keep the Book Stock work going smoothly—and at night the group exercises!

Mother, can't you teach me how not to exert myself, how to live in the peace of the Lord as you told me on my birthday?

The impulse for work must come from within or above, *not* from the pressure of outer circumstances and wills. If the work of the World Union journal is a strain YOU MUST STOP IT—let somebody else take it up.

The work assigned to you is the maintenance of the “Book Stock” and that, that alone, you can do without straining yourself. Take all the rest you need and use that rest to go deep inside and to find the Divine’s Peace there.

Love and blessings

31 January 1965

*

Gracious and Blessed Mother,

It is twelve years today that I first came to the Ashram, and this is the first time you have ever told me to go inside! So much I have wanted to, but there was never any way, any door to enter. It seemed there was no inside in me.

Now that you have spoken, I feel the time has come. I know the Force will be there to make it possible. Show me the door, I pray, and lead me within.

The door is open. You have only to step in.

Love

31 January 1965

*

Series Eleven—Maude Smith

Mother,

*Is there any way of finding out how to go inside?
Is there any way of seeing or feeling or becoming
aware of the door that you say is open?*

When you want to enter a room, or a house, or a temple, you cross the door and go in.

Do the same.

Love

17 April 1965

*

Gracious Mother,

After my birthday you seemed to say to me: Just as you tried to be quiet and open when you were with me, do that for five minutes a day, at the time when you are happiest. Don't expect any result. Just do it. It will be good for you. Is this from you?

Yes.

I have been trying it, but haven't been able to do it for five minutes without a break yet.

Continue the attempt — after some time something may develop.

Love

27 May 1965

*

Gracious Divine Mother,

What is the matter? I can't find any inside, any door, any opening to "step through". There is no place I can go to hide, to rest, to find any peace.

Why is it that I still can't trust the sadhana to you?

Many years ago when I told you I had a feeling

New Correspondences of the Mother

of not being able to do anything, you said that sometimes it is a good thing, for then one surrenders and everything is all right. But I still can't surrender and everything is not all right. Sometimes I work happily for months and don't think of these things, but that does no good either. It only distracts me from aspiring, from striving, from doing the yoga.

Mother, what to do? Sometimes I feel like stopping everything—food, sleep, work, exercise—and just call and call until there is a breakthrough, until something opens. There is no sense in going on as I am. I cannot go on this way.

Mother, help me, I pray.

Perhaps if you stop doing “yoga” and just live joyfully—yoga will spontaneously come to you....

In any case, my love is with you.

8 October 1965

*

Gracious Mother,

The gardening I wish to do need not conflict with my ordinary working hours. Of course the work I am doing is almost unlimited in its possibilities; there is always more that could be done. I have often wondered whether, in being faithful to it, one is justified in doing anything else. You have said that we don't need recreation if we have the right attitude in our work, but where does spontaneity come in?

In principle I have no objection to gardening work, it is a very fine and useful occupation. But I would object very strongly to overtiring yourself and as I know that you will not neglect one work for the other, perhaps both would be too much?...The right measure in action is a very necessary thing. So you are the only one to know, through experience, what you can reasonably do.

Series Eleven—Maude Smith

With all my love

4 May 1966

*

Gracious Mother,

With your statement in the August Bulletin, I agree completely:

“You cannot do yoga if you do not take it seriously. If you are not serious, you have an aspiration for five minutes and then for ten hours you do not have it; for one day you have a great urge and for a month you do not have it, and so on. You cannot do yoga under those conditions. If you forget and relax, you cannot do yoga.”

But this is exactly what I do—I forget and relax! Yet you tell me repeatedly: “Don’t worry, it is coming all right.” You say that the baby kitten way is the best—to take no responsibility for the sadhana—and that I should just live and work joyously (which I can’t do either).

Mother, what attitude should I take when I read such things?

And what about the Divine Grace? Do you think it exists to remain idle?

Most have to work, but some are carried and are asked only to keep faith and confidence.

With love and blessings

1 September 1966

*

Mother,

Most of my life I have driven myself to do what needed to be done or what I wanted to do. But you have told me to do as I feel—which has always seemed utterly impossible. For one thing, different parts of

New Correspondences of the Mother

me feel different ways and I never recognise any urge as being "from within or above", which, you told me, is where the urge for work should originate.

In recent weeks my weight has gone very low, and since my food is not less, I wonder if it may be because my body needs more sleep or more relaxation.

What would happen if I tried for a month doing exactly as I felt? Of course I would do the Book Stock work as usual, but everything else—other work, group exercise, gardening, painting, personal things—I would do only as I felt, not allowing one part of the being to push another. Is this possible before the psychic takes over control?

Shall I try it as an experiment? And will you guide me?

I was not speaking of the *body's* feeling, but of the *psychic* feeling which is wiser than the mind.

Love and blessings

30 October 1966

*

Mother,

Today after examining my neck the Doctor says that the real cause of my elbow pain is a degeneration of the bones because of age. He suggests some diathermy treatment and perhaps exercises. But this has to be three mornings a week for two or three weeks, and I don't like to be away from the Book Stock so much.

Mother, surely all this is not necessary? If disease is caused by an imbalance in the different parts of the being, how can it be healed by diathermy? And if health depends on the ability to call the peace and to live in the peace of eternity, that is for you to teach me, not the Doctor. I should much prefer to depend

Series Eleven—Maude Smith

on your Grace and Force for healing. I leave myself completely in your hands.

What you say is *quite true*. I fully approve and fully collaborate.
With love and blessings

29 November 1966

*

Mother,

A.B. has asked me if I would be willing to be a vice-president of World Union.

I do not see the necessity of your taking up this burden.

Since my experiences in America I have not had much faith in the organisational approach as a means of changing the world, unless the consciousness is changed.

QUITE RIGHT!

As far as I know, A.B. has got a vice-president and all is well!

With love and blessings

29 July 1967

*

Mother,

Frequently one hears about that little step in consciousness which makes all the difference. Is there a method I can use to become conscious?

The best way is not to allow oneself to do anything unconsciously...but!

Even if you just try a little it will help.

Love

12 May 1968

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Mother,

For some weeks I have been having digestive trouble, with occasional headache and giddiness. Dr. S thinks there are two causes: anaemia and a chronic type of colitis. For the anaemia he recommends iron, and for the colitis he proposes to give me a medicine.

Up to now, everything that has ailed the body has always, eventually, become all right by your Grace. So perhaps I can trust that this will also become all right, and need not take the medicine, only the iron?

Keep your faith and take the iron.

With love and blessings

19 January 1970

Series Twelve

Correspondence with Pradyot

Born on 21 August 1905 in Chittagong, East Bengal (now Bangladesh), Pradyot Bhattacharya joined the Ashram on 11 August 1943 at the age of thirty-eight. He had been an electrical engineer by profession; the Mother appointed him as chairman of the newly-formed Technical Coordinating Committee (T.C.C.), which supervised the maintenance of the Ashram's buildings and properties. In 1970 he became chairman of Sri Aurobindo's Action and in 1972 the Mother appointed him as an Ashram trustee. He lived in the Ashram for forty-one years, until his passing on 22 November 1984 at the age of seventy-nine.

Pradyot's correspondence with the Mother covers the period from 1963 to 1972.

My dear child

This is simply mischief from somebody who wants to interfere with our work. But such a thing cannot be tolerated and must fly away in front of the Power from the Divine.

Love

5 April 1963

*

Mother,

Grant that

You get all the money you need.

*I may be a good and truthful instrument and not
a weak or broken one.*

*The child G may be happy and healthy and a
truthful instrument.*

New Correspondences of the Mother

*All those who are around one will turn towards
you.
Your constant Presence.*

Granted.

Love

April 1963

*

My dear child,

I need you as my instrument, and you will remain so. Be very quiet—endure with courage. I am with you, in love and in victory.

7 May 1967

*

Take this persistence in the trouble as a *test* for your faith, answer by a confident smile—and it will be all right.

With love and blessings

2 July 1967

*

*As long as I am alive, I should like to be able to do
your work, as a good instrument.*

*I have some little faith and I believe no serious
trouble like ulcer will recur, but somehow I seem to
allow a lesser trouble like colitis to interfere with me.
May this interference go. My prayer for 1968 is:*

*“Grant that this body discards any tendency to
oppose your will. Let it collaborate.”*

Granted with love.

22 December 1967

*

Series Twelve—Pradyot

Mother,

In a dream, I met someone whose business seems to be causing breakdowns in machines and plants. He and I came to an understanding, and he agreed to spare the works in which I am or may be interested.

I do not know how seriously I am to take it, but it suggests a prayer:

“Grant that this be true, so long as I work for you.”

Very good. Blessings

6 June 1968

*

Mother,

First, I pray for a boon:

A settled, calm courage in the heart assured by your constant Presence in and around me.

Secondly, I pray for your decision, whether or not to undergo an operation for the prostate. At present I am wearing a catheter which can only be removed if the flow is restored. Life with a catheter is not especially attractive.

I should like to serve you. Kindly grant this without an operation if possible, and with an operation, if necessary.

An unshakeable faith in the Divine's Grace and no disharmony can resist its action.

With my love and blessings

10 October 1968

*

Mother,

The irritation is not there now, but there is fever, 101.8°F, probably because of infection caused

New Correspondences of the Mother

by remnant urine in the bladder which has not been cleared as the flow is little.

Sri Aurobindo has written that you can be “hard and terrible”. Not for me, now, I hope. I would rather be reassured that surrounded by your Grace and Protection, what have I to fear in this or in other worlds?

I ask this question because the prostate is a sex gland, I hear. At home and outside, I have to live and deal with many girls and their problems.

I thought I was reasonably free from sex; I consciously aspired for it to be able to do my work. Is it that the Sex-God did not like it and struck me on the victory day?

Surely the Sex-God is not stronger than the Divine's Love and you can be assured that the Divine's Love is with you and the Sex-God will have to behave properly!

Blessings

14 October 1968

*

Mother,

As I informed you last Tuesday, I am going next Thursday, the 30th January, to Calcutta, and maybe to Delhi also, returning home on the 3rd or 4th February. The idea behind the trip is to be of some service.

Grant me, if you please, the energy to be able to serve you. This wish is the reason why I do not want any illness. Not that I am hankering to live for ever! I should live as long as you find it necessary and when I die let it be without illness and of free will, since illness, I gather, is not the Divine Dispensation.

And faith, I believe, is the bulwark against illness. By faith, I understand faith in you, faith that you are the Divine. I have that faith. If I am right in

Series Twelve—Pradyot

my understanding of faith, I suppose I could rightly consider myself basically free from illness and live and move in that confidence.

Keep the unshaken faith that the *Divine wants you in good health*—and it will be all right.

With love and blessings

26 January 1969

*

Mother,

Grant that I may collaborate entirely with you so that only what you will happens to me and nothing else.

It is already granted and for ever.

17 June 1969

*

Mother,

Regarding my health, I am no longer bothered about my enlarged prostate gland or the duodenal ulcer or the hernia. Because you said you would cure all, these have more or less disappeared from my consciousness.

Now there is a small growth just inside the rectum. I don't know if it was there before. It is not troublesome now, but I would not like it to grow larger and cause obstruction or turn cancerous.

Doctors cannot cure. Please, Mother, will you cure me?

We shall wait for a month—if it disappears or even diminishes it is all right. If not you will have to show it to a doctor.

Love and blessings

16 June 1970

*

New Correspondences of the Mother

Mother,

The duodenal ulcer has come again. I did not think this would come. I do not know why it came.

Maybe, as usual, it is not serious and will soon go. There have been other troubles also, which, at the moment, do not bother me.

But always there have been battles. Now I would like to crystallise my attitude towards my body.

Will the Mother sanction that the body will remain in good health to do works till the highest aspiration are fulfilled?

I want your body in good health.

With love and blessings

20 August 1971

*

Mother,

Last night and two other nights this week, I had partial obstruction of the urine. Normally, relaxing myself restores the flow, but last night it was not fully successful. The total quantity was however all right. There was no urine retention.

You told me, for this prostate gland trouble, when the question of operation was raised by the doctor four years ago, that "an unshakeable faith in the Divine's Grace and no disharmony can resist its action." I pray that the symptoms disappear and no operation becomes necessary, to prove myself that I have some faith and the body responds to your will.

Have faith.

My love, force and blessings are with you.

Love

18 July 1972

*

Series Twelve—Pradyot

Let Peace and a quiet Confidence be with you all night.

Blessings and Presence

Undated

*

Nothing can ultimately oppose the Divine's Love. It is the
Eternal Victor.

Love

Undated

Note on the Texts

Series One—Dyuman. Chunibhai Desai joined the Ashram in July 1927. Soon afterwards, Sri Aurobindo gave him the name “Dyuman”. He began corresponding with the Mother in March 1929 and between then and January 1937 he filled 126 notebooks with reports on the Dining Room work, sometimes adding remarks on himself. In the margins of these notebooks, the Mother made comments whenever it was necessary or helpful. The present correspondence consists of a broad selection of her comments, along with the relevant portion of Dyuman’s reports or personal remarks. The first selection from the notebooks appeared between April 1996 and February 1998 in eight instalments of the quarterly *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*. The present selection is more comprehensive than the one in the *Bulletin* and includes simple words of encouragement and solicitude. These “minor” replies have been included because they enable the reader to more accurately gauge the tenor of the correspondence and because they reveal the depth of the Mother’s affection for her disciple. The correspondence is in English.

Series Two—Champaklal. Champaklal Purani came to Pondicherry in 1923, before the Ashram was formed, to live with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. His correspondence with the Mother began seven years later and continued for more than half a century, from 1930 to 1973. Much of this correspondence first appeared in the first edition (1975) of *Champaklal Speaks*; the entire correspondence was published in the third, enlarged edition (2011) of that book. The present text contains the entire correspondence and is taken from the enlarged edition. The correspondence is in English.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Series Three—Dilip Kumar Roy. Dilip Kumar Roy joined the Ashram in November 1928. His correspondence with the Mother covers a twenty-year period, from 1931 to 1951. Selections from the correspondence were published in the *Bulletin* of November 1980. A larger, almost complete collection of the correspondence appeared in the four-volume set of books titled *Sri Aurobindo to Dilip*, published by the Hare Krishna Mandir Trust, Pune, in 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2011. The present text contains the Mother’s replies in those volumes, along with two more, dated 18 January 1938 and 4 June 1938. The correspondence is in English, with the exception of nine replies in French which appear in English translation in the text. The dates of these replies are: 20 March 1933, 18 January 1935, 19 November 1935, 30 November 1935, 27 December 1935, 5 December 1938, 22 January 1939, 22 January 1941, and 27 June 1951.

Series Four—Tara Patel. Tara Patel, the Mother’s “Little Star”, joined the Ashram in November 1929. She corresponded with the Mother during the ten-year period from 1932 to 1942. Her correspondence first came out in the November 1979 issue of the *Bulletin*. The present text is reproduced from that journal. The correspondence is in English.

Series Five—Ambu. Ambalal Desai came to live in the Ashram in May 1928. His correspondence spans the period from 1933 to 1941. It was first published in four issues of the *Bulletin*, between April 1993 and February 1994. The present text is reproduced from that journal. The correspondence is in English.

Series Six—Parichand. Parichand Kothari joined the Ashram in November 1934. His correspondence covers the fifteen-year period from 1936 to 1961. The correspondence was first published in six instalments of the *Bulletin*, from November 1989 to February 1991. It then appeared in a book on Parichand’s life, *Sri Parichand: A Pilgrim of the Spirit*, published in 2004

Note on the Texts

by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. The present text is taken from that book. The correspondence is in English, with the exception of the first ten entries, which are in French and appear here in English translation. The correspondence has been arranged in two parts: “Sadhana and Life” and “Gardening Work”.

Series Seven—Jayantilal. Jayantilal Parekh joined the Ashram in December 1938. His correspondence spans the period from 1936 to 1970. (The first letter was written on a visit to the Ashram, two years before he joined it.) The correspondence was first published in the *Bulletin* issue of February 2002. The text in this book is the same as the one in that journal. The correspondence is in English.

Series Eight—Prithwi Singh. Prithwi Singh Nahar joined the Ashram in May 1938. His correspondence with the Mother covers the period from 1938 to 1967. It was first published in 1998 in the book *Sri Aurobindo and Mother to Prithwi Singh*, brought out by Mira Aditi, Mysore. The present text is taken from that book. The correspondence is in English.

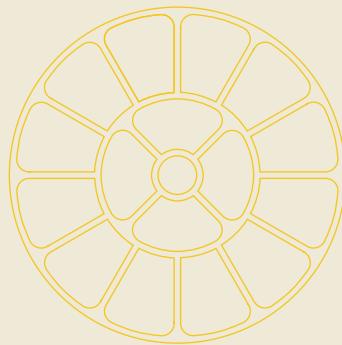
Series Nine—Indra Sen. Indra Sen joined the Ashram in 1945. His correspondence covers the three-year period from 1945 to 1947; much of it is related to his work at the Ashram Press. It was first published in the *Bulletin* in two instalments in November 2007 and February 2008. The present text is the same as the one in the *Bulletin*.

Series Ten—Surendranath Jauhar. Surendranath Jauhar was not a member of the Ashram, but after meeting the Mother in December 1939 he became an ardent disciple. His correspondence with her spans the period from 1951 to 1972. It was first published in 1993 in *Surendra Nath Jauhar: His Life, Work and Thought*, a commemorative volume produced by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Delhi Branch, New Delhi. The present text is taken from there.

New Correspondences of the Mother

Series Eleven—Maude Smith. Maude Smith joined the Ashram in March 1953. Her correspondence with the Mother covers the period from 1955 to 1970. It first appeared in three installments of the *Bulletin*, in April, August and November 1994. The present text is the same as the one in the *Bulletin*, with a few minor changes based on the manuscripts.

Series Twelve—Pradyot. Pradyot Bhattacharya joined the Ashram in August 1943. He corresponded with the Mother between 1963 and 1972. The present text, prepared from Pradyot's manuscripts, is being published here for the first time. The correspondence is in English.

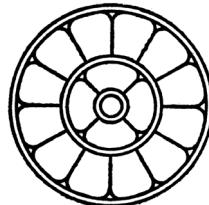


THE MOTHER

New Correspondences
of the Mother

||

New Correspondences
of the Mother
II



New Correspondences
of the Mother

II

Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Pondicherry

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Publisher's Note

This book contains the Mother's correspondence with nine disciples, all of them members of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Each correspondence is presented in chronological order, with the question or comment of the disciple provided whenever possible. The names of the disciples have been given since they have all passed away. A brief life sketch of each disciple appears at the beginning of his or her correspondence.

The reader should note that the word "new" does not mean "published here for the first time", but rather "not published in the Collected Works of the Mother and therefore new to most of its readers". The Collected Works was organised and published around 1978, at the time of the Mother's centenary. More than forty years have passed since then and a number of new correspondences have come to light, including those in this book. Five are being published here for the first time. The remaining four have been published in books or in the Ashram's quarterly journal *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education* or in both. Further details are provided in the Note on the Texts at the end of the book.

The nine correspondences in this book supplement those published in Collected Works Volumes 16 and 17.

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New Correspondences
of the Mother

II

Series One

Correspondence with Amrita

Originally named Aravamudachari Ayengar, Amrita was born on 19 September 1895 in the village of Kazhiperampakkam, Tamil Nadu, fifteen kilometers from Pondicherry. When he was ten, he moved to Pondicherry for his education. Three years later, he saw Sri Aurobindo for the first time. From then on, he became a regular visitor at Sri Aurobindo's house until 1915, when he left for Madras to complete his higher studies.

Amrita returned to Pondicherry in April 1919 to live permanently with Sri Aurobindo. Soon after the Ashram was formed in November 1926, Amrita became its general manager. In 1954, he was appointed a member of the first Ashram Trust board. For fifty years, from 1919 until his passing on 31 January 1969, he gave himself in service to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Amrita's correspondence with the Mother revolves around his work. As the Ashram manager, he discharged a remarkable range of duties. Every day he sent reports to the Mother, describing his activities and pointing out any problems. Through her replies she guided Amrita with clarity and firmness. On his part he served her faithfully to the best of his ability. The correspondence reveals his dedication to the Mother and her role as an administrator skilled in dealing with practical affairs.

This correspondence covers the period from 1919 to 1955, but most of the exchanges took place between 1928 and 1936. The correspondence is largely in English, but a considerable number of entries are in French and appear here in translation.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

(Letter of the Mother from Japan in 1919)

My dear Amrita

We remember you very well indeed, and were most happy to receive your kind letter and also the photographs. These are simply splendid, especially the one standing. The expression is wonderful, and all our friends here, to whom we showed it, are enthusiastic. We will have it published in a magazine.

We are eagerly expecting A.G.'s¹ letter. But meanwhile we lose no time in making the last arrangements for our departure. Before leaving Japan we wish to establish the regular cargo service between Japan and Pondicherry of which you have heard already through Saurin, I suppose. It is this important matter, not yet settled, which prevents us from at once fixing the date of our departure. But we are hurrying as much as we can.

We are glad to hear that you are back in Pondicherry, near the Master, and managing the *Arya* during Saurin's absence. It is with great pleasure that we shall meet you once more.

Will you please present to A.G. the enclosed photographs with our most loving greetings.

Very sincerely

Mirra P. Richard

7 November 1919

*

Be truthful, sincere, awake.

3 December 1928

*

Be simple, sincere, straightforward.

4 December 1928

*

¹ A.G. = Aurobindo Ghose. Sri Aurobindo was known as "A.G." up till the end of 1926.

Series One — Amrita

When carrying dishes, servants are bound to rob. To expect otherwise from them is childish, and no complaint to this effect is of any use.

Consequently those who do not eat their meals in the dining-room and find their dishes meddled with by the servants, have the choice between accepting this misfortune or themselves taking their dishes from the dining-room.

This is especially for those who are lodged inside the compound.

c. 1928

*

Amrita

When you go tomorrow for the lime, you must not speak at all about the houses to be rented. Even if the man wants to speak of it, you will say that you know nothing about it.

28 October 1929

*

(For Duraiswami)

(1) For your health, the most important thing is to get cured. I shall speak of it with you when you come next.

(2) Pearls and peroxide can wait until you come.

(3) As for the dinner, it is no use upsetting your stomach and losing a day or two here into the bargain. Better excuse yourself.

Expecting to see you in perfect health next week.

With love

October 1929

*

To Amrita

Say to Duraiswami not to trust the doctors.

c. 1929

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Amrita,

Champaklal will explain to you his complaint about the servant. I would like you to scold her and tell her that she must work properly and when she is told to, otherwise we cannot keep her.

c. 1930

*

The more there are “Departments”, the less they [the servants] seem to turn out work. I have said that the removal of the cats’ sand is part of the *sanitary* work. This closes matters.

Moreover when Datta was paying Ratnam to remove the sand of her cats, she was giving him *four annas* a month, and at that time she had four cats, not to speak of the kittens!

c. 1930

*

To Amrita

I expected him to go to the hotel—but if he insists on being put up in the asram, one room can be given in the Hequet House; for the food he must manage himself.

c. 1930

*

To the Christian servants I was always giving a half-day holiday on Christmas.

December 1931

*

Amrita

If Calve does not want to repair the house unless we advance the money, it is better to keep what is still safe for Rs. 15 a month until the whole thing crumbles down.

Inform Chandulal.

4 January 1932

*

Series One — Amrita

(*Note to a property owner*)

Regarding the disastrous condition of the wall separating the house you have rented to her from your own compound. This wall has crumbled down on your side endangering the solidity of the building on our side. We trust you will do the needful urgently as the present condition is dangerous to life and property.

6 January 1932

*

Mother,

Sarala complains that Ammani is very irregular in attendance [details given]. She is asking for an advance of Rs. 6. Am I to do anything? Shall I detain the advance without paying Ammani for a day?

You can say to Ammani that if she does not become regular I refuse to give her any advance.

12 January 1932

*

Mother,

The work certificate in question is for Mounousami of the Boulangerie. I will send the certificate to you tonight for signature. I am sending herewith a rough draft for correction and approval.

(On the rough draft prepared by Amrita, the Mother crossed out the words "obliged to leave this place for reasons of health", and commented:)

This may prevent him from finding some other work.

A sum of Rs. 5 is reserved for the five clerks of the Goods Department of the Railway Station. Generally, it is given to them by me. They came last year to the

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Ashram and took it. Balanarayan proposes that the amount may be given to them in the station itself. If so, is it necessary that I should go to the station for the purpose? Or may the affair be left in the hands of Balanarayan, as only he knows the persons concerned?

It is better that *you should go with Balanarayan* to give the money.

15 January 1932

*

Mother,

Sada informs me just at this moment that the old tenant is reoccupying the house next to the V.G.H. on Monday next. He has no intention of giving up the house at all.

I see only one way out of the difficulty. It is to buy the house. The lady can be told that if she wants 1,200 for her house we will buy it and on that ground she can send the old tenant away before he occupies.

(I am ready to give 1,550 to finish with it.)

24 January 1932

*

Mother,

The duty on things like typewriters is 30 percent. It is difficult to say that the one in our hands costs less than say Rs. 150. The Customs Office has a price list of things, so the duty is not likely to be less than Rs. 40 to 45. This amount is recoverable and will be recovered from the Customs as soon as the machine comes back to us. In the meanwhile who is to advance the amount? Will you permit me to approach Duraiswami for it?

Series One — Amrita

I do not like that.

The duty is too high and the risks too much. *It is better to give up the idea.* If the spare part can be found in Madras, Duraiswami might bring it next time he comes and it will be refitted here. Inform Purani.

6 February 1932

*

Mother,

Regarding the bullocks:

(1) Can Krishnayya ask Rama Reddy to send the bullocks with a cart?

I suppose so.

(2) If the bullocks are to come, we have to arrange for hay, for a shed, etc.

Before doing anything we must first be sure that the bullocks will come.

8 February 1932

*

Mother,

Sivalingam has given up his oil bath for a fortnight or so. The oil that was bought for him is with him unused. He asked me to put the following before you: As he will not be using oil for besmearing himself, the soap-nut powder is of no use to him. Therefore, he prays to you to let him know whether he would be allowed the use of shampoo powder and the scented hair oil from the "Stores".

Yes, he can have them. Prepare a chit for him and I shall sign it.

He is suffering very badly from what he calls rheumatism in one of his legs.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Why does he not go to the dispensary for treatment?

14 February 1932

*

Mother,

*Where to put Duraiswami's car that will come
this evening?*

I don't have the slightest idea!

20 February 1932

*

Mother,

Dr. Aroule desires to show his house to someone. He sent his chauffeur yesterday to ascertain whether it would be possible to do it. I replied: "I cannot allow you to take somebody into the house without first taking Mother's sanction and fixing a time for it." I promised to give him an answer this morning. He may come himself to receive it.

Ask him why he wants to show his house? The only valid reason is if he wants to sell it—and if he wants to sell we are buyers.

23 February 1932

*

Mother,

Regarding the leave and absence of paid workers: Leave will be given only on request with a notice giving reasons. Absence other than that due to illness will be counted and wages deducted. A doctor's certificate will have to be submitted by the employee in case of absence due to illness.

Series One — Amrita

It is better, rather than deduct their pay, to put as a condition that they should replace themselves (when the leave is granted).

24 February 1932

*

Mother,

I went to Maya's house at 8.00 p.m. I found only one light burning in the courtyard. I was told that the one light on the ground floor burns only till 9.00 p.m. But I am inclined to believe that there are short circuits here and there and therefore there is much consumption of current.

You mean *leakage* I suppose. The best is to ask to see the meter and ascertain that it is not moving when all the lights are off.

24 February 1932

*

Mother,

Montbrun asked me why we were engaging a new set of workers. I told him that the old set did not agree to the new conditions laid down by us. I added that the new régime with its new conditions promised us better prospects in the matter of efficiency and better work.

It is well understood, I believe, that new people are taken *only* if the old set *refuses to work* under the new conditions. For nothing proves that the new set will be more satisfactory.

25 February 1932

*

Mother,

In case a new servant is to be employed, I would

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

prefer that he is given the work of the Meditation House as his main work. In addition, he could be given other minor chores, but the Dairy work should not be given to him.

And then another man for the dairy work?! How many more? ...

One thing strikes me as very interesting: Savarhy must go; Patchai will leave the place; Roshan has to go; Dhanam had to leave; Moutalle is useless; Chellu is troublesome etc.

Quite right; they will all be spoiled one after the other—“*à mauvais maître, mauvais serviteurs*”² is a common saying in French.

27 February 1932

*

Amrita, you must pay the blacksmith boy for his days of absence due to the accident at work.

28 February 1932

*

Mother,

Dyuman seems to have objection in sending the new servant, Joseph, with dishes to the ladies of the Ashram. Therefore he did not send the new man with the dishes this afternoon. Perhaps it is better not to allow the man inside the Asram for a few days, during which time we can observe and study him. I don't mean to say that he is untrustworthy, but he gives me a feeling of being an adventurer.

² To a bad master, bad servants.

Series One — Amrita

What is this? We have had enough of this type already!

29 February 1932

*

I had suggested *pastilles de Lithine* to take one after each meal. The lithiné water is good; but for lazy digestion the pastilles are also very effective.

5 March 1932

*

Mother,

The landlord informs me that only the bare land with its small dilapidated building will be given for rent—not the rest. He will come again to see me a little before six this evening.

This does not sound promising. Such a restricted occupancy of the land seems to me not worth more than Rs. 20 a year. For what guarantee shall we have that all the good manure will not be robbed away? It appears rather foolish to give such a high price to have our manure utilised “gratis” by others!

5 March 1932

*

Amrita, it seems that Dharmam has been doing very good work. When you pay her next Saturday you can give a tip of annas 7 a day for the number of days she did extra work.

7 March 1932

*

(Amrita sent the Mother a five-page summary of his horoscope reading by a Pondicherry astrologer. She commented:)

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

It shines by its inconsistency, incoherence, contradictions and nonsense.

Better not to be impressed by this worthless and untrue reading of your nature.

13 March 1932

*

Amrita,

If Govindbhai asks you for letters or messages do not give him anything private.

15 March 1932

*

Mother,

The cobbler Couppouswamy is back again in Pondicherry. He wishes to work for the Ashram on a monthly salary. Are there other things you wish to know from him?

Apart from asking what wages he wants, you can tell him that, in case we take him, he will have to do the work that is given to him (repair and new, whatever it is) and to attend for regular hours.

19 March 1932

*

Amrita,

How is it that the bolts of the milk pans are all getting lost? This won't do. It will end by a serious accident; this kind of carelessness is intolerable; the pans must be mended at once.

30 March 1932

*

Series One — Amrita

(To an Ashram garden worker who decided to quit his work because his request for an advance of two rupees had not been granted)

A good servant does not give up his work in a bad mood because his superiors have not acted exactly as he wishes. It was a serious mistake to quit like this because of the refusal to give you immediately the two rupees that you asked for. But I do not want to hold that against you because of your many years of service and your regularity in work. You may therefore return to work starting from tomorrow, but naturally we will be obliged to deduct from your pay the days you were absent.

In the future, when you want an advance in addition to that of the 15th, you should give at least one day's notice so that I can decide.

30 March 1932

*

Mother,

Balanarayan asks your permission to go to some village nearby tomorrow in order to learn swimming in a tank. It seems some of the coolies of the Building Department have promised to teach him.

Certainly NOT. If he goes in spite of this it will be at his own risk as I can't answer for what might happen.

4 April 1932

*

Mother,

I forgot to mention last night about Ammani's request to you for a loan of Rs. 20 in order to meet the expenses of the removal of the corpse of her father, who died yesterday evening. I have not given Ammani the slightest hope of getting the money.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

No money to be given. Sarala must be informed that Ammani will not go to her.

6 April 1932

*

Mother,

Today is the Payas³ day. I propose the following arrangement: (details given).

Yes, it is all right. But you must see that, while waiting to be boiled, the milk does not get dirty. It seems that very often all sorts of uncongenial things are found in it.

11 April 1932

*

(Regarding the rent of a house)

For Monsieur Charles Passagne

I am quite astounded by this change of conditions after everything had been agreed. I had accepted the previous conditions, but I cannot accept these new ones.

25 April 1932

*

Amrita,

It seems that the milkmen are smoking inside the dairy itself—this is *intolerable* and must be stopped at once. They must finish their smoke before entering the house.

28 April 1932

*

³ Payas: a sweet rice-pudding made with thickened milk.

Series One — Amrita

Tobacco is the symbol of falsehood because you produce smoke out of your mouth! (says Sri Aurobindo)

8 May 1932

*

Amrita,

Chandulal was asking who would show to the carpenter the work that is to be done in the “terrain” house. I have suggested your name—what do you say about it?

19 May 1932

*

Mother,

The milkmen are not coming. It is 5 a.m. What am I expected to do?

If the milkmen don’t come we will have no milk today. We refuse to yield to their fancies and fetch milk from their house.

24 May 1932

*

Amrita,

The coolie in charge of the bullocks has been seen badly beating Tej. This is *shameful* and *intolerable*. Tell him in strong words, that if he gives *one single blow more* to any of the two bullocks *he will be dismissed at once*—and you can add that he must not hope that we shall not know about the beating, for we shall be informed of it immediately.

7 June 1932

*

Mother,

Duraiswami’s guests are arriving tomorrow and will stay in Chandrasekhar’s house. If Amal has to

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

arrange for furniture for them, they will need three cots, three tables and three chairs.

I thought there was some furniture in that house—I don't like very much to send the Asram furniture to an outside house. We can wait until they arrive and see what is truly needed.

11 June 1932

*

Mother,

The pushwallah has vacated the premise of the Josué House. He wants the promised amount of three rupees paid to him now.

Just now it is from the man to whom you give the Rs 3 that you must take a receipt. You will arrange with the proprietor afterwards.

Some temporary arrangement can be made just for this night, I suppose.

15 June 1932

*

(Amrita sent a note to the House Maintenance Service asking for a carpenter boy to open a bale of cloth from Bombay. The note was shown to the Mother, who wrote on the back:)

I am wondering why you disturbed a carpenter boy for opening a bale of cloth? Usually Purani was doing it all right with the help of one or two others. And if we had no workmen here what would you do?

17 June 1932

*

Series One — Amrita

Mother,

Since Indrakumari and I were responsible for the loss of over one litre of milk, as per your decision to reduce this quantity from those responsible, I did not get milk for breakfast this morning. I somehow managed to have bread with water. But at lunch, when I was denied my share of curds, I thought: "If Mother were to deprive me of one of the food items for each fault of mine..." I could not even mentally complete the sentence. I felt my throat choking.

So food has still so much importance for you...

The first impulse in me was to tell You all that I have written above. Then a second impulse came, saying, "Don't utter a word of this to the Mother. It is quite humiliating!" Later, still a third impulse said, "Put the whole thing in such a way as if you were an outsider and the whole comedy had been enacted by some other people." I obeyed the first impulse.

You did well.

In the morning, while I was with You, I was able to put a pressure upon myself to keep from Your Presence my struggling part and to put in front of You my normal usual self.

It was quite visible for me that you were very nervous about the suppressed milk.

25 July 1932

*

Mother,

When Chandulal addresses me in his notes as his "lovable, loving brother", there comes up in me a strong resentment. I am pushing it away by calling

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Your name. I am Your child and nobody's brother.

If you are my child, then you are the brother of all my children. This seems to me logical. And if you object to being addressed as Chandulal's brother, then you can say that it is Chandulal who is yours!

26 August 1932

*

(*Letter of Amrita to Champaklal, with the Mother's reply*)

Champaklal,

I do not want an explanation from you. I request you to pass this letter on to the Mother.

This is not the first time you have been rude and inconsiderate towards me. Today you threw such dirt in my face that, but for the grace of the Mother, I would have sunk into depression. In my worst state, in my darkest of moods, I would never dream of saying, "The Mother is ferocious," a condition generally attributed to wild animals.

You have a special knack of misunderstanding me. How could you even dream that I am capable of saying or feeling that "the Mother is ferocious"? But she is there and knows what I could have said or could not have said.

My poor Amrita

You are perfectly ridiculous. Why do you attach so much importance to a statement which, at the worst, could be considered a bad joke? I DIDN'T.

You must have a little more sense of humour.

Those who *take offence* are always wrong, to say nothing of those who *take revenge*!

August 1932

*

Series One — Amrita

Mother,

*How shall I adore you? By being happy and
carefree in serving You? I shall not fail in using every
opportunity that is put before me by You.*

Yes, but also by meeting what comes from others with perfect equanimity.

31 August 1932

*

*(Two sentences from the Mother's Prayers and
Meditations, chosen by her for Amrita)*

To Amrita

What Thou willest, what Thou willest...

At every moment one must know how to lose everything in order to gain everything, to shed the past as a dead body and be reborn into a greater plenitude....

11 September 1932

*

Mother,

Kodandaraman comes to me and gives lengthy reports about the servants—his reason being that if You ask me about them, then I should be aware of what is going on. I told him that he need not take this precious precaution and not to speak to me at all about his affairs.

It would have been better not to say this, as his information can be useful.

Am I to strictly forbid any servant from asking me to make any kind of representation to You concerning him or her?

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Certainly not.

Will you permit me to show to Kodandaraman what I have written above about him?

I do not see any necessity for your showing.

2 December 1932

*

Mother,

When I report something to You, how can I trust my discretion? If I don't tell You everything, I feel uneasy. But if I tell You every detail, I feel I am wasting Your time or am giving You unnecessary worry and trouble. Two horns of the dilemma! Mother, tell me the way out.

Be simple, spontaneous, sincere.

2 December 1932

*

Mother,

It seems Kodandaraman is right about the deduction of two days' wages from Muthu's salary. He told me that You have sanctioned two days' leave without pay because Muthu gave a false excuse for his two days' absence.

You can tell Muthu that I am once again giving my consent not to deduct the two days' wages, but that I am very unhappy with his bad habit of always telling lies and that he must learn to speak the truth; otherwise I will become unpardonning.

5 December 1932

*

Series One — Amrita

Mother,

Kodandaraman seems to think that I have been the cause of much vexation to him on account of Muthu, Chellu and Marie. Perhaps he has good reasons on his side. The logic is evidently in his favour.

Even if one is right, one is always wrong to be vexed.

5 December 1932

*

I do not see on what grounds Dr. Aroule says that I am not answering his letters? Yourself you handed over to him a letter of mine not so long ago. You could have reminded him of that. As for seeing me he did not ask me an interview, so he cannot say that I refused it to him.

Finally I am *not* subletting his house, as I am receiving *no money* from the people who are occupying it, which can easily be proved. So the whole thing is mere rambling and I do not understand why you are in the least impressed by it.

6 December 1932

*

Amrita,

Will you speak to Shivalingam on my behalf and tell him that the place for the bullocks being very small, he must let Krishnayya tie the bullocks and the cow(?) on the mill platform *when there is no chakki work*. Krishnayya promises to clean the place afterwards.

13 December 1932

*

Amrita,

Krishnayya has made an astonishing report about Shivalingam's behaviour. I asked him to show you the book in which

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

the report was made. If the facts are found to be exact, you will have to speak to Shivalingam and to tell him that such conduct will not do at all. Things, work, etc. are arranged here with my sanction and no one can go on acting according to his whims and fancies. He will have to follow the discipline. Otherwise it will be impossible to entrust him any more with any responsible work.

19 December 1932

*

Mother,

It seems from what Jayaraj told me this morning that he is unable to easily digest the Ashram bread. It is the same old story! He doesn't want to eat bread in the morning. He begs You to let him have one more banana in addition to the phoscao. The bread does not agree with him.

I firmly believe that he is unfit to receive the Asram food. It would be better if he could make some other arrangement from the first of next month.

He also does not like the cooked vegetables served in the evening. But he would like to have some cakes, if he could.

Strictly speaking, he could have one extra banana in the morning, but cakes in the evening is really a bit too much! If he were to have a meal elsewhere with the five rupees I take from him, what could he get!

24 December 1932

*

Mother,

You have asked, "When are there cakes in the Asram? I don't understand." Mother, Savitri bakes

Series One—Amrita

Cakes from time to time. Evidently Jayaraj has received them from her each time. He asked You to let him have those Indian cakes, and nothing else.

But, Mother, all that doesn't matter since I am going to advise him to make some other arrangement for his food. May I tell him that in Your name?

You should not speak harshly to him as if it were an order from me, but simply tell him that if the Asram food does not suit his stomach, it would be better to take food from elsewhere.

25 December 1932

*

Mother,

One of Purushottam's gardeners—his name is Rajagopal—has asked me if his wife can come and pay her respects to you on New Year's Day. This gardener is one of the newly married workers. Should I tell him that it is too late now?

Why answer him like that? Reply to him by giving an ordinary sari without money.

30 December 1932

*

Mother,

Venkataraman asked me whether I would show him the readings of my horoscope as calculated by Pavitra. I told him that they are not meant for circulation and that I could not give to anyone without your express sanction. He then asked me to ask you.

No.

6 January 1933

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Mother,

Should I convey to Sowbhagyam your decision of this morning? You have relieved her of work from the Trésor House because she does not deserve even Rs. 10 a month. Her service at Trésor costs us Rs. 14.

That is not at all what I said. What I said is simply that since she gets tips in excess of her salary, I have increased her work at Trésor. If she finds the work too much (she did very badly elsewhere) and the salary not enough, she can see if she finds a better place elsewhere.

10 January 1933

*

Mother,

How long does a packet of the new shampoo, 'Arys', last? The previous brand, 'Hilder', used to last me for four baths.

I always bathe four times with a packet of 'Arys'.

10 January 1933

*

Mother,

The two musician friends of Radhananda who came for the last Darshan of 24th November are editors of a monthly review in Tamil at Srivaikuntham. At their request I gave them some of my manuscripts —those that had already been published five or six years ago in several reviews of that time. The two men promised to publish them in book form, but they said that first they would publish them in their review in instalments in order to know which of these essays would be most in demand.

At that time I did not say anything to them. They have already published one of my essays in the

Series One—Amrita

January review. I don't know why but I am not happy about it. It would be better not to continue, certainly for me and maybe for them too. Mother, if you have no objection, I will write to them asking them to discontinue publishing my manuscripts.

I don't understand how one does something or takes a decision based on a vague impression *when one does not know why*. Before taking a decision one has to look at the sensation carefully to see from where it comes and what supports it. As for myself I cannot decide anything based on this kind of information. I need something much more precise than this—and first of all, what is the nature and subject of the articles, as well as the nature of the review in which it is being published.

11 January 1933

*

Mother,

Two fighting workers. J asked young D to bring some cloth for him from a village. The boy did not bring the cloth. The result was friction, scolding, indecent abuses—all from J's side. The boy remained silent.

Have you heard J abusing the boy? Were you there when he did it? And if not, whose report is this? The boy's or somebody else who witnessed the scene?

12 January 1933

*

Mother,

From the 17th of this month till today, I have given You a total of Rs. 73—that works out to Rs. 9 per day. No doubt the amount goes to the Reserve Fund.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

It is too much. I cannot put so much money aside. An average of two rupees a day is all I can do.

24 January 1933

*

Mother,

In whose name is the property-purchase contract to be made—in Sri Aurobindo's name or yours? If this can be known today, the writing of the act will be commenced this day itself. Praying for an answer, if possible, today before 5 p.m.

Sri Aurobindo says to do in *my* name.

24 January 1933

*

Mother,

Do people come to you on their own or is it the influence of the stars that sends them here?

There is no question at all. It is one and the same, that is to say, it is neither the people who come to us, nor the stars that send them. There is one and same thing that organises the stars and makes the people move this way or that way.

I feel: "I am nobody, the stars are everything!"

I thought I had already explained to you that a person is born at a certain moment under certain astrological conditions *because of what he is*. It is quite wrong to believe that *he is what he is* because of the moment at which he is born. This last belief is the ignorant superstitious way of understanding the thing.

30 January 1933

*

Series One — Amrita

Amrita,

You can say to Jayaraj that if he has no objection about living in the house at the manure ground, I am willing to give him some accommodation there without even asking any rent from him for that. You can show him the place and see what he says.

2 February 1933

*

Mother,

Varadou will come tomorrow morning. He will need to know your first name, your last name and your profession in order to prepare the lease. Will I be right in giving him the following information: "Madame Mira Alfassa, No profession"?

Yes.

I don't know your first name.

My first name is Mira (in the birth certificate it is written with two 'r's—Mirra, but it doesn't matter).

5 February 1933

*

Mother,

The Doctor is asking me for five rupees to disinfect the Budi House. I have given him three for the present. Shall I give him the rest?

Yes.

13 February 1933

*

Amrita,

Krishnayya wants to buy straw from Govindapillai like last year. But before doing it, is it not possible to ask from

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

the “*vieux grigou*” [old miser] if he would not sell to us the provision of straw which is kept behind the “*laiterie*” [dairy]; it is a huge heap.

15 February 1933

*

Mother,

*Will you permit me to have a rubber stamp on
which can be printed simply “The Manager”?*

Yes.

16 March 1933

*

Mother,

In 1930 Sri Aurobindo wrote to the head of the British Post Office that Amrita is the “Manager, Sri Aurobindo Asram, Pondicherry”. I always sign at the Post Office as the “Manager, the Arya Office, Pondicherry”. Now I find that Pavitra has given his address at the British Post Office as “The General Secretary, the Arya Office, Pondicherry”. Perhaps it would be better to have only one official with only one address, either the Manager or the General Secretary of either the Arya Office or the Arya Establishment.

What is this story again! Can Pavitra do the work that we need at the Post Office or can you do it well? Your proposal makes no sense and I fail to see how or why the Secretary and the Manager would be one and the same person!

17 February 1933

*

Mother,

Varadou desires to show you some samples of

Series One — Amrita

paddy so that you may select out of them. Do you want to see and choose, Mother?

I do not think it is necessary for me to see the samples of paddy. I trust it will be all right.

He will, if allowed, come and instruct us as to how to store the paddy so that it may last even more than two years, if needs be.

Yes, it is good if he shows.

22 February 1933

*

Mother,

This afternoon Dr. Manilal asked me for ten rupees for current expenses. I gave it to him and told him that he still had Rs. 150 remaining with me. He asked me, "Aren't Rs. 160 remaining?" I was a little embarrassed. On the morning of the 18th, he gave me only Rs. 160. This afternoon I gave him Rs. 10. How can he say that Rs. 160 are still with me? I am not able to convince him.

In the future, you must give a receipt for the money received after you have counted it in the presence of the person who gave it to you.

I very much regret not having counted the money given to me and not having taken the signature of the one who gave it.

The best thing would be to have a notebook in which you write down the amount each time money is received and each time it is given back, and take the initials of the person who has given the money.

24 February 1933

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Mother,

I have prepared a stamped receipt for Rs. 100 paid to the Modern Press today. It has been made in Nolini's name after asking him if it should be in his name or yours. He replied that it could be in his name and asked me if he should sign it! I said it was to be signed by the person who receives the money.

But, Mother, when we paid the Modern Press Rs. 70 last time, we did not take any receipt from them. To have a receipt for one payment and not for another is irregular on our part. Either there should be a receipt for every payment or no receipt for any payment, is it not so?

You must obtain a receipt for the first payment also. For God's sake, when will you all who have business to do become reliable businessmen!!

27 February 1933

*

Mother,

I did not receive Arjava yesterday. I was disinclined and indisposed.

You seem to be rather fanciful in your dealings with people.

3 March 1933

*

Mother,

According to the present agreement between the owner of the Josue House and us, we are to deduct Rs. 11 every month from the rent for the tax we pay on the house till the end of June. Thereafter the amount deducted will be Rs. 12 a month. But now the owner proposes that we deduct not more than a rupee and a

Series One — Amrita

quarter every month till the end of the lease.

Until when is the lease? Because you must understand that every year we shall have to pay the tax as she will not be able to do it—and then?...

The lease commenced on the 1st of December 1931 and will run up to the 30th of November 1934. The money paid to the owner, till the end of January 1933, was Rs. 559. as. 7. This includes the tax for 1933.

What about the tax for 1934?

The house owner has further proposed that if we pay the rent till the 30th of November 1934 in advance, a promise in writing will be given to us for the extension of the present lease for another three years. Her only condition is that the rental value of the house will have to be revised from the current Rs. 20 per month and not be less than Rs. 23 a month. Mother, how do you find her proposal?

She must not exaggerate all the same and believe us to be more stupid than we are! Who profits most by the extension of the lease? She or us? Where will she find tenants like us ready to pay all the rent in advance? To extend the lease for 3 years more cannot be considered as a concession *to us*. The most we can say is that it is *reciprocal*. As for the increase of rent it is an absurdity and *I refuse* or then I shall ask an interest of 6% on all the money she owes us and on the Rs. 147 she expects us to pay in advance. Her house is not worth more than 20 rupees and if she wants more she can seek for another tenant. Moreover I stick to the previous arrangement and will make not the slightest concession. What is written is written and we shall act accordingly.

4 March 1933

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Mother,

Can outsiders such as house proprietors or their representatives come to the Pranam verandah—in other words up to my room?

Yes.

Mother, what arrangement can I make meeting these people who are connected with the work entrusted to me? Shall I receive them in the Library House or in the Meditation House?

I suppose there is no other way than to receive them in your room, as the Reception hall is a rather too open place for business.

Two or three days ago, someone came in a car at about 11.30 a.m., looking for me. He was told at the gate that I was not usually available between 11 and 12.30. No one knows who that visitor was. Mother, is it not better to take down the names of those who come with some purpose?

It had been told that always the name and the purpose of the visit must be taken down.

5 March 1933

*

Mother,

Regarding the porter who brings our fruit and vegetable baskets from the railway station: Up till now I have paid him the transport charges once a fortnight, calculating on the basis of the railway receipts we get. But sometimes when a receipt or two is missing, the porter gets less money. So what I would suggest is: Each time he brings the baskets, the person on duty at the Asram gate should give a

Series One — Amrita

receipt, mentioning the number of baskets, the date and hour and the porter's name. Then I will feel sure in making payments against such receipts. Will you sanction such an arrangement, Mother?

Are the people at the gate capable of doing that without mistake? None seems to know sufficient Tamil for that.

5 March 1933

*

Mother,

I will need to buy the following material to make a mattress for Swasti: 2 maunds of cotton, 8 yards of printed cloth, 3½ yards of unbleached cloth, and some one yard of coloured cloth for stitching the border. The mattress maker will take two days to make a new mattress. Is the work to be done in Arogya House No. 2 itself?

Yes.

We supply the material, is it not, Mother?

I do not understand what you mean. The mattress which is with Swasti was simply to be taken, undone, the cloth washed, the contents cleaned and the whole thing remade to the size of the cot in Swasti's new room in Arogya No. 2. There had been no question of buying anything new and you speak as if we were doing altogether a new mattress!!

5 March 1933

*

Mother,

Krishnayya went to the Bank Garden yesterday and gave me a verbal report of the state of the place — it is in a very much dilapidated condition, with the

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

mango trees practically dead, etc. But it struck me that it was not advisable for him to go there without your permission. I told him this morning that you would be displeased to hear about it. But perhaps I went out of the way in telling him that.

No, you did well.

7 March 1933

*

Mother,

I was to bring the Notary in the car at 4.30 p.m. for him to see the houses for which the deed has been drawn up. When I went to his house, I found him very busy and I waited for him till 5.45 p.m. Patience was finding me unworthy. Then he wanted to go in a rickshaw to a place near the railway station to get the signature of someone on whose behalf he had just concluded some business. He simply told me that he would come the next day for the inspection.

I thought one more day would be lost. Therefore, I offered the car to him so that our work could be done on that day itself. I do not know whether what I did was right, but the very next day the deed was drawn up. Mother, I want to know if it was a mistake to have given the car to the Notary without your prior permission. It will settle once and for all the matter of abuse of discretion on my part.

Evidently it was not correct, but it proved useful. Does the end justify the means? ... It is the unsettled fight between the men of principles and the opportunists. I leave the problem unsolved, the point of view of the Truth being somewhat different!

7 March 1933

*

Series One — Amrita

Mother,

When Varadou first informed us that the plot owned by the bank was for sale, it was felt that the whole deal could be done by correspondence. But the Notary insists that it be done by both parties meeting personally and that the Director of the bank will ask who the prospective buyer is. The Notary has decided to give my name as the buyer. I requested him not to mention the Asram as the interested party in buying the property. I will also keep in mind that you do not want your name to be mentioned to the Director.

But I would like to know whether you want me and Chandulal to go and see the plot. Will not Varadou alone do for the purpose? If he handles everything, we avoid all indications that could point out to who the buyer is. Also, is the idea of bargaining to be given up altogether? Have I understood the thing right?

No, not at all.

1. It is of the greatest importance that you should go with Chandulal and Varadou to see the condition of the estate. For instance, Varadou must be shown that the pump is not in working order (some parts were already missing when I went to the place) and repairs are out of the question. Pondicherry is not equipped for such kind of work. It means nothing short of a new pump, i.e. Rs. 3000. For the value of the property this is not negligible.

2. I object to your going to the bank for several reasons, the first being that too many clerks know you there and it is as good as if I went myself, as the Director would have only to ask his "personnel" (which he is bound to do) and he will know at once who is the buyer.

3. I am quite willing to leave Varadou to his intuition for working out the thing provided he does not bring me in until the price is settled, because it seems to me a condition of success.

It is by the way that I was saying this morning that if my

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

name was to be mentioned, I could have done the whole thing myself without the help of anybody. But if I did not do it, it is because I am convinced the banker will raise his price the moment he knows it is I who want to buy.

Finally Varadou must know that the affair must in no way interfere with or delay the settlement of Siyali's houses, as this purchase is more immediately needed and important than the other from the practical point of view.

I hope I have made myself clear this time.

8 March 1933

*

Mother,

I do not know whether you know the existing arrangement for payment in the Bullocks' Department. Krishnayya pays the amount in advance to the cartmen directly. He takes the money from me with your sanction. I state this because Krishnayya told me this morning that today was the first time you did not smile at him at Pranam. And finally he told me that five rupees are missing from his room. It is this that makes me inform you that the advance money or any payment sanctioned by you for the cartmen is being given to Krishnayya, who in turn pays them.

It is better in future if you pay them directly.

15 March 1933

*

Mother,

S. Gangadharan of Veerampattanam, the man seeking Brahmacharya, came yesterday and gave a letter addressed to you. He came again today to ask if there was any answer from you. I have asked him to come and see me on Monday. Herein is a translation of his letter to you. I wrote about him in this notebook

Series One — Amrita

under yesterday's date. Did you read it, Mother? I didn't find any remark from you.

I had read it, but what to say? The whole thing does not seem to be very promising, and I am not eager to increase the number of the members of the Asram. You can postpone him, as we did for such a long time with Shivalingam.

16 March 1933

*

Mother,

Prasanna has been asking every alternate day if you have given permission for her pocket watch to be repaired. She feels that perhaps you are angry with her on hearing that she has spoiled it for the third time.

You can give the watch to be repaired but I do not see how we can entrust her with one as she so obviously does not know how to use it. Tell her that I have not yet decided if she will get the watch back or not, but that I am *not* angry.

16 March 1933

*

Mother,

I have paid the tax, but one of the hundred-rupee notes was not accepted because it has been cut in a rather zigzag way. Wherever I have tried to make payment with that note, it has not been accepted. But one of our milkmen, Gopal, is ready to accept it. His bill, till this evening, comes to fifty rupees. He will make up the balance of fifty rupees in another week. What do you say, Mother?

Yes, you can give him. I told you this morning that at the bank

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

also they refuse to take these notes; it is only in Madras that they are bound to take them.

18 March 1933

*

Mother,

Can I ask Satyen and Rajangam to put their account books at my door not later than 7 p.m. every day? When I proposed it to Rajangam, he asked me whether it was your arrangement or I was doing it on my own responsibility.

When I wanted to undertake the work, it was Chandulal who suggested my room would suit me better than the accounts office. I too think so. Now I come to you for a better solution.

Amrita,

You can see by Rajangam's letter (enclosed) that he has his own reasons for wishing it to be otherwise.

If each one thinks only of *his own* convenience I give up all attempts to come to a "better solution".

18 March 1933

*

Mother,

I imagine that by now you must have already become despairing about me—repetition of mistakes, persistency of partiality, much self-revolving, repeated inaccuracy of reports, want of vision, especially clarity, etc. But after all, I am your child, Mother.

Certainly.

19 March 1933

*

Series One — Amrita

Mother,

Last night I went to bed at 11.15; I couldn't go to sleep earlier. I had to get up at 3.45 a.m. and I did. Tonight also I have no hopes of going to bed before 11.00.

I do not approve at all of this going to bed so late. If it is because of the accounts left by N.B., I shall be obliged to find somebody else to do them, as the absence of sleep is not at all favourable for the clarity of your mind!

20 March 1933

*

Mother,

De Quadros has been to see the Notary; later he met me. He wants me to convey his plea to you not to charge him the cost of the transfer of the title once you buy his house. He said he would bear half the cost of the Registration Charges and the Notary's fee too. Both together may not exceed Rs. 150, I think. Lastly, he wants you to allow him to remain in the house till the end of April 1933, by which time he hopes to find a place on rent.

He will receive the totality of the money only when he quits his house. Anyhow the notary can see to all these details. But we must be a little careful as he is also the notary of the other party. We must not forget his attitude towards Mme. Hecquet and how he favoured her against us.

21 March 1933

*

Mother,

De Quadros pleaded very much that I should give him word on your behalf that he would receive Rs. 2500 in cash on the day he would actually leave

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

the house, that is, sometime before 30th April 1933. I told him that you could give your word only after his papers were examined by the Notary to your satisfaction, and not before that.

Quite right. We must see the papers first and see how much is due upon the house. Once this figure is clearly settled, I shall give a final answer. As for the various expenses he need not worry about them; I take them at my charge.

He implored: "Don't go back on your promise. Amal promised Rs. 7000 on behalf of the Mother; it has come down to Rs. 6750. Please see to it that the price doesn't get reduced further. In any event I must receive Rs. 2500 in cash."

You can tell him that I shall do my best to let him have the 2500 he asks, but nothing definitive can be settled before we know exactly how much he owes to his creditor. So the sooner the papers are handed over to the notary, the better.

This poor de Quadros is so anxious to have the thing finished that he has brought this paper to Amal. You will have to take it to the notary. I don't feel like discussing the 2500 rupees. They represent so much more for him than for me! So the whole thing can be finally settled for Rs. 7000, on which I shall pay his debt on the day the sale deed is signed and the rest he will receive the day he hands over the house to us. I shall ask only that an inventory and statement of state of repair should be joined to the sale deed so that nothing can be changed, deteriorated or taken away between the signature of the documents and the actual handing over of the house by de Quadros.

22 March 1933

*

Mother,

Vishnu will be shown tonight how the accounts

Series One — Amrita

are to be done. Up till now when the accounts books were with Nolin Behari, nobody had an easy access to them. From now on, if these books are to be kept in the accounts office of the Meditation House on an open shelf, anybody can open them and take a look. This office is never locked. Mother, I do not know how you consider this matter.

It is better if the books remain with you and you will hand them over to Vishnu at the time when it is arranged for his work.

Is Vishnu to be told that he should not disclose the accounts figures to anybody? From tonight he will be in possession of the books.

No, this won't do at all. You must keep them with you.

Nolin Behari was provided with a shelf for keeping the accounts books and stationery. Will you permit it to be shifted to the accounts office of the Meditation House?

It is not needed if you keep the books with you.

22 March 1933

*

Mother,

Venkataraman asked for milk from the Dairy early this morning. He said he would not take his share of milk from the Dining Room in the morning. Since he did not find Dyuman, he left word with Jivan and I gave him the quantity he wanted; he also bought milk worth one anna. Such an incident is rare. I considered the matter for some time before giving the milk. At one moment I was about to refuse, wanting to ask Venketaraman to bring your sanction, but I chose to risk giving it. Mother, what am I to do in such cases?

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Asking for your sanction at 4.30 a.m. is tantamount to a refusal. If I am allowed what is called “my way”, then I would rather give more often than not give.

Yes, most often it can be given.

24 March 1933

*

Mother,

Krishnayya wants to help me in the Dairy work. Mother, would you have any objection if I familiarised him with the work? After helping me for about two months, he could substitute for me from time to time instead of Dyuman who has a lot to do.

You could familiarise him with the work. But will he be able to receive and measure the milk? Will he be strict with the milkmen and conscientious in his supervision?

3 April 1933

*

Mother,

Each time I go to see Varadou, he strongly recommends a particular milkman who according to him will bring an excellent cow to us for milking and the cow will be very clean. The most important point, again according to Varadou, is that this man will not be merely a milkman on business terms with us but will deal with the Asram with devotion and sincerity. He prays to you to consider this point and hopes for a favourable reply from you.

Why should you not see this man *without promising anything* and see if his devotion, etc. are sincere?

10 April 1933

*

Series One — Amrita

Mother,

Balanarayan tells me that he was given a present of one tray by the shopkeeper Appadurai. He is offering it to you, Mother.

It is an ash tray!

12 April 1933

*

Amrita,

Tulsi says that you told him to attend, this afternoon, to the arrival of the paddy. How is that? I never spoke of such a thing. Tulsi is busy with the Saverhy House repairs and can't leave his work to attend to something else. He says also that bags are needed. How is it? The paddy is not coming in bags? How is it measured then? In that case you ought to have informed at least a fortnight ago, so that the necessary measures should have been taken. Now you have to find a man to receive the paddy. I suggest Rama Reddy or Balanarayan. I suppose coolies will be there to carry the bags.

If there is any other thing to decide you will speak of it this morning.

21 April 1933

*

Mother,

Krishnaswamy Chetty, father of Sri Ramalu, has again sent his prayer through Joseph for you to allow him at least to meditate in the Reception Hall where Sri Aurobindo's photo is kept.

I think he can come once to the Reception Hall if he is so eager.

22 April 1933

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Mother,

De Quadros, the previous owner of the house, has left behind a dog and two cats! As soon as the dog came out of the house we closed the door in such a way that it will not be able to enter again. I am sure that it will spend the whole night outside the house! What to do, Mother? It was very painful to put the dog out.

We cannot adopt a dog. It should be shown the way to the new house of de Quadros. Dogs are more attached to their masters than to their house.

26 April 1933

*

Mother,

Jayaraj, working in our Electricity Department, is not satisfied with the fate of his children in the convent here. He now wants to put his children in the convent at Cuddalore. For this purpose he wants to go to Cuddalore tomorrow to make enquiries. He asked me to inform you of this, the implied idea being to borrow money from you. I asked him how he meant to redeem himself from his debts; he had no answer to give.

I shall not give him. The whole thing is absurd.

28 April 1933

*

Mother,

Some of our paid servants have come together to form a group of either five or ten members among themselves. The group is formed for a certain number of months during which each member contributes a certain amount of money each month. The money

Series One — Amrita

thus collected is then distributed equally among the members of the group. The present group, made up of ten, has Kesavalou as one of its members, but now he refuses to give his monthly quota to the group. The group is alarmed and its members approach you for a solution.

I refuse to have anything to do with these affairs.

The whole thing is illegal and punishable. But this kind of thing is prevalent among the servant class and milkmen of Pondicherry. This is by the way. But what do you want me to tell them?

That I absolutely refuse to hear a single word about such things.

29 April 1933

*

Mother,

*Balanarayan has accepted all your conditions—
to return every evening to Cycle House at the time
fixed by Benjamin and to obey all the rules of the
House.*

The important points being: no smoking, no chewing tobacco,
no taking snuff.

30 April 1933

*

Mother,

*You spoke at mid-day today about how to give
pocket money to Sankara Rama. As nothing was de-
cided at that time, I simply bring it before you again.*

You might go to him and tell him simply: You know that
Mother gives pocket money to all the members of the Asram.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Would you like to have some?

4 May 1933

*

Amrita,

Benjamin is offering to take up the surveillance of Ammani for the mending work, until something is arranged. Ammani must be informed and Nolini will have to go with her to the Cocotiers to fetch all the things she was using for this mending work. A small almirah or the chest of drawers may be needed to keep all the work in course of doing.

Ammani will go also to Pavitra twice a week for ironing his things when washed.

5 May 1933

*

Mother,

Rama Reddy has invited me to his house for lunch tomorrow! I told him that I would write to you today and wait for the answer tomorrow morning. He bought a half-measure of milk for the purpose! The stomachic soul in me seems to be very influential!

You can go.

8 May 1933

*

Mother,

Ramchandra informs me that Louis Arogya [a local resident] has taken a turn to the Yoga. He has decided to join the Asram, but all depends on whether you will admit him or not.

It would be good if he could give the date and *the time* of his birth.

Series One — Amrita

*He wishes to have a waiting period of one month.
He will use this time to send his mother to his elder
brothers.*

First I must see him once before deciding anything.

12 May 1933

*

Amrita,

A man is needed to bring the paddy up to the roof of the Canal House. A special coolie could be provided for that, but he must be, as far as possible, reliable. Will you see to it?

12 May 1933

*

Mother,

Louis Arogya will submit his personal documents to me tomorrow evening. What do you want me to do? Should I accept them so that I can give them to you? Advise me, Mother.

You can tell him that I usually don't give advice in matters of this kind. Still, if he insists, you can take them and I will have a look at them.

14 May 1933

*

Mother,

Some time back, Subramania Chetty installed two water connections—one in Subbu House and the other in Josué House. We did not pay him for these additional connections. Today he has dug up the two notes for these connections from his archives! But the other day he signed for having received his dues till

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

30th April 1933. How can we be sure that he will not discover yet another note? But I don't believe there is another note. Still, I can't assure myself.

It is incomprehensible that we did not keep an exact account of all this. It is an unpardonable negligence.

14 May 1933

*

Mother,

While Premanand was translating for me some sentences underlined in Dahi's letter, Nolini came to the Library to take Premanand's signature on the circular about the meeting. Nolini wanted Premanand not to talk about it to anybody, not even Amal. Now Amal and Premanand have been very good friends for a long time. So Premanand came to me this afternoon to ask if he ought to change his attitude towards Amal. He asked me to write to you.

I prefer not to interfere in such matters.

15 May 1933

*

Mother,

For my meditation with Arjava in my room, I was using the rug from Duraiswami's room during his absence. But today I was obliged to use one of the Pranam verandah rugs for the purpose. I have done it without your permission. For next time, well, I await your counsel.

It is all right.

18 May 1933

*

Series One — Amrita

Mother,

Paying one person out of other people's money introduces difficulty in accounting. For example, two or three days ago I received Rs. 133 from you. But at the time of payment I found that I needed Rs. 159. So I took the remaining amount from the money deposited with me by someone. And in the accounts book I marked Rs. 159 as if received from you. That doesn't seem fair.

You must once for all stop touching to the money deposited with you. Each one must have his money in a separate envelope with the amount written clearly, and if he draws it out by installments that must be written also with the date. Any other process can lead to much confusion and great bother. Remember what was on the point of happening with Dr. Manilal, and also how Becharlal took back his money with a fright. Such things must, by all means, be avoided.

I therefore suggest, first, that I pay only with the money I receive from you. The moment it is finished, I will simply say, "Tomorrow". And second, that those who want money due to them and who have your sanction behind their claim must inform me at least 24 hours in advance in writing.

Of whom are you speaking? Not the people who have deposited money with you, I hope? For the money is *theirs* and must be given back *at once* on demand. Any other dealing is dishonest and cannot be tolerated.

18 May 1933

*

Amrita,

Information from the Canal House that to-day the coolie will be needed only morning and evening to carry the paddy up

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

and down the roof.

20 May 1933

*

Mother,

I have a proposal to make for drying the paddy quickly. If you agree to give your permission to carry it out, then everything could be arranged as follows:

1. Six to seven workers will put the entire quantity of paddy into sacks.

First expenditure.

2. Krishnayya will transport the sacks before 7.30 in the morning from Calve House to the Granary.

Second expenditure.

3. In the afternoon the paddy will be ready in the sacks to leave at 3.00 in order to reach Calve House before 5.00.

Third expenditure.

How complicated all this looks to me!

20 May 1933

*

Mother,

But what to do about the paddy? One has to choose either to finish the work in one day or to dry the paddy little by little for five days on the roof of Calve House.

Arrange all that if you like—but don't ask me questions about minor details.

22 May 1933

*

Series One — Amrita

Amrita,

Are you using the almirah which came from Meenakshi's house? If you are making no use of it, you might send it back to them as they are needing an almirah for the serving. But if you are using it, I shall have a smaller one made for them.

22 May 1933

*

Mother,

What would you like me to do with the pistachios and raisins I received today? Can I give them to Dyuman?

Yes, but it would be better if someone is willing to prepare 120 packets, so that the work of the Dining Room is made easier.

27 May 1933

*

Mother,

Pujalal asked in the evening to give him the address of V. Venkataraman in order to have an English dictionary brought from Madras. Can I give it to him, Mother?

He intends to pay for this dictionary, I believe? You must make sure and only under this condition can you give it to him.

2 June 1933

*

Mother,

Louis Arogiassami of Reddiyarpalayam asked me whether he could come more often for the Pranam. He has a cycle and he could come every day, if permitted.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

He can come.

He plans to send his mother to his brother's house. Once that is taken care of, he wants to know whether he can come into the Asram to lead its life at once.

I would like you to show him the rules of the Asram, translating and explaining them to him, so that he may think about it again before asking for admission. You can tell him also that, if admitted, it will be first on trial as it always is. Final admission coming only after some time, when it is proved that he can conform himself with the Asram life and obligations.

3 June 1933

*

Mother,

Mouttou Maistry, the washerman of the Ganesha Garage, is asking for a further extension of his deadline for vacating the place. He asks to be allowed to stay until next Wednesday, promising to hand over the key either on Wednesday night or on Thursday morning.

This comedy has sufficiently lasted. He can drag us on like that indefinitely. Make him sign a paper this time. (Ask Duraiswami in what words to put it so that we can turn him out of the place if need be.)

3 June 1933

*

Mother,

Just now (10.10 p.m.) Dyuman reminds me that the Dining Room does not sell milk and that it has not done so for the last two years. But Dande has already been asked to go to the Dining Room for his

Series One — Amrita

one anna of hot milk. Dande says he cannot go either to the Dining Room or to the Dairy before 6.30 a.m. But the entire amount of milk is sent to the Dining Room a little before 6 a.m. Now what is to be done?

I do not see the difficulty. Dande can take the milk from the D.R. and give the money to you as well as if he was taking it from the dairy. For writing the accounts you simply mark: sale of milk. You need not mark from where the milk has been given.

3 June 1933

*

Mother,

Dyuman is somewhat upset because Jivan issued milk to Dande without consulting him. Nolini asked me yesterday to inform Dyuman about Dande's going to the Dining Room to receive hot milk, but I failed to inform him of it.

But Mother, did you tell Nolini that Dande could have his milk from the D.R.?

No, we never spoke to Nolini about it and never thought of the D.R. as we did not know that Dande wanted hot milk.

Mother, will you sanction at all the sale of milk from the D.R.?

Not the sale but the giving. You will have to keep the account and receive the money.

4 June 1933

*

Mother,

The parcel was unregistered and I put the signature in the postman's book on behalf of Kantilal.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

I never heard that an *unregistered* parcel needed a signature. And if a signature *was* needed it was a great mistake to have put one in somebody's behalf.

7 June 1933

*

Amrita,

Shanta complains that the lock of the granary cannot open (in Canal House)—mishandling, I suppose—and she is asking for a new one. Will you go and see if the report is exact and if a new lock is truly needed.

15 June 1933

*

Mother,

Which of the two notices below will be preferable?

*Chairs are forbidden to be taken up to the roof
or*

*Chairs are forbidden to be taken up to the roof
By order*

Chairs are not to be taken on the roofs

or

It is forbidden to take up chairs on the roofs
By Order

This is preferable.

23 July 1933

*

Mother,

*With an exceptionally silent mind, I met Sachî
and Manubhai separately. I experienced an unusual*

Series One — Amrita

clarity while understanding what they said to me. I prayed to you before going to them. It is nice to listen silently to the one who speaks.

Bravo!

11 September 1933

*

Mother,

M. B. Desai gave me a cheque for Rs. 91.5 annas this afternoon, saying that Rs. 60 was for the Asram for the month of September and that the rest was for his wife which he would send to her at the end of the month. In the evening he told me not to encash the cheque now since it is only the 12th of the month. He said to add the amount of Rs. 91.5 to his deposit account and to pay the Mother either at the end of the month or on the first of next month.

I was simply stunned. I told him, “I am not paying you any interest till the end of the month, and I am not interested in guarding your money. Why keep the money with me?”

His cheque will not be paid to me, the money will go straight to my account as it is a *crossed cheque*.

If he goes on like that, I do not see why I should cash his cheques for him and *pay out of my own pocket the expenses of cashing them* (some 8 to 12 annas usually).

He further said that if you had accepted him in the Asram, then you could have cashed the cheque and kept the money with you. Only the Asram would have to send, on the first of every month, Rs. 31.5 to his wife from his pension of Rs. 91.5. He added: “I am only here temporarily. I will wait and see up to November what happens to me.”

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

This attitude is not very encouraging to take him as a permanent member!

12 September 1933

*

Mother,

Sanchi says the “Patience” tree in front of the Bakery is not growing well because another tree, “Vital stability”, has grown very big. It seems this tree was intended to be cut down originally. He wants to know whether he can uproot it.

NO.

If this is not permitted, then will you allow him to prune the tree closely?

NO—enough of massacring trees to satisfy the desires of each and every one!

12 September 1933

*

Mother,

Kalasti, one of our workers, received Rs. 20 against a signed receipt of Rs. 30. But Rs. 20 was enough to turn him tipsy. He is absent today, without informing!

Change the figure on the receipt, writing in the margin = *I say* Rs. 20 and signing.

The day must be deducted from his pay—and no more money lent to him—take note of this for the future.

12 September 1933

*

Series One — Amrita

Mother,

Kodandaraman engaged two coolies for two hours to shift Dilip's belongings. He paid them Rs. 1. That is really something! He took the money from me in the morning and gave me the account in the evening.

It is absurd! And why does he do things like that without permission? He said that he would have to move the things of Dilip (to which it was answered yes) *but never mentioned coolies*. Next time, if he has not my previous sanction, no money will be given to him.

12 September 1933

*

Amrita,

Mrudu says that the big cane table is too big for her; if you have a smaller one of the same kind she will take it; anyhow she wants the big one to be removed. So you can take it away.

23 September 1933

*

Mother,

I have informed M. B. Desai that the bank has transferred to your credit the sum of Rs. 90, 8 as. This afternoon he received from me Rs. 10 and 8 as. In my notebook I will note Rs. 80 to the credit of M. B. Desai. Have I done the right thing, Mother?

Is it he who asked you to give him only Rs. 10, 8 as? I had written to you to give him Rs. 30, 9 as, and I was planning to credit him with Rs. 60 given to the Ashram.

26 September 1933

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

(*Regarding measurements for a wooden stool for the bakery*)

Amrita,

I do not understand these measurements. You will have to go and verify what he wants.

29 September 1933

*

Mother,

Gangadhar requests you to give him an umbrella because of the rainy season.

Amrita,

Wouldn't it be better if he had a cloak with a hood? You can ask him, and if he wants one we can give him one from the Stores.

29 September 1933

*

Mother,

For the purchase of the two houses we are interested in buying, I have been negotiating with the owners or their representatives for some time now. Hours and hours, with wholehearted devotion to You, I have mixed with these outsiders, now cajoling, now persuading, now influencing them and so on. But one of them, Sri Ramalu, went too far this morning in insisting upon his foolish demands after the agreed amount has been paid by us.

Later, when I suggested to you that the deed could be annulled, you laughed at me. I swallowed whatever was hurled at me. But, Mother, even now, we can have back the entire amount we have paid.

Series One — Amrita

It is the absurdity of the proposal that shocked me. To have taken so much trouble and when one has succeeded, suddenly to undo everything! It would be mere folly. The very idea of it seems to me grotesque.

It was like receiving blow upon blow from you. I thought that you found it difficult to trust me.

Nonsense! It was not at all for such a reason.

I still feel that the deed should not be annulled. After all the Notary has not yet put his signature on it. I already told you that this is quite out of the question. I never thought of it, even for a second. It would be the last of absurdities.

Mother,

I would like to be freed from meeting the outside people for various types of work. I am very much shaken. From tomorrow shall I stop giving money to Satyen for the daily expenses? And why should I keep other people's money in my safe? Money is troublesome, Mother, and I am made of such poor stuff. Please save me.

What is all this? ... When Pavitra told me this evening that you had wept at 3 o'clock, I was moved and felt great pity—but now I see that these were tears from wounded “amour-propre” and not from the heart anxious for progress...

So, you would like better to throw all the work away from your shoulders (not even thinking of the difficulties to which it could put me) rather than accept the idea that you have to make a progress and that you will make it?

You ask to be saved. There is only one way: remain firm at your post; recover your lost faith, and where you see now the sign of a lack of trust in you and of unjust or, at least, undeserved severity, recognise the action of the Divine Grace labouring to make you rise above this condition of impotent

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

and confused humanity, into a state of clear, luminous and powerful Consciousness.

8 December 1933

*

Mother,

This evening Padmasini told me that her happiness in being here is slowly growing. But then this afternoon, after returning from Aroum  , she felt as if her heart was choking and she was overpowered by a sense of cold, accompanied by a slight shiver. She also felt like weeping but did not know why. She added that she has never experienced fear or loneliness. It seems some people in Aroum   told her that if she is afraid of living all alone in the house, she should tell you and that you will arrange for another member of the Asram to live with her. She told those people that she has no fear and she feels your Presence. I forgot to ask her who told her all those things.

Yes, better ask her who it is.

But she is wondering why the choking in the heart, etc. in spite of feeling you?

You must tell her that it is the disbelief of others that disturbs her faith and confidence. She must not listen to what others say and keep her faith and confidence intact.

29 January 1934

*

Mother,

A few things continue to puzzle me; no, they even trouble me. A certain atmosphere sometimes develops that prevents the actual facts from being presented to you. The result is that something not exactly wanted or needed is either constructed or furnished which

Series One — Amrita

fails to satisfy the person concerned.

For instance, Chandulal's latest proposal is to put a broad, half-opened conduit broad pipe made of a thick iron sheet between the well and the cistern. It will satisfy neither Rama Reddy nor the servant who has to fill the cistern. And is the proposal economical? Instead a cement wall 60 cm high will stand easily for five years and the cost will surely not be exorbitant. Why can't Chandulal see it? It becomes very much annoying when one has to go on day after day even when the inconvenience or difficulty is small.

I completely fail to understand why a wall would be more convenient than the semi-circular pipe. It is not Chandulal but I who suggested that as the simplest and most practical way if it is done properly. Now, if your happiness and quietness depends on the wall, you can certainly have it.

18 April 1934

*

Mother,

I would prefer that Vishnu be present when Kodandaraman and I meet. Next Monday I will place before you the result of the meeting. All this will take place provided you approve of the meeting.

Yes, I approve of your meeting and you can show him the accounts concerning the servants, but no others. He need not see also the accounts of the Atelier people. Vishnu can be present.

8 September 1934

*

Mother,

When milking began at 4.30 a.m., our policy was to fine the milkmen who came late. Now and then

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

some of them would come late by five, ten or twenty minutes and this caused a lot of inconvenience to us. The fine levied up to now was three paise for every five minutes late. Now, as the milking starts at 5.00 a.m., Rama Reddy and I propose to you to increase the fine to one anna for every five minutes after 5.00 a.m.

Better speak to the milkmen first, explain to them the situation and threaten with the one anna fine before actually giving it.

30 October 1934

*

Mother,

Rajangam informs me that there is a veterinary doctor in town. If Mother wants, Rajangam could bring him to the Dairy tomorrow afternoon for a consultation with regard to the condition of the cows. He charges two rupees per visit.

Certainly it should be arranged for him to come and do not forget to ask him whether it is dangerous to take the milk of cows which have the illness.

9 December 1935

*

Sweet Mother,

To what extent should one be wary of personal decisions and judgments? Is it the will or the need in one's surroundings that determines what one should do? But neither the one nor the other should determine it. Should one remain passive?

No, obey only the divine will.

How can one know what you want in every detail of practical daily life?

Series One — Amrita

Learn to be quiet (make your mind quiet) and listen in the silence.

20 December 1935

*

Mother,

On the 23rd evening Dyuman spoke to me about the D.R., his two morning milk deliveries to the D.R., and also about Madanlal. Instead of limiting himself to the problem at hand, he rambled on here and there, sometimes persuading me, sometimes convincing me in an insistent, disturbing and slightly unpleasant way. Remaining silent until the end—almost two hours!—I heard all that he told me. That evening I was troubled and greatly regretted not presenting my case.

On the 24th morning he showed me his notebook and I saw your remark about the Madanlal affair. But what astonished me was his casual phrase “Dyuman had to confess”. When I read this, I told him in a stern tone: “I kept my mouth shut in front of you because I did not want to displease you. But that does not mean that I agreed with your opinion. Now you have forced me to tell you my side...”

What to do, Sweet Mother? How can one know what you want in every detail of practical daily life?

If you don't get rid of your ego, there will be no one, finally, with whom you won't quarrel.

26 December 1935

*

Amrita,

Yes, I am always with you to help you in your difficulties. But you must learn to open yourself and receive that help.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

With my blessings

3 February 1936

*

Mother,

Regarding the absence of domestic workers. A few months ago you told me that we could deduct money for absence from the Darshan tips we give them. I request you to allow me to deduct either the entire amount or part of it during the Darshan month.

In that case, it must be explained very clearly to them that we are starting from this month, so that there is no misunderstanding.

5 February 1936

*

(Note by Amrita to Kanai:) May I know whether you have taken permission from the Mother for getting kuja water from the filter? According to the rule in force, the Mother's permission is needed to get the filter water. I write the above to you merely as information, because I heard from a servant that he brought kuja water for you; he came to me at 5.45 p.m. instead of 5.00 p.m.

Really, you could have avoided making a big fuss for such a small thing. I gave the permission.

20 March 1936

*

Mother,

Kiran, who already has one table, is asking for a second one in which to keep the photos. We have a dozen cane tables but she wants to have one with drawers.

Series One — Amrita

We cannot give a cane table for keeping the photographs. It is impossible to give two tables with drawers to one person.

10 April 1936

*

Mother,

Some relatives of Yagnalakshmi have arrived and she would like to receive them at her place—that is, at Aroul House. She asks you if she may. I saw those people when they were talking on the footpath of Aroul House with S. Ram and Yagnalakshmi. There are two children (a girl and a boy) and a man and a woman.

If she receives them downstairs, it is all right. Upstairs, it is not possible.

11 April 1936

*

Amrita

When you have some information to give me about somebody, it is better to give it (or write it) *privately*, not to speak in front of others.

17 June 1936

*

Mother,

Ambu informs me that Mother has asked him to speak to me about the periodical checking of the weights of the Building Service. Chandulal will not allow him to do this, unless he presents an authorisation written by the Mother.

He never spoke a word to me about this subject and naturally I said nothing to him on the subject because I am absolutely

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

ignorant about this matter.

I will not give any authorisation before speaking to Chandulal about it.

18 June 1936

*

Sweet Mother,

You have spoken about the use of servants in connection with excessive expenses. I would very much like to put before you some suggestions:

1. *Give up all the special services: laundry, hot water supply, mosquito-net cleaning, etc.*
2. *Limit the sweeping of pavements and cleaning of gutters to once a day.*
3. *Clean the walls, doors and windows only once in every three months.*
4. *Give up the preparation of manure. The cost of the manure we are making ourselves is quite high. For two or three rupees a month, the municipal workers would be willing to remove our garbage.*

In this way we could get rid of six or seven domestic workers.

Sweet Mother has spoken about the confusion around me. How can I get out of these difficulties?

All this has saddened me greatly, Sweet Mother.

There is no reason to be sad or to take sudden measures which can only be arbitrary and, as a result, will only replace one confusion with another. If I saw clearly what should be done, I would tell you and the problem would be solved. My comment today was made more to correct a state of mind than to change the state of things. First the true consciousness of things has to come before we can usefully change the aspects of action. This morning I said that everything will be fine when the Light comes down into the subconscious. This in fact is the only remedy and this is what you must work for. For this my help is always with

Series One — Amrita

you, but you must learn to take advantage of it.

With my blessings

8 August 1936

*

Amrita

1. I asked Jotindra to explain everything to the owner of Sadhana House so that it will not be necessary for Chandulal to go there. But you must be there.

2. The owner should not forget that we have given him *the full rent* in advance and that therefore it is dishonest of him to say that we abandoned the house. Is he ready to reimburse the money we have given him?

December 1940

*

Mother,

Vinata is asking for seven extra keys for the gate of Montbrun House to minimise the theft in the house. Each inmate will have one key.

This seems to me increasing the danger instead of diminishing it as some people are sure to lose their keys.

But do for the best...

5 September 1955

Series Two

Correspondence with Amal Kiran

Amal Kiran was born Kekoo Dhunibhoy Sethna in Bombay on 25 November 1904. He joined the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in February 1927 at the age of twenty-two. After eleven years in the Ashram, he went back to Bombay where he lived for the next sixteen years. There in 1949 he started a journal, Mother India, which was largely devoted to the spiritual teaching and practice of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Amal returned to Pondicherry in February 1954 and remained for the rest of his life. His principal work was editing the monthly Mother India. Artist, poet, literary critic and all-round intellectual, he was a prolific writer and the author of more than a dozen books. On 29 June 2011 he passed away at the age of one hundred and six.

Amal's correspondence with Sri Aurobindo was extensive. His interest in poetry elicited hundreds of comments by Sri Aurobindo on poetic creation and the composition of his epic Savitri. Amal's correspondence with the Mother was also substantial. More down to earth, it dealt largely with personal problems, family affairs and the editing of Mother India. Many of these exchanges are included here to show how the Mother handled this brilliant and spirited disciple; they also reveal her deep concern for him.

The correspondence covers the period from 1930 to 1970. Most of the entries are in English; those in French appear here in translation.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

(Amal's first work in the Ashram was managing the Furniture Service. Several of the entries below are examples of furniture chits given in the early 1930s.)

To Kekoo,

Govindbhai is not satisfied with his easy-chair. Please take it back from him and give it to the next applicant. Let us hope he will be less dainty.

c. 1930

*

Amal,

Subhadra is asking, for books, a shelf of 3 feet x 3 ft x 1.1/2 ft. This is quite ridiculously big—it would hold a full library! Even if you had anything of the kind, I would tell you not to give it. But one of the biggest among Purani's shelves could be offered.

I shall probably require the shelf you showed me some time ago. You can give it after "pranam".

14 May 1932

*

Amal,

As I do not want to refuse your present, I am keeping the Parker you have offered—but as you may like to have a fountain pen I am sending you this one (with which I am writing). Although it is not so up-to-date as yours, it is not old as it has scarcely been used.

15 November 1932

*

Amal,

Will you ask Nolini for the list of the people coming for the 21st who are to be accommodated in the Asram and see if you have the necessary cots, chairs, tables. If something is missing let me know as soon as possible.

Series Two —Amal Kiran

Benu is coming, do you have a cot to fit him?

5 February 1933

*

Amal,

Is it true that Krishna Shambhu is without a wooden cot? How is it? Will you go to his room and see, and if he has none give him one out of the last ones that have been made. You can tell him, by the way, that I was convinced a wooden cot had been given to him.

16 February 1933

*

Mother,

As regards Vishnu's request to be given back his old cane table in addition to the new wooden one, it seems he has no trunk or anything in which to keep his clothes and other things. So should I give him the table or will some other arrangement be made for him?

Don't you think that a box would prove more useful for him than a table? Do you have some box that you could give him?

c. 1933

*

Mother,

Mr. De Quadros of 16, rue de la Marine, the house next to the vegetable garden, came to see me this morning. He said that he wanted to sell his house. Two years ago Chandulal had made a thorough survey of it and, with your advice, offered Rs. 6000.

Mr. De Quadros had set up a higher figure—Rs. 9000 or so; but now he names Rs. 7500. He says

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

he'd like to sell to the Ashram and this is the sum he specially mentions for it; for others he would state a bigger one. He asked me to look in and let him know your reply.

You might see the man and tell him that I am ready to buy his house for Rs. 6500 if he wants.

c. 1933

*

Mother,

This morning I was told by Mr. Vigie that Nandini was staying upstairs in his house and that she was eager to see me. I went and there she was, in bed and unwell, and there was talk of sending for a doctor. I sat down and talked a little and expressed my impression that she had gone away from the Asram all of a sudden. But the story I hear from Nandini is quite another. It seems that last night she returned to the house to sleep and she was turned away by the girls. They said that the Mother had given orders that if Nandini came back she was not to be admitted but to be sent to Amrita.

I do not dare to judge your intentions, Mother, but when I was asked if that was a decent thing to do, I could not help agreeing that to refuse entrance to Nandini at night to her own room was rather bad, especially when it was clear that she had not left the house to go and stay elsewhere—in that case she would not have left all her belongings behind. Nobody would leave his or her clothes and go away, so I don't know why it was understood that she wouldn't return. It seems she had no other clothes except what was on her and it was a great shock to her to be turned away like that in the night. Was it really done according to your order, Mother?

Series Two —Amal Kiran

The report is false—she has not been turned out of her rooms—and it seems to me that you have rather too readily accepted this suggestion. As she had moved away things without any previous notice and she was taking no trouble to let us know of her whereabouts, we had her door locked to be sure to meet her when she came back, if at all she came. She was told to go to *Amrita who had the key and would open the door to her*. She was, it seems, quite out of temper and it is probably why she did not understand what was told to her. It seems to me that, in future, it would be better if you reserved your judgment and your remarks about it to outsiders until you learn the truth about circumstances from Sri Aurobindo and myself.

13 November 1933

*

(*After nearly seven years in the Ashram, Amal went to Bombay for a five-month visit. During this period the Mother sent him the two letters below.*)

Amal,

Happy to learn that you are all right now.

I'm feeling somewhat astonished that my "line" did not materialise last time; it had really the intention of doing it.

Do not let M or anybody else keep you away for a longer time than strictly indispensable.

9 April 1934

*

Amal,

I received the paints two days back; they are very pretty and will prove quite useful. But still there is one shade that is missing. Do you remember the flowers of protection? It is practically impossible to paint them unless we have a colour which is, I think, called in English "Magenta". If you could

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

discover this ideal colour somewhere, I would be very glad to receive it.

Happy to hear that you have quite recovered. We received the nice letter of M and sent her our blessings today by wire.

Always with you.

25 April 1934

*

(*After his visit to Bombay, Amal returned to Pondicherry.*)

Mother,

Pardon my writing to you without any specific reason; but I felt like telling you that you are extremely dear to me. In spite of my thousand and three imperfections, this one sense remains in me—that you are my Mother, that I am born from your heart. It is the only truth I seem to have realised in all these years. A very unfortunate thing, perhaps, that I have realised no other truth; but I deeply thank you that I have been enabled to feel this much at least.¹

My blessings are always with you.

17 September 1934

*

Mother,

It seems centuries since you called me last for an interview. I feel I have grown old and grey, waiting—waiting—waiting. I hope you don't want me to wait till I feel quite like a Methuselah!

¹ To this letter Sri Aurobindo replied: “It is an excellent foundation for the other truths that are to come—for they all result from it.”

Series Two —Amal Kiran

I fear you will have to wait till Saturday the 16th, to see me. Let us hope your hair won't turn quite white!

10 February 1935

*

Mother,

About L. If pain in the tooth becomes again acute, she would like very much to have some sedative medicine, because she feels very exhausted and would welcome any relief, however temporary. Or if you don't approve of medicine, she begs you to give her a lot of sleep in the night. If the fever is high also in the night, she might like to have somebody near to help her, provided you think so too.

Yes, it would be better if somebody is with her at night. Let her say whom she would like to have—and if the pain starts again it seems unavoidable to give her some medicine. You might speak to Pavitra about it—he has something helpful with him.

More ice and fruit juice can be given if needed—only one shall require the flasks.

29 March 1935

*

Mother,

I had been expecting a reply from you but I got it this morning in your face. I suddenly resolved not to touch drink again. Facing myself later, I perceived that if it was at all necessary to drink something nice, I must try to confine myself to innocent cold drinks.

Then I fell asleep and had a most frightfully realistic dream in which my teeth broke off in my mouth and fell out in my hand and on the floor. I dreamed that I got up, but in that condition I discovered that my teeth came loose and I spat out quite a lot of them. I was terribly pained to see such a

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

thing. I really woke up after this and, understanding what the falling of the teeth meant, I felt a great release, a fine sense of openness to you and a freedom from the old consciousness.

I am happy at your resolution and I hope you will keep to it. I was going to write to you that you must choose between seeing me and drink—for I would not see you if you went on drinking—but I am glad to hear that you have made the resolution already.

11 October 1935

*

Mother,

In the talk I had with you about my stammering, I understood your words “I shall see” to mean some inner perception on your part. I certainly have a faith in Dr. Ramchandra’s treatment,² but is your sanction based on your inner perception?

The sanction is given because Ramchandra’s treatment has, when given a chance, proved surprisingly successful even in hopeless and impossible cases. Naturally in all his cases sanctioned by us we put our Force behind him; he himself always asks that of us as a condition for his taking the case.

23 March 1936

*

Mother,

D writes: “The Mother’s power has broken down all the barriers peacefully, and to my utter amazement Mrs. C said I could go in November for Darshan but must return soon.” So D will be here round about the 20th of next month.

² Dr. Ramchandra was a homeopathic doctor who lived in the Ashram.

Series Two —Amal Kiran

She writes further: "Please ask Mother if she would allow me to bring a blue-flame stove, as I am to have hot water every morning and enema every week. Besides, if it is cold I can have a little warm bath. If food is too spicy on certain days I can boil some vegetables. And please let me know which rooms I shall have. I like the rooms I had last time very much as they are open and clean; also those inmates are very good. Tomorrow I shall consult Dr. S as I have a severe pain in my chest. Hope nothing will stop my coming."

D has enclosed a letter for you, which I am sending herewith. Any reply to it? And what reply shall I give to the inquiries quoted above?

You may write to D that she can come. The rooms she was occupying have been nicely arranged for J—they are most comfortable now. I hope she will not spoil them with her cooking. I do not like much the idea of it—but... She asks to pay only Rs. 30 a month. Considering the present accommodation the price is somewhat ridiculous, but as she says she cannot give more, then...

Of course, if she has any serious illness, she must not come.

31 October 1937

*

Mother,

I have received a letter from my brother H. He writes among other things: "There is too much intellectualism in Cambridge. Men worship the intellect as if it were a deity; and there is too much desire in everyone to be as busy as possible, without stopping to reflect on what the whole business is about. For the moment I have to throw in my lot with them and I am naturally influenced by the busy life around me and

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

the intellectual pursuits. The greatest consequence, about which I am worried, is that I feel that I am very far away from the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. I shall indeed be very grateful if you will ask Mother on my behalf to help me to overcome this feeling and also to enable me to be in touch with her.

"There is another point. For the last eight days I am having a somewhat persistent pain in the lower part of the bone above the heel of my left foot. The difficulty is that every shoe I wear touches this painful spot and so whenever I go out I feel its presence acutely. I shall be very grateful to Mother if she will kindly help me to remove it."

Please give me some message to send H.

What to say about H except that the pain in his foot is the result of the bad climate just as the lack of contact with Sri Aurobindo and myself is the result of uncongenial surroundings....

12 November 1937

*

Mother,

What you have said about H's troubles is quite true, but as he has asked for advice and help, I should like to send him some reassuring words from you, both as regards his foot-pain and his inner difficulty. I am sure he'll appreciate them very much.

Let him react against the contagion of the atmosphere and keep his inner being open to us—that is the only way to overcome these troubles.

13 November 1937

*

Mother,

You must be remembering the name MB. It is

Series Two —Amal Kiran

the name of a girl who came here some years ago in order to make research in the archives of Pondicherry in connection with an historical thesis she was writing for her M.A. She got her degree, but otherwise she has been passing through very unfortunate experiences and radical disappointments with the result that she is thoroughly tired of the ordinary life.

In her latest letter she expresses her aspiration to take up yoga. In conclusion she adds: "I will come to Pondicherry as soon as I get an opportunity. Do you think I would be allowed to stay at the Asram for a fortnight? It is because I will be coming there for the Asram and if I am not permitted to stay there it would not be much good." She is the head-mistress of a well-known school for girls in Bombay. I suppose she wants to come during a vacation. May I give her hope that you will permit her to stay in the Asram?

Truly I have no room.

15 November 1937

*

Mother,

If MB stays somewhere outside, will you permit her to come to pranam and meditation? What shall I reply to her? Should I give her to understand that you reject altogether her wish to taste of our yoga? She says that it's not mere curiosity which is prompting her, nor just a desire to have an experience.

If she stays outside I will certainly allow her for pranam—at least once—to see how she is. Afterwards I shall be able to say if she is fit for yoga or not.

16 November 1937

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Mother,

Here's a picture of Lord Nuffield. You must have heard of him. Recently, the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of our times as "this Nuffield Age", for this man's munificence has been simply breath-bereaving. Last year he gave £2,000,000 for medical research. The other day he offered the University of Oxford £1,000,000. Altogether his benefactions during his life amount to £10,000,000. Is it not possible for us to send him a packet of some of our books, beginning with "A Life-Sketch of Sri Aurobindo", so that he may form some idea of the work, and the power and personality behind it? A letter stating our need of expansion can be added. Nothing may come of the whole venture—but why not try?

If you want to pick up the business you can try.

17 November 1937

*

Mother,

We were talking this afternoon about avoiding the secretaries and getting information reached directly to Lord Nuffield—and I forgot the most obvious solution of the problem. My brother H is in England and I am sure he will be happy to do something for you—it will be one more means of keeping his contact with you. H's presence in England seems really providential. What do you think of my idea?

Very good.

I should like to send the letter as well as the books by air-mail. The books we spoke of are: The Life-Sketch of Sri Aurobindo, The Teaching and the Asram of Sri Aurobindo, Thoughts and Glimpses and The Riddle

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of This World. *Has Sri Aurobindo any suggestion for some others? What about The Mother? There is a chapter in it on the right use of money—though I dare say it is not very complimentary to the present holders of money and may seem a little high-handed to the outsider.*

No suggestion—“The Mother” seems premature.

18 November 1937

*

Mother,

The air-mail will be a little expensive: so if you like we'll despatch the books by the ordinary post. What do you wish?

Yes, ordinary post is quite sufficient and safer too.

When I have drafted the letter for Lord Nuffield, I'll send it to you for approval.

All right.

19 November 1937

*

Mother,

I dipped into The Teaching and the Asram of Sri Aurobindo and read:

“Everything in the Asram belongs to the Teacher; the sadhaks (those who practise under him) have no claim, right or voice in any matter. They remain or go according to his will. Whatever money he receives is his property and not that of a public body. It is not a trust or a fund, for there is no public institution.... All depends on the Teacher and ends with his life-time,

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

unless there is another Teacher who can take his place.”

Won't this prove rather tough meat for an Englishman? It was written in this downright way when that anti-Asram movement was in full career in Pondy, but to Lord Nuffield it may smack too much of dictatorship, and the dictatorships known to Europe are hardly of an appealing kind to an Englishman. The charity he is accustomed to is rather of a public nature. What do you advise about the book? Will the “Life-Sketch” in the other book counteract the impression likely to be given by it and make him a believer in the benevolence of the Teacher in question?

You need not send “The Teaching and the Asram”.

20 November 1937

*

Mother,

I have made a draft of the letter for Lord Nuffield, incorporating the information prepared for the Hyderabad people. As we are not sending the “Teaching and the Asram”, some sort of general information is necessary. Please go through the letter and make any modification you think is needed. I should like to know how the letter strikes you.

It is all right.

And will Sri Aurobindo let me know through you how exactly the conclusion should be? What does one say while signing one's name to a letter addressed to a lord? Also, do you think the phrase “out of your splendid generosity” after the word “please” in the last sentence is quite right or does the sentence go better without it? (Amal's two-page letter ends: “Will

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you please, out of your splendid generosity, give a helping hand to this work of Sri Aurobindo.”)

“please” could be omitted but the rest will do.

For the ending of the letter why should you not ask Arjava?³

22 November 1937

*

Mother,

I am feeling very wretched. Of course nobody guesses my condition, for I do not go begging for sympathy nor can I help joking and laughing when I am in company; but I find not a jot of usefulness left in me. Everything appears to me in the light of a cul-de-sac. I don't know how long my nerves will stand the strain—and even if they stand it for ever, the feat can hardly be very enjoyable.

Your name was on my note book several times and each time I have been obliged to strike it off because of something urgent and unavoidable. Now I have written your name on the 7th and hope it will stay there...

3 January 1938

*

Mother,

I suppose you received the picture of Lord Nuffield I had sent you on Friday. You have written no reply giving me your impression of him.

I have received the photograph and keep it. Nothing to say about it for the moment.

10 January 1938

*

³ Arjava was an English disciple who lived in the Ashram.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Mother,

The Ideal of Human Unity *is out of print—perhaps luckily, since it was printed in a very shabby way in Madras. If you like, I'll send to Lord Nuffield Ideal and Progress, The National Value of Art, Superman, Evolution, and whatever else I can find of general interest, besides War and Self-Determination.* What do you say?

Yes—these books will do.

In your letter you have said, “If H could be introduced by someone who knows Nuffield well and would take some interest”. How much is H to tell this intermediary? Is it advisable to say that he wants Nuffield to give a substantial sum of money to the Asram? Or should he just talk about the yogic work of Sri Aurobindo and say that he would like to interest Nuffield in it. Perhaps it may not be nice to be specially secretive if somebody is good enough to be of assistance?

There is no necessity to be at all secretive about it to the intermediary.

17 January 1938

*

Mother,

I hear there is an epidemic of small-pox in Bombay. Should I get myself vaccinated before I go there?

It might be better.

15 February 1938

*

(After eleven years in the Ashram, Amal moved back to Bombay in February 1938. He remained there for

Series Two —Amal Kiran

sixteen years, from 1938 to 1954. The following two dozen letters were written during this period.)

Mother,

A friend wishes to collect money for you. He says he will be very much helped if you write to him a statement about approaching people for monetary help.

Amal,

I am not in the habit of writing for money to anybody. If people do not feel that it is for them a great opportunity and Grace to be able to give their money for the Divine's cause, "tant pis pour eux!"⁴ Money is needed for the work—money is bound to come; as for *who* will have the privilege of giving it, that remains to be seen...

Received all the nice things you sent.

Our love and blessings are with you.

29 April 1938

*

To Amal

With the blessings of 29th March—anniversary day of my first meeting with Sri Aurobindo.

29 March 1939

*

To Amal

With the blessings of 4th April, New Year's day of the Ashram in remembrance of Sri Aurobindo's arrival at Pondicherry.

Open to the action of the "spiritual power of healing".

4 April 1939

*

⁴ "So much the worse for them!"

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Mother,

I am puzzled. My heart is pulled towards you and I want to come back. But certain things are keeping me here and I feel that they will keep drawing me even if I return at present. What should I do? But please know that whether I come just now or not, I cannot ever break away from you. I pray to you not to abandon me.

My dear child, blessings of the day...

Just received your letter of the 21st; it came to me directly (without the written words) three days ago, probably when you were writing it, and my silent answer was categorical: remain there until the necessity of being here will become so imperative that all else will completely lose all value for you. My answer now is exactly the same. I want only to assure you that we are not abandoning you and that you will always have our help and protection.

24 April 1939

*

Mother,

People keep lamenting about their lot and feel that their troubles and their unhappy reactions would go if other people and things were changed. Do you share my doubt about this feeling?

Each one is the artisan of his own miseries.

My love and blessings always

4 July 1939

*

Amal,

I am sorry, but I cannot deal with your poetry

- (1) because I have no time,
- (2) because I am not qualified.

Series Two —Amal Kiran

And you must not hope that Sri Aurobindo will see it,
because he is not attending to any correspondence whatever.

With our love and blessings

16 July 1939

*

Amal,

Your room is kept free for you, so you may come at any time for a few days. But I must warn you about two things: (1) that since the war there are many restrictions here and you may not find life very comfortable, (2) that nobody will be able to look after your needs properly as it has to be done. So you might do well to bring someone with you to nurse you on the way and here if need be.

This young girl looks indeed very charming, but for the reasons mentioned above, it will not be at all possible to lodge her in the Ashram and it might be wiser for her to postpone her coming.

You can give my blessings to S.

Our love and blessings to you

23 September 1939

*

Mother,

I dabbled in stocks and shares a little, but came a cropper. The speculation I carried on for a while has burnt quite a hole in my pocket. I really wish I hadn't. Are you dead against speculation?

Amal,

You ought to know that I do not approve at all of speculation—but what is done is done.

All I can say is that there is not much likelihood of the war coming to an end with the end of this year.

My love and blessings

17 December 1939

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Mother,

Of late the idea has been occurring to me that I should make a book of some of my poems and have it printed in Bombay. But my own resources are extremely limited. I want to persuade my grandfather to help me with at least part of the money needed. I don't know whether I will succeed in persuading him nor whether my book will sell. Will you and Sri Aurobindo bless my venture so that there may be no difficulty anywhere? I shall be happy to have a line in your writing.

That is all right.

Our love and blessings

2 April 1940

*

Mother,

These three days I have been having spells of extreme exhaustion. A little walking and I feel utterly fagged out. Why this should happen I don't understand. I want to get strong—body and soul. The soul is, of course, feeling much healthier, but the body gets bouts of great weakness for no sufficient reason. I must get all right.

It seems to me that it would be better not to talk too much, as, after all, it is not quite essential...

P.S. I had thought I would chuck all medicines here. And I don't like to take brandy but I have to take a little dose of it when I get that low feeling. Do you advise me to stop all this? Please let me know how best to get over my complaint.

It may not be wise to stop abruptly all the medicines you are accustomed to take. A little quiet concentration would do you

Series Two —Amal Kiran

more good than much rushing about.

My love and blessings

22 April 1940

*

Amal,

Do as you like. But as you ask my opinion I must say that
it is silly.

31 May 1941

*

Mother,

*So many problems have been facing me of late. I
wonder how they will be solved happily.*

To Amal

The only way to a true and lasting happiness is a complete
and exclusive reliance on the Divine's Grace.

With my love and blessings

19 October 1941

*

Mother,

*Your letter of May last year, in reply to mine in
which I explained what I thought of doing, runs: "Do
as you like. But as you ask my opinion I must say that
it is silly." Is it silly because there is a feeling in me that
circumstances are compulsive?*

*Another thing: why have you omitted those
words which mean so much to me and which you
have always ended with: "Love and blessings"?*

My "it is silly" covered many sides of the question, including the most exterior one. What you suggest as the foolishness of believing that circumstances are compelling when they are not, is part of it.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

It is purposely that I have omitted the words “love and blessings”, because I did not wish you to think that I am blessing your enterprise—I do not—just because I find it *silly*. So, do not be mistaken if I end by love and blessings. These words are for your soul of which you are not, just now, very conscious, and not for your exterior being.

18 June 1942

*

Mother,

I spent quite a lot of grey matter putting before you argument after argument. But you have not argued back. You are quite happily unconcerned.

Amal,

All the reasonings in your letter come from the external physical mind. You cannot expect me to come down to that level and discuss with you from there. I see things from another plane and in a different way.

19 July 1942

*

Mother,

It is hard for me to understand how X who has been so absorbed in Yoga for years, who has been considered by you to have the nature of the saints, could drift away from you and have a fall from the Yogic life.

Amal,

The mistake in your psychology is its excessive simplification. You look at one side and with exaggerated emphasis and ignore the rest. A person may have certain qualities but not to perfection, and there is in the subconscious the very contradiction of these qualities. If one does not take care to eliminate this contradiction, then at any moment under the pressure of

Series Two —Amal Kiran

circumstances what is in the subconscious may rise up with force and bring about a collapse, what is called a fall from the yoga.

I suppose that with the above indication you will understand.

With love and blessings

30 November 1943

*

Mother,

If a person who was declared by you to be "saintly" in nature could come away from a Yogic life of many years, I can't help feeling quite sad and discouraged.

Amal,

I do not propose to write anything about the main subject of your letter. Only, as you write of discouragement, I may point out to you that nothing irreparable has happened. Of course, the further one wanders away from the path, the more radical will be the conversion needed to return to it; but the return is always possible.

With my love and blessings

22 December 1943

*

Mother,

You know that for many years I have been in the habit of leaving my physical body and making exploratory tours in my subtle body. (Here several experiences are described.) I wonder whether I should keep up my practice of going out of the body. It is extremely fascinating, but is it a necessary part of Yogic development for keeping the consciousness open to inner spiritual things?

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Amal

I have received your letter with the enclosed money.

As to the experiences you speak of, it is much better to stop them altogether. They seem to take you into levels which are undesirable and most unsafe; they are not at all necessary for any opening in the yoga.

Love and blessings to you and the family

28 March 1944

*

Amal

Your letter with its enclosure reached in due time.

Certainly I have not given you up, not in the least. You are quite capable of the realisation if you make up your mind to it, and the experience you relate seems to me a valid promise that it will come.

With our love and blessings

19 May 1944

*

Amal,

Your letter of the 20th and its contents reached safely.

I have never written articles and I do not propose to begin now. All I can do is to send you my short remarks on the present world situation, part of which is in the prayer for the coming year. You will find them enclosed on a separate paper.

Your proposals for the title of the Annual are not very successful. Sri Aurobindo, who I consulted, suggests that you should do like the *Pathmandir* in Calcutta, that is to say, call it “*Sri Aurobindo Circle – 1st Annual*”.

Sri Aurobindo will see if he can send you some poems, but he can make no promise, for there may not be any which he wants to publish now.

With my love and blessings and my best wishes for a happy New Year

29 December 1944

*

Series Two —Amal Kiran

Amal,

When you first asked the question about the bird painted by Krishnalal, I did not answer because along with your letter arrived the printed cover made from this very painting. It seemed to me that, the cover being printed, it closed matters and there was no need to worry about it any more. I did not inform you about it because I thought you were already informed about it. The defect you spoke of was there all right, but nothing could be done at that stage and after all in a symbolic painting it is of secondary importance.

But you can be sure that I never said "the design is quite perfect and beyond criticism". This is a statement that can never be made of anything human.

With my love and blessings

P.S. The Rs. 25 sent on the 13th instant reached safely.

Love and blessings to all

22 April 1945

*

Amal,

Received all your letters and also the designs which I am sending back under separate cover.

I am sorry to have to tell you that your proposed corrections make the design much worse than it was before. The unhappy wing seems now grotesquely big and heavy, quite out of proportion with the rest of the bird. I am of the opinion that it is far wiser to let things stand as they are. After all Krishnalal's design is not so bad as you seem to think, it has its charm and grace. So I have decided not to speak to Krishnalal about it, neither did I show him your sketch. The best would certainly be to drop the matter altogether and have the cover printed as it was originally designed. Hoping that you will not mind my frankness, I send you my love and blessings.

2 May 1945

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

My dear Amal,

I am in receipt of your letter with the enclosed money.

Of course in the text I sent you “their” has been omitted by mistake. But now I am sending you a new version which I prefer to the other. Here it is:

“For the Governments honesty lies not only in saying what they are doing but also in doing what they say.”

With my love and blessings to all

21 June 1945

*

Amal,

I showed your letter about the Annual to Sri Aurobindo who said jokingly, “Why not bring out in time a book without mistakes?”... Anyhow if one is to be sacrificed to the other, time is surely the side that must suffer!

With my love and blessings to all

22 July 1945

*

My dear Amal,

Your letter reached safely with its contents. I must have received also the previous one as well as the annual, but as it came just at the time of “darshan” and the crowd was bigger than it had ever been, I had no chance to answer and give my opinion although the impression was good. Sri Aurobindo also, who kept a copy with him, seems to have been satisfied. I suppose you have been told that we are opening a Press in Pondicherry—the Ashram Press. It is Pillai who was at the head of the Government Press of Hyderabad who is organising it. It means that the work will be first class and we intend to do the printing of all books and magazines concerned with Sri Aurobindo’s works as well as his books and mine.

As for your eyes we fully approve of your trying the Dr.

Series Two —Amal Kiran

Bates's method⁵ which have proved quite successful in many cases.

With my love and blessings for yourself and your family.

Will you kindly tell to M that I have received her letters about your mother's health. Hoping that she is getting better now.

18 September 1945

*

Mother,

I was rather depressed on hearing of Chandulal's death after an operation. He was one of your workers with an exceptional ability. How is it that he passed away although under your influence and guidance?

My dear Amal,

About Chandulal's departure, the operation was quite successful, done by a very skilful surgeon, but his heart was weak beyond expectation and he died of heart failure five days after the operation. It has been a sad event and a big loss for the work. But for some time he suffered much and felt tired of it. He had several times expressed the wish to change his body for a better one. It is surely this wish that is responsible for what happened.

I open your letter of the 17th instant and find in it Rs. 18 (eighteen) and not 88 as you announced in your letter. What has happened? I hope it has not been stolen on the way. Of course it is not quite safe to send money in an ordinary registered letter; but until now all sums reached intact.

With my best wishes and my love and blessings for you and the others

22 November 1945

*

⁵ The Bates system is a natural method of eyesight cure involving eye exercises and relaxation of the eyes.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Mother darling,

It is very kind of you to send me a telegram of love and blessings for my birthday. The usual Money Order left yesterday. We are very happy to offer the sum.

Mama's pain went soon after I had dispatched the wire to you. An X-ray photo was taken and the result shows that though there is evidence of some consolidation and callus formation; there is also evidence of slight absorption of the bone at the fracture. We all shall be very thankful if you will make the callus strong and hard and prevent absorption. We are extremely grateful for all the kindness you have shown and the help you have given.

I have been puzzled by the utter lack of reply from you to so many letters of mine. You did not even let me know anything when I wrote about SD. Eventually he could not leave Bombay because he had been empanelled on a jury and his application for being exempted was not granted. But you gave no answer at all. I am sure you must be having some reason for no answer here as well as for taking no notice of my two or three other letters. Have I asked you something which you did not like and which annoyed you?

No other reason than an absolute lack of time has prevented me from answering you in writing. But I have noted all the points and did my best to give you satisfaction. As yet I do not know when I shall be able to answer at leisure; this is why I scribble these few words on your own letter to assure you that I am not forgetting you nor your mother and M and that my love and blessings are with you all. A wire has been sent to you yesterday for the "darshan". The M.O. has reached today. Hoping that your mother will recover soon.

Blessings

19 November 1946

*

Series Two —Amal Kiran

Mother,

I am still not through with this second spell of heart trouble. The first was in June 1938, owing to a gigantic overdose of a stimulant tonic powder. This time it is a strain of the heart muscle. The doctors have advised complete rest in a supine position. Not even the head is to be lifted. They also warn me that if I don't take extreme care I may develop more serious trouble.

But I feel full of your presence and do what my suddenly and abundantly released poetic inspiration leads me to do. I sit up frequently, get excited with the passage of the poems through me and my heart starts beating fast at that time, and if the doctors could then put their stethoscopes to my chest they would begin to shake their heads at the prospect of a quick cure. But I am unconcerned. I trust implicitly in your power and feel like laughing away the black future with which they threaten me in case of carelessness about my heart. I feel certain, Mother dearest, that the Divine Power can help—can't it?

My dear child,

I quite agree with you that there is a power other and much more powerful than that of the doctors and the medicines and I am glad to see that you put your trust in it. Surely it will lead you throughout all difficulties and in spite of all catastrophic warnings. Keep your faith intact and all will be all right.

28 May 1948

*

Mother,

I want to ask you a question concerned with my reaction to the inconsideration and vulgarity in Y's letter about Sri Aurobindo. I remember an occasion

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

many years ago when a lady friend of mine spoke unbecomingly of you. I verbally choked her off at once, but the indignation within me went on burning. It was like a sword of fire leaping out of my chest, striking and striking through the hours. My mind could serve only to direct it accurately; it had itself little part in the actual violence. The next day the lady had a terrific attack of diarrhea.

A similar blaze began to go out of my chest yesterday on reading Y's letter. I had no scruple in directing it at his journal as if to consume its future to ashes. But although I also struck out at Y himself as if to destroy him, I did not encourage the fiery onslaught. I started wondering if it was right to attack a person like that.

I shall be thankful if I can have some words of guidance from you. Please keep in mind that I am not talking about a mere outburst of anger: some force appears to me there which wants to destroy and feels it has the power to destroy. Of course I would never think of using it for my private ends.

It is evidently the working of the Kali force that is lit and is directing this fire in you. There is nothing wrong in its action; it is not an anger personal to you but the wrath of a divine power and it must be allowed to act; in fact, I think you could not stop it from burning in you even if you wanted to stop it. This man has drawn it upon himself and there is nothing wrong in what is happening; he alone is responsible. Of course, it must not be used for any personal aim or in any self-regarding way.

8 October 1950

*

(In February 1954, after sixteen years in Bombay, Amal returned to Pondicherry. He lived in the Ashram

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for the remaining fifty-seven years of his life. Many of his letters to the Mother during this period deal with his work as editor of the monthly journal Mother India.)

Amal,

I find Usha a very good and receptive girl and do not approve at all of her going or rather of taking her away against her own will; as for her mother I do not want her here, it would be useless.

My blessings

You can show this note to Dahyalal.

December 1954

*

Mother,

Dahyalal asks me to give him the original of your letter to me about Usha. Do you think it will serve better the cause of truth if he has this with him? Or would you prefer that only a copy should go?

If you have not shown the original, you can *show* it, but it is better to give only a copy.

Blessings

20 December 1954

*

Mother,

Happiest New Year to you!

If you don't have other plans, will you let me publish in this month's Mother India all that you read and spoke last evening? Part of it, of course, will have to be translated.

Before anything can be decided on the subject I must first see

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

the complete report (taken by the recorder) of what I have said. I am asking for it.

1 January 1955

*

Mother,

I feel that, in this year of fundamental challenges and difficulties, the first three months are my months of destiny. If the basic psychological defects of my nature are faced and fought now, a crucial and essentially permanent victory will be won with great rapidity. Am I right about the immense importance for me of January, February, March?

Keep your conviction and add to it the faith that only victory is certain—and everything will be all right.

I feel also that some small beginning of the victory has been made, after several attempts and failures. Is this true?

Yes.

I pray constantly for your help and grace. Without it I am helpless. Please give me all the support and assistance you can. I am dead serious in this matter and would like, once for all, to make a decisive turn and belong entirely to you and live only for your love and light. A few words from you will be greatly appreciated. I want to feel that even in your most outward aspect you are directly with me in my effort.

Surely my help is with you *in all ways*.

It is very interesting that these first three months should come as months of destiny for me. For I well remember the talk you and I had when, two years

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ago, in the February of 1953 I announced to you that the call had come to me from above the head to give myself at last to the life here. I said: “So many things in me must be cleared out. Although you have waited for 26 years (that is, since I first came here in 1927) for me to make a final resolve, I don’t want to wait for even 26 hours.” Then you replied: “Things can’t be cleared immediately. You must give me, say, at least, 26 months.” In the coming April, it will be exactly 26 months! Will the hoped-for Wonder come to pass?

VERY GOOD.

My blessings and love

19 January 1955

*

Mother,

MP has sent me the following letter:

Dear Sir,

I shall be thankful if you will get clarification from the Mother on the following three points:

1. On the subtle-physical plane, was there any creation before or is a new one being created by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother with new types of beings or for the souls that are developed and transformed on earth?

2. Sri Aurobindo had promised that he would manifest in a first supramental body built in a supramental way. Will this happen in 1967 or before?

3. It has been said in the Bulletin, April 1963, pp. 49–51, that both the bodies will be there at the same time and that we need not abandon totally this form in order to enter into another. Does this mean that the same person will have two bodies—the present one with gradual progression and the other by a direct

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

occult means and both will be present at the same time?

These questions are just a demonstration of how the mind makes a mess of everything. It is impossible to answer.

1 February 1955

*

Mother,

Kishor has given me—with your sanction—the following two letters of yours on women for publication in Mother India. I would certainly like to publish them. Will you please tell me what is to be done about two or three points to which I have drawn attention in the margin?

Of course, essentially and originally the Mother remains the Mother, but in the exterior world where all is mixed up there is scarcely one man that does not contain feminine elements and not one woman that does not contain masculine elements, which at once takes away all possibility of superiority of one sex over the other.⁶ (1 January 1949)

*

There have been many outstanding feminine figures in spiritual life. But on one side⁷ women are more

⁶ The Mother originally wrote “upon the other”. In a marginal note Amal suggested either “to the other” or “over the other”. The Mother chose “over the other”.

⁷ In a marginal note Amal asked, “What is meant by ‘on one side’?” The Mother replied, “I suppose I meant ‘from a certain point of view’.”

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interested in action than in meditation⁸ and intellectual expression. That is why very few women have recorded their spiritual experiences and thus they have remained unknown. (2 October 1950)

What general title should be given to the two letters?

No title.

(After attending to Amal's marginal notes, the Mother wrote at the bottom of the page:)

Better drop the whole thing, there is no necessity to publish it.

May 1955

*

Mother,

There seems to be something wrong in the way I asked you about certain words or phrases in those two passages of yours about women. It can't be that the very act of asking such questions is wrong: surely you don't mind being told about some oversight or slip. My approach, my attitude must be at fault: otherwise your response would not be what it was. Did I strike you as unsympathetic, insensitive, "cocky"? I should like very much to correct myself. I feel bad about being the cause of or even the "excuse" for your withdrawing what you had already sanctioned for publication.

Nothing of the kind—myself I did not like very much these two sentences. They give me the impression of a rather flat expression of what I wanted to say. I remember very well that I

⁸ The Mother originally wrote “by action than by meditation”. In a marginal note Amal suggested “in action than in meditation”. The Mother accepted this suggestion.

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had found the questions to which I was answering *boring* and it explains the dullness of the answers.⁹ I was truly glad of the occasion of withdrawing them from publication.

Blessings

22 May 1955

*

Mother,

I beg of you to grant me a short interview in the room at the Playground: ten minutes or so. I feel so troubled. Something in the physical mind often blocks me up terribly, though the higher intellect and the inner being are unshaken. A little talk with you and your close presence will dissolve the miserable disturbance.

You looked *so miserable* yesterday that I have arranged to see you tomorrow, Wednesday at 5.30 (Playground). But now you must smile.

Blessings

27 June 1955

*

Amal

As the time is come for settling the affairs, I am sending you this word to remind you that you owe something like Rs. 25,000 to S and that I expect you not to forget it when making the accounts.

I hope you are feeling my presence helping you to be firm and to do the right thing in the right way.

⁹ The question for the first passage is not available. The question for the second passage was: "Why are women absent from the long list of Avatars we get? Besides, there are very few ladies who have left a spiritual tradition behind them."

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With my love and blessings

19 May 1957

*

Mother,

Surely the Mother knows that a certain person is of a type that would rebel or vegetate and, in either case, go away from the Ashram. Knowing this, why does she allow such a person to stay in the Ashram for several years? Why does she not tell him that his stay would be useless or that he can leave at any time he pleases?

Because to each one is given his full chance, and there can always be an unexpected opening and a conversion.

24 June 1958

*

Amal

Long ago I had warned you that this silly story would become ugly. I am sorry you took no notice of what I said. Now it must come to an end.

17 September 1959

*

Mother,

TL had the following experience which seems worth recounting to you for an explanation. She writes, in effect:

"I left Pondi in very good condition, except for a little pain in the tail bone. But, while getting into the train for Bombay from Madras, all of a sudden I felt unbearable pain and could not move my limbs because of it. I took some drugs during the journey, but to no avail. Day and night I suffered. When half a day's journey was left over, in the early morning I was

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holding Mother's blessings packet and Sri Aurobindo's photo and trying to concentrate on Mother.

"Then, with my eyes wide open, I saw a strange thing. A thin, small black man in red shorts, with nothing else on, entered the compartment from the door behind me. His hair looked dirty and disheveled. He was going from one door to the other. He turned towards me and laughed. Another man followed him, tall, black, in long straight dhoti. He just passed by me and also went out of the compartment. Of course, the train was going at full speed.

"Then I saw a plate before me, on which was some food. Just a teaspoonful had been already eaten by somebody. I heard a voice: 'Eat this. Mother has sent this for you after tasting it.' I looked at my watch. It was Balcony time. I knew in my heart that the pain would diminish, and it did. When I got down at Bombay I was almost normal.

"What do you think of it? Should you inform Mother?"

One small physico-vital force of mischief and some vital entity, both responsible for the pain. The dish is the symbol of my help which would bring cure if it were received properly.

22 January 1960

*

Mother,

G showed me the letter you had written to her a few days back. I remarked to her that the concluding part was of very general application and that it was too beautiful to be left in the dark. She fully agreed. So if you approve, may I use it for the Mother India of October? There is a second text here too for your consideration.

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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Never forget that, as much outside as in the Ashram, if you want to lead a happy life, you must be the master of your lower nature and control your desires and vital impulses; otherwise there is no end to the miseries and the troubles. (20 September 1960)

*

That knee of yours is still troubling you? But you must keep in touch with athletics. Otherwise you will become incapable. Do you want to go about with a stick and, in your old age, get all weak and tottering? Learn from X's example. Look at what he is doing even at his age!

The trouble is not the mere fact of the knee being bad. You have to put your full consciousness there and be obstinate at it. It is by constantly putting your consciousness, day after day, month after month, and by doing exercise, that you can cure the knee. Truly you have to be very obstinate and do consciously the movements which do not allow the dislocation to recur. Of course, you can't go on thinking of the knee all the time. You have to do so many things together. But it is not necessary to go on thinking. You have just to fix the consciousness at the place and it will take care automatically to ward off the forces of accident. This is the only way, and it is by persistently pursuing it that people have cured themselves.¹⁰ (24 August 1960)

24 September 1960

*

¹⁰ The Mother evidently approved the publication of these two texts, for they appeared in the October 1960 issue of *Mother India*.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Mother,

May I use the text below—or at least a part of it—for the next Mother India?

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

A practical problem comes up more and more often: should one who is preparing to do Yoga and has made it a general rule to offer You everything and depend entirely on You, accept gifts, in money or kind, coming from others? Because if he accepts, he is put under personal obligations and duties. Can a sadhak allow this? Can he say to himself: “The Divine has many ways of giving”?

What is to be done if a person begins to quarrel because one has accepted a gift in one case and refused in another? What is to be done to avoid such bitterness around one, provoked by repeated refusals?

“The Divine has many ways of giving.”

This is the correct thing. One never has any obligation to anybody, one has an obligation only to the Divine and there totally. When a gift is made without conditions one can always take it as coming from the Divine and leave it to the Divine to take care of what is needed in exchange or response.

As for ill-will, jealousy, quarrels and reproaches, one must sincerely be above all that and reply with a benevolent smile to the bitterest words; and unless one is absolutely sure of himself and his reactions, it

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would be better, as a general rule, to keep silent.¹¹

6 October 1960

*

(Written on Amal's birthday)

To come closer to the Truth, you must often accept not to understand.

25 November 1961

*

Amal, do you want this for *Mother India*?

It pleases Him to be like that, He is like that.

And the secret is simply to be in the “it pleases Him”.

Not only to be in what is objective, but also to be in He who objectivises. That is all.¹²

c. July 1962

*

Dearest Mother,

*Will you please approve this for Mother India,
March 1963?*

THE ALL-INDIA LANGUAGE QUESTION

THE MOTHER'S VIEWS

*The only immediate solution is that each province
should keep its own language as official language*

¹¹ The Mother evidently approved the publication of this text, for it appeared in the *Mother India* issue of December 1960.

¹² This entry is an extract from the Mother's conversation of 4 July 1962.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

of the State and that for Central Administration the existing common language of English should continue for the moment.

A GIST OF SRI AUROBINDO'S VIEWS
(from *Nirodbaran*)

If India is to be an international State, English has its place and is even a necessity. There English alone can be the medium of expression, especially now that it is replacing French as a world-language.

But as it is a foreign tongue the nationalist sentiment will be against its being the common language of the country. As to Hindi becoming the common language, Hindi cannot replace English in the universities, nor can it substitute the provincial language.

When the national spirit grows, it is difficult to say what will happen. In Ireland, after the revolution, they wanted to abolish English and adopt Gaelic; but as time went on and things settled themselves their enthusiasm waned and English came back.

It is all right.

c. February 1963

*

Dearest Mother,

S wants me to tell you about a matter which has been troubling him very much. During his visit last February, his brother got their mother to make a Will. Now that she is dead, it is found that all the money and property have been given to the brother and S gets only Rs. 501. This is a gross injustice and he is wondering how to remedy it. It is hurting him extremely. He needs your help and inspiration.

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You can say to S, on my behalf, that he must look at this apparently unhappy circumstance as a proof that the Lord considers that he is ready for spiritual life and he must no more be attached to any exterior or material thing.

If he takes things in that way, he will soon feel that all sorrow is gone away from him.

With my blessings

28 August 1963

*

Dearest Mother,

*I have transmitted to S your wonderful message.
I am sure it will set everything right with him.*

In reply to a previous letter of mine, he has sent some details. Although I had been told by his brother that he gets only Rs. 501, there are a number of shares which stand in the joint name of S's mamma and S himself, and they are with S at present. Here the right of survivorship is on his side. It seems that S's brother doesn't know about these shares. I don't suppose that what you have written should make S give away even half of the shares and take only Rs. 501. If he can exercise his right of survivorship in regard to these shares, may he do it?

YES.

What I meant was not to worry about it. Let him take what comes to him without getting upset or sorry, excited or nervous.

With my blessings

31 August 1963

*

Dearest Mother,

The following "Words" of yours will go very well as an accompaniment to those on modern art which

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

I am using for the September issue of Mother India. Do you approve of their publication? (Amal sent both the French original and his English translation. Below only the English is given.)

Why do you want to do the details? They are not at all necessary. Painting is not done in order to copy Nature, but to express an impression, a feeling, an emotion that we experience on seeing the beauty of Nature. It is this that is interesting and it is this that has to be expressed, and it is because you have the possibility of doing this that I encourage you to paint.

It is all right but—excuse me—I find your English somewhat “heavy”.

8 September 1963

*

Mother dearest,

May I use this in Mother India? It is based on what you told S apropos of my kidney stone and our house problem. Of course you may edit the report as you like.

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Even when doctors say something is impossible, it is still possible. Science has gone very high, but about one thing it will say, “It is possible” and about another, “It can’t be done”! So there is a division, a contradiction in Science. Actually, you cannot say “No” about anything. Every time the impossible can become the possible. If people, when doctors say “Impossible”, turn to the Divine about it, the Divine can achieve the impossibility.

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The Supreme has every power: there are no limits for Him. And when people will realise that they do not know anything they will realise that to the Supreme's Will all things are possible. In the Supreme, there is a whole universe waiting and ready to make impossibilities actual. Even what is most inconceivable to us now can happen. For, everything is already there, hidden. So, when human beings come to feel they are quite ignorant, at that very moment the impossible will start happening. At present, people think they know everything. Oh, they are so very clever!

This redaction lacks in power and I can't agree to have it published—and no time to write it myself.

Sorry.

9 September 1963

*

Mother dearest,

Since you have not approved, I shall not publish the "Words of the Mother" which I had sent you. But there is one thing on which I should like to have your decision. Would you consent to my publishing this very significant matter, not as direct "Words of the Mother", but as:

POSSIBLE AND IMPOSSIBLE
(Based on Some Words of the Mother)

I say yes but without enthusiasm.

22 September 1963

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

PRAYER FOR PERFECTION

*Out of our darkness lead us into light—
Out of false love to Thy truth-piercing height—
Out of the clutch of death to immortal space—
O Perfect One with the all-forgiving face!
From Thy pure luster build the mind anew—
From Thy unshadowed bliss draw the heart's hue—
From Thy immense bring forth a godlike clay—
O Timeless One self-sought through night and day!*

Dearest Mother,

May I hope that one day you will answer this prayer of mine, which begins with a reminiscence of the soul's cry in the past and goes on to our own aspiration?

One day is sure to come...

Blessings

30 December 1963

*

Dearest Mother,

I assure you that your name will not at all be implicated if C contacts T [an American devotee]. But if there is the slightest wish in you that T should be left alone by me, please say so.

Not necessarily, but I do not want my name to be pronounced so that he can feel free to refuse if he finds it necessary.

But, in any case, whether T is contacted or not, I pray for your blessings on the venture to find a publisher in America.

What I would like to be done, more than anything else, is the issuing of an American edition of Sri Aurobindo's Ilion. I believe it is the one poem of

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his which should make an immediate impact on the Western literary world and establish him as a great poet. It has no directly Indian or spiritual message, although all of it is steeped in profound inner sight, and it deals with a theme which has haunted the Western imagination for over 2500 years. So its abundant poetic originality, both of expression and technique, should make a mark. If T or somebody could bring it out as an American publication, it would stand a very good chance of catching the public eye. What do you say, Mother?

When a Mother sees her child take very seriously his childish play, she will not tell him, "what a baby you are" but smile and encourage him in his game...

With love and blessings

25 March 1964

*

Dearest Mother,

You must have read the copy I sent you of my letter to C. The letter gives my mind's movement in consideration of past friendship: it clearly blames him [for hurting S's wrist in a state of anger] without depriving him of a chance to make up. But have I acted rightly in wanting to be re-constructive instead of condemnatory or retributive? A private word from you to me will help me much and will be much appreciated.

It is most likely that C will express regret for the damage done—but you must be patient. Do not worry.

Blessings

10 September 1964

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Dearest Mother,

The Trustees and the solicitor managing grandpa's estate in Bombay want me to go there—as I am also a Trustee—and settle the matter of dissolving the Trusteeship and making all of us direct owners of our shares in the big building, of which we are co-owners with the sons of grandpa's nephew. I feel I need your help very much. Grandpa's nephew, himself a solicitor, and his sons are tough nuts to crack and we should not in any way play into their hands. The sooner I go the better. Will you give me your blessing (as well as protection) before I go? (Of course, if you don't wish me to go, I shan't).

I suppose you have to go and I am quite ready to help you—
“mais je ne suis pas si sûre que ces gens ne vous rouleront pas!”¹³

Blessings

4 October 1964

*

Dearest Mother,

S is again unwell. The effects of her last dengue fever are recurring—bone-breaking pain, severe headache, temperature not high but subnormal. Please send her your force to make her well.

I have just realised that we are in November. This means November 24, the great day of your Darshan, is pretty close. It also means that November 25, the day on which the earth had the doubtful luck of having my first Darshan, is not very far away.

On the 25th morning I am busy—but I must see you that day even if the vision is as short as lightning!

¹³ “But I am not so sure that these people won't cheat you!”

Series Two —Amal Kiran

The enclosed packet is to bring health to S.
With love

6 November 1964

*

Dearest Mother,

We want Mother India to be moulded more and more according to your light and guidance. Hari has a lot of ideas for making it reach out far and wide with Sri Aurobindo's vision, without, of course, losing the proper quality. He feels—and I agree—that if the various ideas that come to us off and on can be directly put before you and get adjudged by you straight away, we can make considerable progress. That is why an opportunity, whenever convenient to you, to have matters quickly settled in a short personal meeting seems very desirable. On the managerial side, new ways open up quite often. If you can let Hari consult you personally at certain intervals, we shall be thankful. I can also come in, if you permit, when editorial issues arise.

Already we are trying hard to make Mother India a success in the true sense that serves your cause and Sri Aurobindo's. We feel we can do much more with a little extra push of Grace from you. We should like this push to include even an order from you for anything you think we should do.

I understand and shall try to call you with Hari, at least once a month for the work at *Mother India*.

End 1964

*

(One of Amal's co-workers suggested that Mother India readers should be asked their opinions and expectations of the journal in order to increase its

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

popularity and make it more successful. Informed by Amal of this suggestion, the Mother commented:)

Let us become as vulgar as we can and success is sure to come.

16 January 1965

*

(Amal asked the Mother what changes might be made in Mother India without falling below her standard. She replied:)

I have no superficial views on the subject—and what I could say would not fit the “new spirit” of the journal. Keep me out of all this, it is better.

17 January 1965

*

(Regarding her comment of 16 January 1965 on success and vulgarity, the Mother clarified:)

All that is done with the purpose of pleasing the public and obtaining success is vulgar and leads to falsehood. I enclose a deeper view of the subject.

Blessings

(The “deeper view” sent to Amal may have been the following statement of the Mother:)

You say you want to get rid of falsehood, here is a way.

Do not try to please yourself, do not try either to please others. Try to please only the Lord. Every one of us, human beings, is a coat of falsehood put on the Lord and hiding Him. He alone is true; He is the Truth.

It is on Him that we must count and not on the

Series Two —Amal Kiran

coats of falsehood. (27 January 1963)

18 January 1965

*

(*Regarding an attack on the Ashram on the night of 11 February 1965, ostensibly as part of an anti-Hindi agitation; several Ashram properties were looted or burned.*)

Dearest Mother,

On inquiry, I had learnt from Nolini last week that you had approved of the idea of enclosing, with copies of the Ashram journals, copies of your Declaration and of Udar's statement. So we have had these things printed for us and they were intended to be sent along with the copies of Mother India of February. We have mentioned them as a Special Supplement in our Contents.

This is CANCELLED.

Just now we have heard from Counouma that you have decided against enclosing Udar's statement. Does that include your Declaration? Cannot the Declaration by itself go?

NO. I have another plan.

2 March 1965

*

Dearest Mother,

We shall certainly omit your Declaration and Udar's statement. But as we have already mentioned both of them in our Contents as a "Special Supplement", we have to put a small slip into the magazine about the omission. We have framed the following:

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

TO THE READER

*The Special Supplement mentioned in the Contents
has not been inserted for certain reasons.*

Impossible.

S told me that you said to her, “Amal can print in Mother India the last part of the Declaration, beginning with ‘Our position is clear.’” So, along with the message on Protection, may I take this also for the March issue?

I keep that for the *Bulletin*.

Are there any other “Words” you can spare for me?

If the February issue is not yet sent you must put the supplement announced, but adding in a footnote to Udar’s writing the enclosed note.

Blessings

(The “enclosed note”, whose authorship is unknown, reads:) The report about the attack on the Ashram on the night of the 11th February did not arise from any sense of retaliation or from fear or justification or self-commiseration, neither for favour or offence; it arose from an inner compulsion to give the simple truth. This is its basis.

3 March 1965

*

Dearest Mother,

I am on the point of giving up hope of receiving from you “Words” for Mother India. Won’t you save the situation by a thrilling last-minute intervention of Grace?

Series Two —Amal Kiran

Why do you want me to say something?
In silence is the greatest power.

11 March 1965

*

Dearest Mother,

Thanks for your little message to me. Could I have a block made of it and use it along with my own silly question?

Yes.

12 March 1965

*

Dearest Mother,

A prize of £3,000 in all has been announced in England for the best book of any kind submitted before March 31. I am sending by air-mail book post to the promoters the typescript of my newly written book on Shakespeare's Sonnets. Quoting words from the Sonnets themselves I've called the book: "Two Loves" and "A Worthier Pen": The Enigmas of Shakespeare's Sonnets.

May I have your blessings?

Blessings

13 March 1965

*

Mother,

Do you think we may use one of these two pictures by D in Mother India? But which of the two? Both are meant to illustrate the phrase from Savitri: "A mighty guidance leads through all."

Why do you ask me? I find these pictures *very poor* but I do not

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

want to interfere in *your* taste.

30 April 1965

*

Dearest Mother,

*May I publish these three pieces in the June
Mother India? The second piece has already been ap-
proved for publication by you.*

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

The Lord is always victorious in His way—not in the human way—according to His will, not according to the will of men.

The Lord is always present, only we do not realise it.

*

When somebody lives in a higher Consciousness, the vibrations of this higher Consciousness are manifested in whatever this person does, says or thinks. These higher vibrations are manifested by the very fact of the presence of this person upon earth.

*

It is not what one sees or hears that one loves. It is the Love that one loves through the forms and sounds—and the most perfect love, the most lovable love, it is the Lord's love.

All right.

4 June 1965

*

Dearest Mother,

*I hope you have seen the letter I sent three days
back. I had asked if I could print in the August Mother*

Series Two —Amal Kiran

India your message on J. And, finally, I had reminded you that I had no “Words” yet for the August issue. Block-making will take some time, you know.

I said NO. It is quite a private message and not meant for publication—and I have NO Words to send you.

3 August 1965

*

(Amal sent to Nolini a copy of his article “The Indo-Pak Conflict in the Spiritual Light”, along with the following cover letter:)

Nolini, this is an article incorporating the letter which you read out to Mother and which she okayed. The introductory and the concluding parts are new. Will you please see them and let me know if they are all right. I have marked them red in the margin. Kindly let me know the verdict soon.

(Nolini showed Amal’s article and his cover letter to the Mother. She crossed out the entire article with an X and wrote a big “NO” beneath it. At the bottom of the cover letter, she wrote:)

NO POLITICS in any of our publications.

15 November 1965

*

Dearest Mother,

Indra Sen has suggested that we bring out a special issue of Mother India dealing with “The Integral Culture of Man”. He writes: “This is a supreme idea of Sri Aurobindo propounded long ago and visibly becoming dynamic today and needing deeper and

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

larger clarifications and strengthening. We can do it by presenting our vision and the visible cultural influences and trends moving in the same direction. These trends are present in various fields of culture—in socio-political life, business, industry, arts and literature.”

Shall we try to carry out, when we can, the suggestion of Indra Sen? It seems a fruitful one.

All right.

Blessings

3 March 1966

*

Dearest Mother,

The “Words of the Mother” you have permitted me to use for the March Mother India are:

Ça ne fait rien! Les difficultes sont là pour le plaisir de les surmonter.

Va de l'avant, garde confiance et tout ira bien.

Is the following English translation all right?

That does not matter! The difficulties are there for the pleasure of surmounting them.

Go forward, keep confidence and all will be well.

All right.

Now about those pictures of D. I believe he hopes that if any is approved I may use it for Mother India. Even otherwise he would like to know whether any is really good. I am told you kept quite silent about this. It's the second time you have done so. Rather a choking affair for poor D. I am sure he would welcome even a damning judgment, for then he would know he has to improve. So will you please say something?

Series Two —Amal Kiran

I kept silent because he is copying Janina without having either her inspiration or her talent. Why are you forcing me to speak?

15 March 1966

*

(*Amal sent to the Mother two proposals for a special issue of Mother India on the theme “The Integral Culture of Man”. She replied:*)

If in man the seed of aspiration is watered with true spirituality then he will grow into divinity.

March 1966

*

Dearest Mother,

You know that I prefer even downright condemnation to suspenseful silence. If one is wrong, one must know it from you. Will you be kind enough to tell me exactly what you think of the proposals I conveyed to you on Saturday [for a special issue of Mother India] after a talk between Hari and me? Please don’t tell us, “Do what you like.”

Thanks for your message.

I thought my message was a sufficient answer. For me “culture” (read in French) means “arroser des plantes”¹⁴...

21 March 1966

*

Dearest Mother,

Your message does make it clear that “culture” means “true spirituality”, resulting in growth into

¹⁴ “To water the plants”

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

“Divinity”. But I still do not know how it works for either “Yes” or “No” to the proposals Hari and I made for your consideration. One proposal was to invite Indra Sen to be Guest Associate Editor for this special issue whose idea was originally given by him. Another was to form an Advisory Committee of about 12 persons, with scope for expansion if necessary.

All right, but what about Nolini?

A third proposal was to invite some prominent “cultured” people in India and elsewhere to contribute short articles in conformity with our general idea.

NO.

Blessings

22 March 1966

*

Dearest Mother,

Who can forget Nolini where “Integral Culture” is concerned? We had him in mind from the start. The only reason why he was not mentioned in the list was that we felt sure he would be too busy to attend Committee meetings. (Perhaps like myself he hasn’t much taste for them too.)

I was expecting from you the question you have put. We are glad you have brought Nolini in. He will now stand at the head of our list. Busy or not, Committee-minded or not, he will now have to give us the advantage of his presence!

Nolini will attend only if he wants and can.

23 March 1966

*

Series Two —Amal Kiran

Dearest Mother,

I thank you for the Message sent for Mother India. Please see if my English translation will pass. I am giving the French also.

Qu'est ce que c'est la Conscience?

*Quand le Seigneur prend conscience de Lui-même,
ça crée le monde. La conscience est le souffle qui fait
vivre tout.*

What is Consciousness?

When the Lord has consciousness of Himself, it creates the world. Consciousness is the breath that makes everything live.

(*In Amal's translation the Mother changed the phrase "When the Lord has consciousness of Himself" to "When the Lord is conscious of Himself" and commented:)*

It is purposely that I have put it as simply as possible.

1 July 1966

*

Dearest Mother,

The following is going round the Ashram as emanating from you. If it is authentic, may I publish it in Mother India?

"4th May 1967 (4-5-67): the Supramental will start working on earth, but the working may start even a little earlier.

"I observe this day as the Supramental Mani-

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

festation day thus: this is the day of India's New Year, Earth's New Year and the whole Universe's New Year and all these three strangely coincide, which may change the face of the whole Universe."

It is all fancy!

10 May 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

CH has written again. Two letters to you from his friend Miss NB (who had met you on her last visit here some months back) have gone unnoticed—to all appearance at least.

How unnoticed? She got cured! Man of small faith!

31 May 1967

*

(Regarding the Six-Day War between Israel and Egypt)

Dearest Mother,

Not at all with an eye to publication but for my own knowledge, may I ask you two questions:

(1) The quick conclusion of the war in the Middle East and the avoidance thereby of the serious world-situation which was all the time threatening to develop—could one regard this as the first instance this year of the Supramental Power's decisive action upon the minds of men and the course of events?

Do you believe that what *you* think about it has the slightest importance?

(2) One of the world-problems has been whether the existence of Israel would be firmly established or

Series Two —Amal Kiran

not. The Arab countries had sworn to exterminate Israel from Palestine. Now the Israel victory will call for a final acceptance of her existence by all and the assurance of a life-line for her in the Gulf of Aqaba. Could one regard this turn of events as the Divine's grace to her—of course for non-political reasons?

Israël as a nation has the same right to exist as all the other nations.

11 June 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

I am very grateful for your clarifying answers. If you approve I can publish both of your statements typed below. Also there is one sentence of yours in the preceding letter. Do you think it could be used to begin the series? It ran: "Israel as a nation has the same right to exist as all the other nations."

Yes.

I have corrected the typed sheet you sent me to make the sentence more clear. Note carefully the correction.¹⁵

THE NATIONS AND THE WORKING
OF THE DIVINE TRUTH AND GRACE

SOME ANSWERS BY THE MOTHER

How can you believe that the Grace works for one nation or against another? The Grace works for Truth

¹⁵ In the reply to question (2) below, Amal typed the phrase "the result to obtain". The Mother corrected this to "the result which is the inevitable consequence of the triumph of the Truth".

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and in the present condition of the world, Truth and falsehood are both present everywhere, in all nations. It is the human mind which thinks, this one is right and that one is wrong—right and wrong are present everywhere.

The Truth is above all conflicts and all oppositions. (13 June 1967)

May I have a clarification from you on two points?

(1) Does not the Grace work for whatever Truth there may be on both sides of a conflict?

Yes.

Or does it keep altogether aloof just because either side has falsehood also?

No—I said *work*—it is constantly working.

(2) Do present conflicts differ radically from a conflict like World War II, in which the Grace worked definitely and decisively on one side—at least on the whole?

You are mixing up two things, the working of the Grace and the result which is the inevitable consequence of the triumph of the Truth: they are quite different things on a quite different level.

The progressive victory of the Truth brings automatically certain results complex and often unexpected by the human mind which always wants clean cuts. It is only a total vision both in time and space that can understand. (14 June 1967)

15 June 1967

*

Series Two —Amal Kiran

Dearest Mother,

Thanks for taking so much trouble over those letters. I have carefully retyped the corrected parts. Now, could I put a dash after the whole bunch of these letters and add what you have written to Prithwi Singh? One line of it repeats practically one sentence in that bunch, but the other lines bring in new implications and seem to me to round off very well your replies to me. Do you approve?

Yes.

Here is what you wrote to Prithwi Singh:

Those who serve the Truth cannot take one side or another.

Truth is above conflict and opposition.

In Truth, all countries unite in a common effort towards progress and realisation. (8 June 1967)

Blessings

16 June 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

People who have read the recent letter written by you to Vishwa (Dr. Ponnou) tell me that it is a very enlightening one. It is about the religious consciousness of the Jews and the Arabs. I am told that there is nothing political in it nor anything personal to Vishwa. If you consider it publishable, will you kindly permit me to approach Vishwa to give me either a copy of it or let me have a photostat taken for the Mother India of July? I shall be thankful to have the chance to publish it, following up what has appeared from you in the June issue.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

I have not written, I have only spoken, and it has been written down by others who were there. As the notes were a little dry, I have given them to Satprem with explanations, to complete them. I cannot dispose of them as they are.

26 June 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

In a letter of Sri Aurobindo's—not written but dictated—we read:

“When we try to concentrate, this stream of self-made mechanical thinking becomes prominent to our observation. It is first normal obstacle (the other is sleep during meditation) to the effort for Yoga.”

In the second sentence, “the” appears to have been inadvertently omitted in the transcription before “first normal obstacle”. Nolini also agrees, but we must ask you about it.

Put back the “the”.

P.S. The Arab-Israeli statement of yours hasn't still reached me.

Three days ago I gave it to be typed for you!

10 July 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

There is a story going round that into the body of X you have put the soul of Y! Apart from anything else, I believe Y is still alive. Or has he been put to sleep in order to give his soul a better embodiment? The story strikes me as rather fantastic—but

Series Two —Amal Kiran

one never knows until one asks you. A less colourful report says that this time you have completely succeeded in putting a great soul into a baby at the very moment of birth.

When will you learn not to listen to all the rumours going about in this place!

15 July 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

Two years ago an eye doctor in Bombay found an incipient cataract in my right eye. Lately I had a talk with our Dr. Agarwal and he told me that such a cataract could be cured by the Bates system.¹⁶ On examining my eyes he felt sure. I am trying out his treatment. He has been very kind and eager and I wish to cooperate with an open and trustful mind. Will you please bless the treatment?

It is a very good treatment. You can follow it with my blessings.

21 July 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

Before Dr. Agarwal's treatment would be well underway I wanted my incipient cataract to be officially certified, so I went this morning to Dr. Gorimedu to get my eyes examined by an expert. I have been authoritatively told that not only has my right eye

¹⁶ The Bates system is a natural method of eyesight cure involving eye exercises and relaxation of the eyes. It was practised by Dr. Agarwal, who lived in the Ashram and founded the Ashram's School for Perfect Eyesight.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

an incipient cataract but that also my left eye has a cataract just starting though I feel nothing. Now Dr. Agarwal's treatment is put against the proper scientific background and can claim full credit when it succeeds. I am sure it will succeed, especially since you have blessed it. Do you think I did something wrong in going to Gorimedu?

Very good—you did well. Now you must cure and it will be very interesting.

Blessings

26 July 1967

*

(The following text was published in the July 1967 issue of Mother India. On the typed sheet sent for approval, the Mother added the final sentence in her own hand.)

THE JEWS AND THE ARABS

SOME ANSWERS BY THE MOTHER

How is one to explain this age-old enmity between the Jews and the Arabs (although having a common ancestor), hating each other generation on generation up to the impasse in which we have been living from some days back?

Perhaps the enmity exists just because they are neighbours!...

Violence and enmity...when brothers hate, they hate much more than others. Sri Aurobindo has said: "Hate is the indication of the possibility of a much greater love."

Series Two —Amal Kiran

Could we think that these two great peoples in conflict represent the symbolic Forces called to decide the fate of our civilisation?

It is not this conflict that will decide the future of our civilisation.

The Mussulmans and the Israelites represent the two religions where the faith in God is the most extreme. Only, the faith of the Israelites is a faith in an impersonal God and faith of the Mussulmans is a faith in a personal God.

The Arabs are passionate natures. They live almost exclusively in the vital, with its passions, its desires, while the Israelites live chiefly in the mind with a great power of organisation and of realisation, which is quite exceptional. The Israelites are intellectuals with a remarkable will. They are not sentimental, that is to say they do not like weakness.

The Mussulmans are impulsive, the Israelites are rational.

1 August 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

Kindly look at what follows. I shall be very thankful if you permit me to publish it in the Mother India of August 15. It will be most appropriate.

You can publish both after corrections. These corrections *are important* and must not be forgotten.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SRI AUROBINDO'S BIRTH

SOME WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Till the birth of Sri Aurobindo, religions and spiritualities were always centred on past figures, and they were showing as “the goal” the negation of life upon earth. So, you had a choice between two alternatives: either

— a life in this world with its round of petty pleasures and pains, joys and sufferings, threatened by hell if you were not behaving properly, or

— an escape into another world, heaven or paradise.¹⁷

Between these two there is nothing much to choose.¹⁸

Sri Aurobindo has told us that this was a fundamental mistake which accounts for the weakness and degradation of India. It was sufficient¹⁹ to sap all energy out of the country.

True, India is the only place in the world which is still aware that something else than matter exists. The other countries have quite forgotten it: Europe, America and elsewhere... That is why she still has a message to preserve and deliver to the world. But at present she is splashing and floundering in the muddle.

Sri Aurobindo has shown that the truth does not lie in running away from earthly life but in remaining

¹⁷ The Mother corrected “heaven, nirvana, moksha” to “heaven or paradise”.

¹⁸ The Mother omitted “—they are equally bad.” after “choose”.

¹⁹ The Mother corrected “Buddhism, Jainism, Illusionism were sufficient” to “It was sufficient”.

Series Two —Amal Kiran

in it, to transform it, divinise it so that the Divine can manifest HERE, in this PHYSICAL WORLD. (31 March 1967)

3 August 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

We have the idea to persuade Suren Mohan²⁰ to write his memoirs for Mother India. They will indeed be valuable. We shall provide him with all facilities—secretarial help, etc. But we must first have your permission for our idea. If we have it, we can go ahead and see whether he is willing.

(No reply)

13 August 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

Some days back I wrote to you asking permission for Mother India to approach Suren Mohan for his memoirs. I hope you haven't forgotten my letter.

It is purposely that I did not answer. Because you can ask him if you like—but you must not tell him “Mother has said” or “Mother has approved” or “Mother wishes you” or anything of the kind. I refuse to come in the picture.

Blessings

16 August 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

In my first note about Surendra Mohan, as well

²⁰ Surendra Mohan Ghose, a minister in Nehru's cabinet.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

as in the second, you will find the word “permission”, and not “approval” or “wish” or even “sanction”. The only point to ascertain was a negative one—namely, whether you had any objection. Withholding your reply on purpose has only served to prevent me from settling the matter with Suren Mohan by personal talk. I am on very good terms with him and personal talk would have been rather helpful.

But, since you have suspected me and prevented this talk, I have the faith that somehow it will ultimately be better to write and ask. Whatever gets done by you is sure to benefit one if one can accept it as an act of Grace.

May I have your Blessings again?

Blessings

17 August 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

May I use the following in the September Mother India? I am accompanying it with an English translation. Will you please check it? (Amal sent both the French original and the English translation. Below only the English is given.)

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

To break with old traditions and not to obey old rules is good—provided you discover within yourself a higher and truer consciousness which manifests harmony, peace, beauty and a superior order vast and progressive. (26 August 1967)

It is all right.

Series Two —Amal Kiran

P.S. About a week back I sent you two short notes about M's son F. One of them concerned a very serious problem of his. Will you please look at them and write something?

I have read the letters.

All sincere effort to progress and get rid of dangerous habits is answered and supported by an active help from the Grace but the effort must be *steady* and the aspiration must be *sincere*.

Blessings

5 September 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

Thanks indeed for what you have written about F's problem. He will greatly appreciate it. But he will be extremely happy also if you could say a word about his recent brilliant success in the medical examination—the winning of the Gold Medal. He has always turned to you for help in all his studies and a little encouragement from you will mean more to him than even the highest praise from anybody else.

Here is a blessing packet for him. But success is nothing. It is what one realises that is important.

6 September 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

Some months back H and I had proposed that Mother India should take up book publication. You did not object. Now we have a book with which to make a debut—a book which we expect to sell. It is a collection of articles by me, which were first published in Mother India, The Advent or other Ashram periodicals. These pieces have been considerably

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

appreciated and there was a suggestion to collect them and give them book-form. Many of them were seen and approved for publication²¹ by Sri Aurobindo himself. I don't have his comments on all but I was lucky enough to hear one, through Nirod, on an article called "Freewill in Sri Aurobindo's Vision". Sri Aurobindo said: "It is excellent. In fact, it could not be bettered." There will be 15 articles in all, and the collection will be entitled: The Vision and Work of Sri Aurobindo. H will try to secure the finance. Do you approve of the plan? If you do, will you please help us with your blessings?

My blessings are with you. When do you want to publish it?

17 September 1967

*

(*Letter to the Mother from M, sent through Amal:*)

Beloved,

My daughter R has been constantly puzzling over the fact that the body of St. Francis Xavier is still undecayed after centuries. There does not seem to be any embalming done. R wants to know how this "miracle" has happened. What keeps the body incorrupt? Would you write a few words about it?

It is not a "miracle" but simply an unusual case.

He was a saint and an ascetic, even when he was alive the body was reduced to its minimum.

It is a phenomenon of dehydration.

18 September 1967

*

²¹ The Mother added the phrase "and approved for publication" in her own hand.

Series Two —Amal Kiran

Dearest Mother,

I found your reply to R's question about the body of St. Francis Xavier extremely interesting, quite a new vision of things. Could we infer from it that the undecayed condition here points to a hitherto unrealised natural possibility of result by dehydration—opening a new vista for physical science? When you say that this condition is not a "miracle", I suppose you quite rule out any direct action from beyond nature.

What do you mean? There is nothing in this world which is not submitted to a direct action beyond Nature—but most of the men are unaware of it.

18 September 1967

*

(Amal wrote again about the body of St. Francis Xavier, but his letter is not available. The Mother wrote on a separate sheet of paper.)

Your questions are mental ratiocinations and are not interesting.

19 September 1967

*

Mother dearest,

As regards my questions about St. Francis, I regret I came down to the level of "mental ratiocinations". But there is a genuine inquiry behind them. If you could just overlook the too mental form of what seems like "cross examination" on my part, if you could say something more in your own way, all of us would be benefitted. Perhaps you would like to wait until R herself sees your reply and puts a further question?

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

My own problem basically is: What exactly has made this “phenomenon of dehydration” such “an unusual case”? Some power in the saint himself—some power outside him?

If you are so curious, ask the saint, he may tell you!

20 September 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

You know that H and I have been on the lookout for some place, however small, which by being near the Ashram could serve as an effective point of liaison with the public reached by Mother India. Now we have heard that the small office next to the Ashram Post Office is vacant. Is it not possible to let Mother India have a distributing and receiving centre next to the Post Office?

The post office has asked for this office because they are short of space.

So it is out of question.

21 September 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

Here is something you wrote to Oscar some time back. May I publish it in the October Mother India? I am sending a translation also. Will you please check it? (Amal sent the French original and the English translation. Only the English is given below.)

Series Two —Amal Kiran

ON MUSIC

TWO ANSWERS BY THE MOTHER

X and I play the flute together. We have found a book (Folksongs of North America) whose songs have very beautiful, very simple and easy-to-play airs. We should like to know if the poems of love and death which do not seem to go with our ideal in the Ashram have a bad spirit in the tune. Are the Catholic religious pieces of music, which are played in the churches, bad to play? If so, we shall not play either the airs accompanied by vulgar words nor the religious compositions.

One should suppress the words and keep only the music in both the cases.

If you know how to write the music, make copies of the airs you want to play (without copying the words). If you do not know how to write the music ask someone who does—Jo for example—to do it for you or to teach you to do it.

Do not keep the books with you, for these books can have a bad influence. (1965)

*

What is it we should attend to in music?

How to judge the quality of a piece of music?

How to develop good taste (for music)?

What do you think of light music (cinema, jazz, etc.) which our children like very much?

The role of music lies in helping the consciousness to uplift itself towards the spiritual heights.

All that lowers the consciousness, encourages desires and excites the passions runs counter to the

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

true goal of music and ought to be avoided.

It is not a question of designation but of inspiration—and the spiritual consciousness alone can be the judge there. (22 July 1967)

All right.

25 September 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

Last Friday I had written to you not only about N's birthday but also about F and S. You promptly sent me a birthday card for N. But you have forgotten to say anything apropos of my quotation of F's very distressed note about himself and his wife. Won't you please look at my letter again?

Nothing was written because there was nothing to write.

4 October 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

I intend to publish in Mother India this handout on Auroville. But I have made a few changes to bring in accuracy and to avoid the pompous or rhetorical note. Your French phrase "l'union d'une harmonie compréhensive" is clear—it provides an excellent definition of the kind of union wanted, but the literal English translation, "the union of a comprehensive harmony", sounds like an incomplete expression with one of the two expected terms for "union" left out. I have suggested: "a union of comprehensive harmony". That seems to give the proper definition in English. Here, as in one other place, accuracy is sought to be served by my alteration. Elsewhere you'll

Series Two —Amal Kiran

*see an attempt at a simple, unforced and natural note.
Do you approve of what I have done?*

It is all right. The changes are indeed very good. I wish this new version should be adopted, if more copies are to be printed.

(The handout on Auroville mentioned above was published in the Mother India of October 1967. Its opening sentence, which was written by the Mother in French, is reproduced below in Amal's English translation.)

On February 28, 1968 the whole world will take part in laying the foundation stone of Auroville... the town dedicated to the youth of the world in order to establish a union of comprehensive harmony within Auroville.

10 October 1967

*

*Dearest Mother,
M has sent a letter for you. It runs:*

"Dearest Mother, my immediate problem is the excessive smoking in which N and my two sons F and D are indulging. As you know, N has not been well for the last two years. D also had at one time a congenital heart defect. Both of them feel constantly a pain in the back over the lung area. And N is all the time losing weight. Both F and D very often go hungry and walk miles because the money given is spent on cigarettes.

"Dearest, sweetest Mother, I request You to give them the strength to break this harmful habit. Their own wills are too weak. Only You can impose Your own all-powerful Will on them and with Your subtle direction they will be made to change."

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Mother, what shall I reply to her?

That I am not in the habit of forcing my will upon others.
If they, themselves, ask for help, the help will be given.

24 October 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

May I have a block made of these words of yours? I shall not be quoting the question to which they are a reply. The title will be:

THE MOTHER'S HELP

A LETTER

I am not in the habit of forcing my will upon others.
If they, themselves, ask for help, the help will be given.

All right.

9 November 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

In one of your declarations on Auroville you have the title-phrase “The first condition to live in Auroville”. Would you mind very much if, instead of “to live” we put “for living”? Both Tehmi and I felt that this would satisfy English idiom better?

Certainly yes—“for living” is much more correct.

P.S. *There is a little oversight in another phrase—in your letter on gossip. Would you permit us to print “I wish all would repent like you” in place of “I wish all repent like you”? Of course these are only suggestions.*

Series Two —Amal Kiran

I shall do exactly what you want.

To correct is quite all right and I fully agree!

29 November 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

Will it be possible for you to find the report which S sent you a week back of S's dream about A? If not, she can request A to send another copy for you. A is very anxious to know the meaning. So will you be kind enough to say a few words? It was quite a short report.

Usually I give no “meaning” to dreams, because each one has his own symbolism which has a meaning only for himself. I read the letter of which you speak and found nothing to be said about it.

c. 1967

*

Dearest Mother,

This morning, just before waking, I had a dream in which I saw your flag being hoisted high up on the top of a building, where you yourself are standing. I am watching from the street, sitting in a carriage—or, rather, in the carriage door. I feel great enthusiasm as the flag goes up. Is any special victory indicated?

Perhaps a victory in your own mind—let us hope so!

8 January 1968

*

Dearest Mother,

I have received from Oscar a photostat of what

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

you have written on Auroville: “At last a place where one will be able to think only of progressing and transcending oneself” etc. Is this also reserved for the Bulletin—or can Mother India use it?

It is reserved.

c. February 1968

*

Dearest Mother

I am giving here the English translation of some matter which you have approved for the March Mother India. Is it all right?

I wish my money to be used exclusively to conquer the causes of our sufferings and miseries.

It is for this that we are working here, but not in the artificial manner of the philanthropists who are busy only with outer effects.

We wish to abolish for ever the cause of suffering by divinising matter through the integral transformation.

Yes.

18 February 1968

*

(Amal sent to the Mother the entreaty of a friend:) Please tell Mother that I feel all the time as if life and energy were flowing away from me out of my hands and feet and I cannot stop it.

Why does he complain? The energy must be spent to be renewed. The human body is not a closed jar that gets emptied by spending. The human body is a channel that receives only when it spends.

Series Two —Amal Kiran

Let him eat well, sleep well, avoid wrong thinking and spend normally. He will soon be all right.

20 April 1968

*

Dearest Mother,

There is a very fine recent statement of yours on sincerity and the Divine Force at work at present, all basically apropos of Auroville. Oscar showed it to me. It has such a general bearing that I feel its publication in the May Mother India will be very much appreciated. If you approve of my publishing it, I shall send you M's English translation, along with the French original for scrutiny.

You can send it.

(The text mentioned above appeared in the Mother India issue of May 1968; it says:)

There should be an absolutely transparent sincerity. Lack of sincerity is the cause of the difficulties we meet with at present. Insincerity is in all men. There are perhaps a hundred men on the earth who may be totally sincere. It is man's very nature that makes him insincere—it is very complicated, for he is constantly tricking himself, hiding truth from himself, excusing himself. Yoga is the means to become sincere in all the parts of the being.

It is difficult to be sincere, but you can at least do so mentally; it is this that one can demand of Aurovilians.

The force is there, present as never before; it is the insincerity of men that prevents it from descending, from being felt. The world is in falsehood, all the

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

relations between men have so far been based only on falsehood and fraud. The diplomacy among nations is founded on lies. They claim to desire peace and, on the other hand, arm themselves. Only transparent sincerity in men and among nations will permit the advent of a transformed world.

Auroville is the first attempt of the experiment. A new world will be born if men are willing to make the effort of a transformation and of a quest for sincerity; it is possible. From animal to man thousands of years were necessary; today man, thanks to his mind, can speed up and will a transformation towards a man who shall be Divine.

This transformation with the help of the mind (by analysing oneself) is the first stage; afterwards, we have to transform the vital impulses. That is much more difficult, and, above all, to transform the physical: each cell of our body should become conscious. This is the work I am doing here; it will permit the conquest of death. That is another story; that will be the humanity of the future, perhaps in centuries, perhaps more rapidly. It will depend on men, on peoples.

Auroville is the first step towards this goal.

(February 1968)

In the meantime I am sending another letters of yours, with my English translation for approval. (Amal sent both the French original and his English translation. Below only the English is given.)

Series Two —Amal Kiran

READING SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

A LETTER TO THE MOTHER

How should one read the books of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother?

The true method is to read a little at a time, with concentration, then keep the mind as silent as possible, without trying actively to understand, but turn upward in the silence and aspire to the light. The understanding will come little by little.²²

And later, in a year or two, you will re-read the same thing and then you will know that the first contact was vague and incomplete and that the true understanding comes later on when you have tried to put into practice. (16 October 1967)

Blessings

29 April 1968

*

Dearest Mother,

There is a message of yours which I wish to publish in Mother India in block form. It runs: “C'est dans le silence que le vrai progrès peut se faire.”

I have translated it: “It is in silence that true progress can be made.”

May I have your approval?

All right.

Blessings

19 May 1968

*

²² The Mother corrected Amal's “bit by bit” to “little by little”.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

(Amal submitted the following the two texts for approval to publish them in the July 1968 issue of Mother India.)

It is certain that for living at Auroville a great progress of consciousness has to be made.

But the moment has come when this progress is possible. (June 1968)

*

Do you permit me to leave my children quite independent? Well, then, what should be my role?

According to what I know and see, in a general way, *after 14 years*, children should be left independent and they should be advised only to the extent that *they ask for it*.

They should know that they are responsible for the conduct of their own existence. (17 March 1968)

It is all right.

c. June 1968

*

Dearest Mother,

May I publish the following in this month's Mother India?

THE MOTHER ON THE ASHRAM AND AUROVILLE

What is the difference between the Ashram and Auroville?

The Ashram will keep its role as pioneer, inspirer and

Series Two —Amal Kiran

guide. Auroville will be an experiment in collective realisation. (June 1968)

Yes.

10 July 1968

*

Mother dearest,

Would it be too presumptuous of me to pray for a minute's darshan of you after S on the first at 8 a.m.? Oh, it has been so long since your last sweet touch!

Yes.

28 October 1968

*

Dearest Mother,

To solve the problem of my 21 unpublished books as well as of our great financial difficulty in general, I should like to apply for the Jawaharlal Nehru Scholarship. This Scholarship gives a very substantial payment every month for one whole year, enabling the recipient to pursue, with ample facility, specific researches which he has to name. I may add that a great joy to us resulting from the Scholarship will be our ability to make offerings to you every month. No strings are attached to the Scholarship.

The application is to be made through an educational institute. I asked Kireet if he would recommend me. He replied, "Most gladly. I have been a pupil of yours." But, of course, your approval and blessings are first required. Will you give me a push?

All right.

Blessings

30 May 1969

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

(Amal submitted the following two texts for approval to publish them in the September 1969 issue of Mother India.)

Here sensibleness is indispensable and the integral yoga is based on balance, calm and peace and not on an unhealthy need to suffer. (12 May 1969)

*

Hostility, recoil and distrust seem to me so useless. We could so easily be friends, each and all.

This is just what the Supreme Lord says to Himself when He sees the life of men upon earth.

(14 September 1969)

All right.

Blessings

Late 1969

*

(Amal sent a report on the financial condition of Mother India. It is followed by the Mother's comments.)

SOME DETAILS ABOUT MOTHER INDIA

Ever since December 1968, the Press, which used to charge us about Rs. 500 every month (paper cost), has been charging us about Rs. 1600 for composing, printing, etc. We have tried to pay all the charges, but the bills of four months have not been met: this means a debt of over Rs. 6000.

Out of our subscriptions and advertisements we can pay up to Rs. 1000 monthly. So, even if we could

Series Two —Amal Kiran

pay off the Rs. 6000 debt, we shall be in the future in loss every month by Rs. 600.

If we can get advertisements to cover two or three pages each month, we can meet the excess. In the meantime we are badly in need of some donation to help us pay off those Rs. 6000.

I quite agree to “*Mother India*” continuing; but the Press is insisting to be paid and “*Mother India*” *must pay*—that is all.

If it can pay it continues.

If it cannot pay it must stop.

And I say like that because I am convinced that with a little trouble and care it must be able to pay.

So, take the trouble and go on. Dyuman is ready to help in the organisation.

With love and blessings.

22 January 1970

*

Mother dearest,

O please help me to belong entirely to you! I want a radical push inward and upward as well as outward towards you. I hope I don't seem too hopeless to you.

Not at all hopeless—I am sure that finally it will be all right. But, for the moment, you are still too much attached to your intellectual cleverness—it hampers your progress.

My blessings

*

The only way to remedy too much talking is to keep *silent*.

Series Three

Correspondence with Sanjiban

Sanjiban Biswas was born on 30 January 1913 and joined the Ashram on 15 February 1933 at the age of twenty. Two months after his arrival, the Mother began training him as an artist. For many years, he taught students in the Ashram school to draw and paint. He lived in the Ashram for fifty-eight years, passing away on 18 October 1991 at the age of seventy-eight.

Sanjiban's correspondence with the Mother, entirely in English, covers the period from 1933 to 1941. It deals mainly with art and shows how the Mother patiently guided this sensitive young man as he developed into an excellent artist.

Mother,

I have joined the work of book-binding. At night and in the morning I have tried to make some envelopes and I am offering them at Thy Feet. I also thought of offering a writing pad.

The envelopes are very pretty. A few more envelopes would be more useful than a writing pad.

March 1933

*

O Mother,

Shall I try to copy human figures? If it is not yet time to do so, I shall wait for the proper time to come.

You can begin to study the human figure, but that from *nature*, not from books. Ask people to give you half an hour sitting and

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

make pencil sketches.

14 April 1933

*

O Mother,

I am sending three drawings. My attempts at life sketches have been unsuccessful. The first one is rather hopeless, but even in the second the real appearance of the person has not come out.

The attempts are not so bad for a beginning. You must persevere.

How to take measurements at the time of making these sketches? Can I know from Thee how to make such sketches?

I cannot very well explain these things by writing. I must show you. So I shall see you for that purpose next Friday, the 21st, at 11 A.M.

16 April 1933

*

O my Mother,

I am sending a drawing in coloured pencil. It is quite unsuccessful. As the colours are waxen and as I am not accustomed to drawing with colours, I find it difficult to put shadings. The colours do not mix with one another.

It is not expected that they should mix—the technique is to apply the colours by dots or short lines very close to one another but not to mix them; it gives a much more *living* effect than the mixing and expresses well the play of colours and of light.

(To show the technique, the Mother made several quick colour sketches.)

Series Three — Sanjiban

You can make in that way all possible shades.

28 April 1933

*

O my Sweet Mother,

*I am sending a drawing to Thy Feet. I have tried
to draw it like that book cover, but I am not successful
in this attempt. I don't know how I can make it better.*

I find it good enough. You might try now on a sheet big enough to cover a book. You can make the same kind of decoration with greens, blues, reds. It is better not to mix many different colours for one sheet. The play of colours must be done by using several shades of the same colour; several greens or several blues, etc.

3 May 1933

*

O my Sweet Mother,

*I am sending a sketch of a human face. I thought
of making a sketch of the front view of X, but when
I began it I found that it did not resemble him. I am
always afraid of these front views. Before I begin to
sketch, many disappointing ideas arise, such as, it
won't come out successful, it won't resemble a human
figure, etc.; these ideas come to my mind and I get
nervous.*

Of course it does not resemble X but as a drawing it is not bad.

You must be prepared to be unsuccessful many many times before you can truly learn. It is with the effort of many failures that you prepare a progress leading towards success.

19 May 1933

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

O my Mother,

I am sending a drawing to Thee. There I have tried to make a sketch of Y. But his resemblance has not come out in it.

I recognised him at once (before reading your letter) and liked the drawing well.

23 May 1933

*

O my Mother,

I am sending a drawing to Thee. I have tried to make a sketch of Z. I don't know how Thou likest it.

The shadows are made a little too roughly and thus give the impression that the face is dirty. But the resemblance is not bad.

24 May 1933

*

O my Mother,

I tried to make a sketch of X in the morning today. I am sending it to Thee.

It is not very successful! She looks there quite like an old woman.

27 May 1933

*

O my Mother,

I am sending a sketch of myself to Thee.

It is improving. Now you must try to bring out the delicate shades and a careful expression of details.

6 June 1933

*

Series Three — Sanjiban

O my Mother,

*I have tried to make drawings for book covers
and am sending the rough pencil sketches to Thee. I
think a very delicate brush will be necessary.*

The drawing is all right.

Nagin had presented me with some water colour brushes. I have returned them to him. Perhaps among them you would find what you need. But if not, it will be better to look for one brush in the bazaar, or at Babylone (who sells books and drawing books) or at the Mission.

27 June 1933

*

O my Mother,

*I tried to make a sketch of Y today. I am sending
it to Thee.*

It is good. The nose is just a little too flat.

4 July 1933

*

O my Mother,

*I tried to make a sketch of Z today. The light and
shadow fell on his face in such a way that I found it
very difficult to make the sketch. I am sending it to
Thee.*

Before doing a drawing you must find the proper place for the model to sit. Generally *near a window* where the lights and shadows will be frank and precise, is the best — before starting the work, you must try several positions and choose the best.

4 August 1933

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

I am sending you back the Japanese bridge that you have painted, along with two models of bridges. Generally these bridges in Japan are lacquered. The colour on the post card is *exact*. I have seen that famous bridge at Nikko.

I will ask you to send me back the post card when you have finished as it is part of a collection.

26 August 1933

*

O my Mother,

I finished painting that book cover today. I am sending it to Thy Feet. I am searching for a new design and if I can get hold of one I shall begin another cover tomorrow. Ma, shall I use those tube colours for book covers? For one cover almost a piece of water-colour cake is required.

The cover is very good. But it would be a pity to use the tubes for that. The colours in cakes are much cheaper.

2 September 1933

*

O my Mother,

In the new colour box I find that the paste in one tube has dried up. How can I use it? Shall I break the tube or try to put some water inside in order to soften it?

The easiest way is to carefully cut the tube open (cutting lengthwise) and to use the paint as you would a dry one.

14 September 1933

*

Series Three — Sanjiban

O my Mother,

This afternoon I went to the colonial garden. There I made a sketch of some bamboos. I also did a portion of the trunk of a bamboo with coloured pencils. I shall try to paint them tomorrow if Thou likest. Ma, dost Thou like that I should try to copy things from nature in this way? Though there is nothing to be seen in the sketch, yet I am sending it to show Thee.

It is good to make sketches from nature. It gives richness, variety and precision to the execution.

I shall be interested to see what painting you will make out of this.

16 September 1933

*

O my Mother,

I have received a letter from Bhupati. He has sent some Japanese landscapes on post cards for You. If you like I could ask him to send some more such landscapes, if possible.

These landscapes are not Japanese, they are either English or German.

25 September 1933

*

O my Mother,

This afternoon I went with X to see a work-site. There I made a sketch which I would like to show Thee. Ma, I find difficulty in showing distance and can't set things correctly. Shall I try it again with paints?

It is not bad. You can try it in painting. If you want the

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

background to be far away you must be careful to keep it of a *paler shade* than the foreground. And pale mauve and pale blue can be used freely. Also details must be left more indistinct than in front.

3 October 1933

*

O my Mother,

*I have finished the landscape I began yesterday.
I began it well but at the time of putting the background I almost spoiled it, so I finished it rather carelessly. I am sending it to Thy Feet.*

It is not bad. The background is just a little too dark and the houses on the right side a little *too precise*, which gives to them an air of toys.

8 October 1933

*

O my Mother,

I am sending another landscape for Thy suggestions as to how to paint it. It is a night scene, so will not the sky and the water portions be of pale blue?

Surely not *pale* blue, but deep, dark blue as it is on a moonless night.

What are the white effects in the sky? Are they some fireworks? What should be their colour?

The fireworks must be of pale bright colours, golden, orange, and red chiefly. The reflections in the water must be of the same colours as the fireworks but a little fainter.

15 October 1933

*

Series Three — Sanjiban

It is a question of shadows and light. The colouring of the shadows is wrong. The shadows are never of the *same colour* as the light but darker.

The colour of the shadows is always somewhat complementary of that of the light. The complementary colours are
green and red
orange and blue
violet and yellow

and all the intermediary shades with all the possible combinations.

Thus if in the light your ground is green, in the shadow, it will be probably of a reddish brown. If it is of some kind of golden orange, the shadow will be of a bluish purple, and so on.

1933

*

O my Mother,

*I have coloured the landscape on the envelope
given to me this morning. I am sending it to Thy Feet.*

It is good. I am sending you another one. You will notice the mountains in the background with the white mist hanging over them. It is very Japanese.

*Ma, I have done three sketches. First one of Y and
then one of me at noon. And then one of Z done just
now in the electric light. I am sending them all to Thy
Feet.*

They are quite good. Indeed there is a remarkable progress. Push on your studies now. You are on the right path.

8 December 1933

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

*O my Mother,
I have drawn two hands.*

They are not bad, but you must be careful about the proportions of the fingers to the palm. In the classical hand both are of the same length. The fingers may be longer, it is rare that they are shorter and it makes always very heavy hands.

P.S. It will be good to do some more studies of hands.

9 December 1933

*

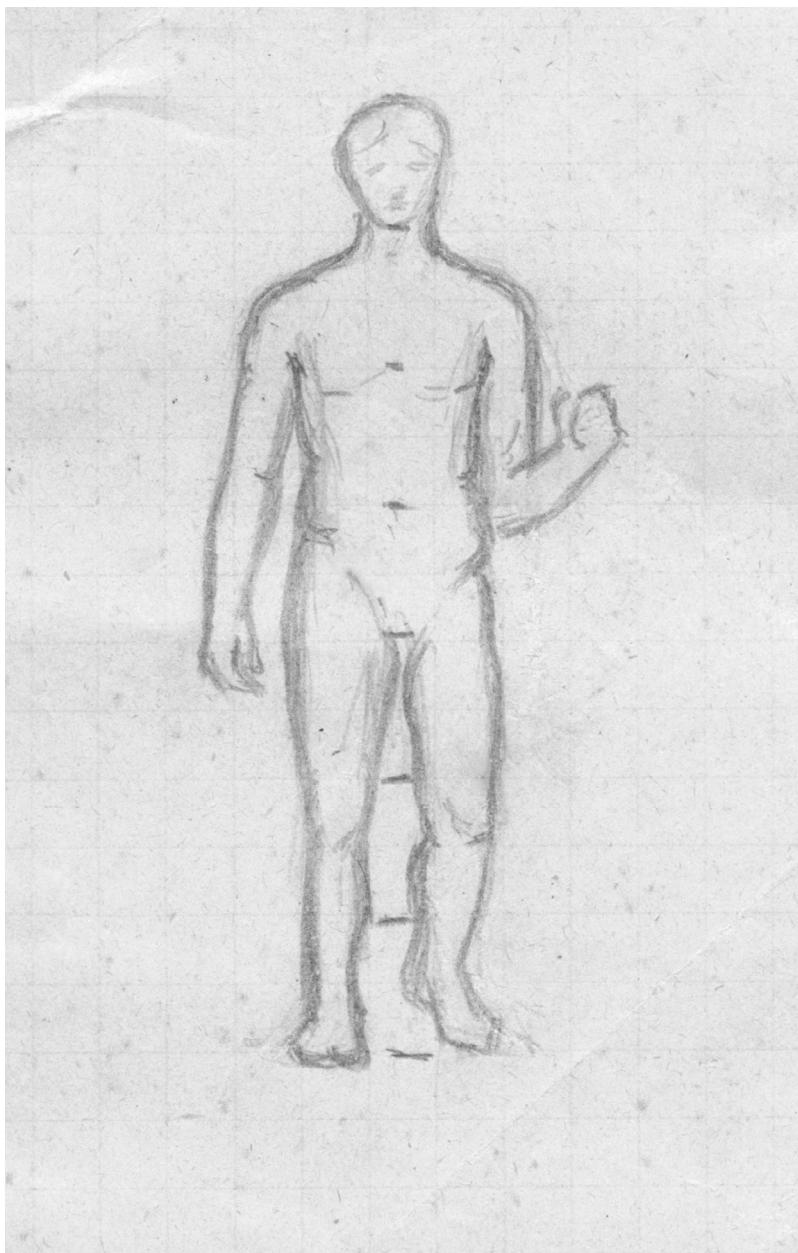
*O my Mother,
I have drawn two hands and two legs. The foot of
one leg has become disproportionately long, I think.
I also tried to make a sketch of the whole body, but
I could not do the feet well, so I left it and drew the
two legs.*

The sketches of arms and legs are good except one foot (not the longest which is all right but the other which is a little clumsy).

The whole body sketch is not so good because you have not kept the right proportion between the bust and the legs. The bust is all right, the legs are too short by two inches at least. It is because you started the sketch too big and when you arrived towards the end your paper was too small. When you want to do a certain sketch on a certain sheet of paper, you must first establish roughly the whole of it, keeping in view only the *proportions*. For a whole figure it will make it easier to keep the right proportion by keeping in mind that a normal body contains 7 heads including the head itself; less makes a short man and more a tall one.

I am sending you a sketch of a man with the seven heads marked.

Series Three — Sanjiban



New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Ma, should I make these drawings and sketches smaller than I am doing now? If I go on doing them in the present way, shall I be able to do them well when I am required to do them smaller?

This size of sketch is all right. For study the bigger the better.

12 December 1933

*

O my Mother,

I have drawn two hands and two legs. The legs were done very swiftly, so I think they have become a little clumsy.

No, they are all right and the hands also. Now you might try once more an “ensemble” to learn to keep the right proportion.

14 December 1933

*

O my Mother,

I have done two sketches of the whole body. They are not coming out well. I don't know how I can improve them.

There is some improvement; in fact they would be good except for the forearms that are weak and the hands which are far too small (especially in the standing picture).

Open your hand and place it on your face, fingers up, you will see that a normal hand goes from the chin to the top of the forehead. I have marked on the standing figure the size the hand ought to have.

16 December 1933

*

Series Three — Sanjiban

O my Mother,

I have made a sketch of the whole body. I don't know what are the mistakes but it seems somewhat unnatural. Has the throat become a little too long?

Yes, and the head just a *little* too small—not much. The fore-arms and hands are still clumsy, but on the whole there is great improvement. Continue to do sketches of the whole figure until you succeed completely.

17 December 1933

*

O my Mother,

I have made two sketches. Have the proportions come out right in the standing one? It has become somewhat clumsy and that is due, I think, to my quickly finishing it. The other one was also quickly done as the model's time was over and so it is unfinished.

The sitting posture can be finished. It is worth finishing as the proportions are almost all right.

In the standing posture, from the knees down the legs are once more too small, but you might take up the sketch again and correct it, making the legs one good inch longer. Send me these two sketches back when they are finished.

Henceforth I shall try to do one sketch, giving more time and doing slowly.

This is much better, and even if you have not finished in one day, you can continue the next day.

18 December 1933

*

O my Mother,

I am sending back the two sketches I did yesterday.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

I see that the standing posture (begun yesterday) has become now a little too long. The bottom part of the legs is all right now. It is the part between the waist and the knees that is a little too long. But you cannot correct it now.

I have also begun a new one and though unfinished I would like to show it to Thee.

It is good, you can finish it.

Be careful about the hands, they are still a little clumsy.

19 December 1933

*

O my Mother,

I have finished the sketch I began yesterday. I tried to do the hand carefully, but I could not do it well. Has the left leg become a little too small?

It would be rather the right one that is a little long. But on the whole the proportions are much better and the sketch is good. Hands and feet need special attention. You might do, once more, some separate *big* (life size) drawings.

20 December 1933

*

O my Mother,

I have drawn a hand and a leg. The foot seems too fleshy and it is due to shading, which I think is not right. At first I made it too big and so afterwards I had to finish it quickly as the model's time was over. Shall I in this way go on doing some legs and hands?

I find the leg and foot *very good*. The arm and hand also are much better.

To continue the studies, it would be good if you could find

Series Three — Sanjiban

some other benevolent model as a change in the form of hand and foot would be helpful.

21 December 1933

*

O my Mother,

Thou hast written that it would be better if I can get another model but I don't know whom I can get. Since the beginning when I was trying to learn the human figure, I was expecting somebody to give me a sitting, but I got nobody except X at last. At least today I got Y to sit for me.

Of course, so long as you find nobody else for sitting you can make drawings of X; it is very useful. But at the same time you might let it be known that you are ready to make a sketch of all those who will give you sittings and it seems to me that there are some who would be but too glad to have sketches made of them.

22 December 1933

*

O my Mother,

I asked Z to give me a sitting and he told me to do it today. So I have made a sketch of his face and of his small hand and his foot. In the face I think the resemblance has not come well.

I recognised him at once and found the sketch quite good. The hand also is good, and the foot is well done but the position is not favourable. That is to say, to do feet it is better to sit on the floor, the foot will seem less flat.

23 December 1933

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

O my Mother,

I have tried to draw two hands in the pose which I could not do well in the last whole body sketch. But they have not come out well even this time.

The one on the hip is all right now. The other one, leaning against the wall, was not in a pretty position, because it was not expressive of the movement of leaning. I have roughly outlined the changed position of the second finger which will make it all right, it seems to me.

27 December 1933

*

O my Mother,

I have tried to make a sketch of X. These front views are very difficult for me. I can't do them well.

It is rather good. You must do some more and they will become all right.

I have also tried to improve the last whole body sketch. Ma, my hand is still quite rigid and I can't do fine lines, especially where I have to do something small.

It is by doing that the hand becomes conscious and loses its clumsiness.

28 December 1933

*

O my Mother,

I am getting less delight in continuing the study of the human figure and I think I shall not be able to continue unless with a new inspiration. However, I shall try.

Series Three — Sanjiban

It would be a pity to stop as you are progressing very well.

1 January 1934

*

O my Mother,

I tried to finish the last sketch of the whole body. First I did the hands and feet and then the face twice or thrice but failed and so left the sketch as it is. Afterwards I tried to draw the face separately in the same pose but could not do it well even there.

I do not find these sketches bad at all. But the lack of interest you find in them comes from the fact that they are done always from the same figure. The form becomes too familiar and the way of expressing it becomes almost mechanical and loses most of its interest. It is why I had said to try to find someone else to sit for you, because it would have renewed the interest.

2 January 1934

*

O my Mother,

I have tried to make a sketch of Y. I think his resemblance has not come out well in it.

No, it is all right. You are improving, in your sketches, very much.

22 January 1934

*

O my Mother,

How to do sketches like walking, running, etc.? In the present sketch I tried to show the movement of walking but it has not come. If the arm had leaned more towards the front, it would have shown the movement?

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

The movement is all right and would have been expressive except for the foot which is *not* in the walking posture.

When you want to express a movement, you must ask your model to do the movement and *stop him* in the *midst of it just at the most expressive moment*. If the position taken cannot be kept very long, look at it very carefully in order to *remember* and make a rapid rough sketch of the most important points: the movement of an arm or leg, the position of the feet, etc.

In the present case, make Z walk across your room and stop him in the middle of the movement which he must keep very exactly. You will see that the foot must be bent, it is the only way of showing the action of walking.

23 January 1934

*

O my Mother,

I began a sketch of X but the resemblance has not come well, so I did not colour it. When I began the sketch, something in me was refusing to continue it and I was feeling very lazy. So I left it and have slept the time away.

It is a pity you left it because it was very good. Even as it is it is resemblant.

26 January 1934

*

O my Mother,

I have tried to make a sketch.

It is good. There is great progress in the arms and hands.

29 January 1934

*

Series Three — Sanjiban

O my Mother,

*Y asked me to make a sketch of him. I tried one
and it has become quite hopeless.*

I find it *very good*.

30 January 1934

*

O my Mother,

*I have begun a sketch but it is not finished. I also
tried to make a drawing of the cloth folds according
to Thy suggestion, but I could not follow the precise
details in it, so I have finished it soon.*

The envelope is very good today. The sketch of the cloth is well done. As for the other sketch, the general proportions are good except for one arm (right side of the picture) which gives the impression of being small and the feet also which would gain to be enlarged a little.

5 February 1934

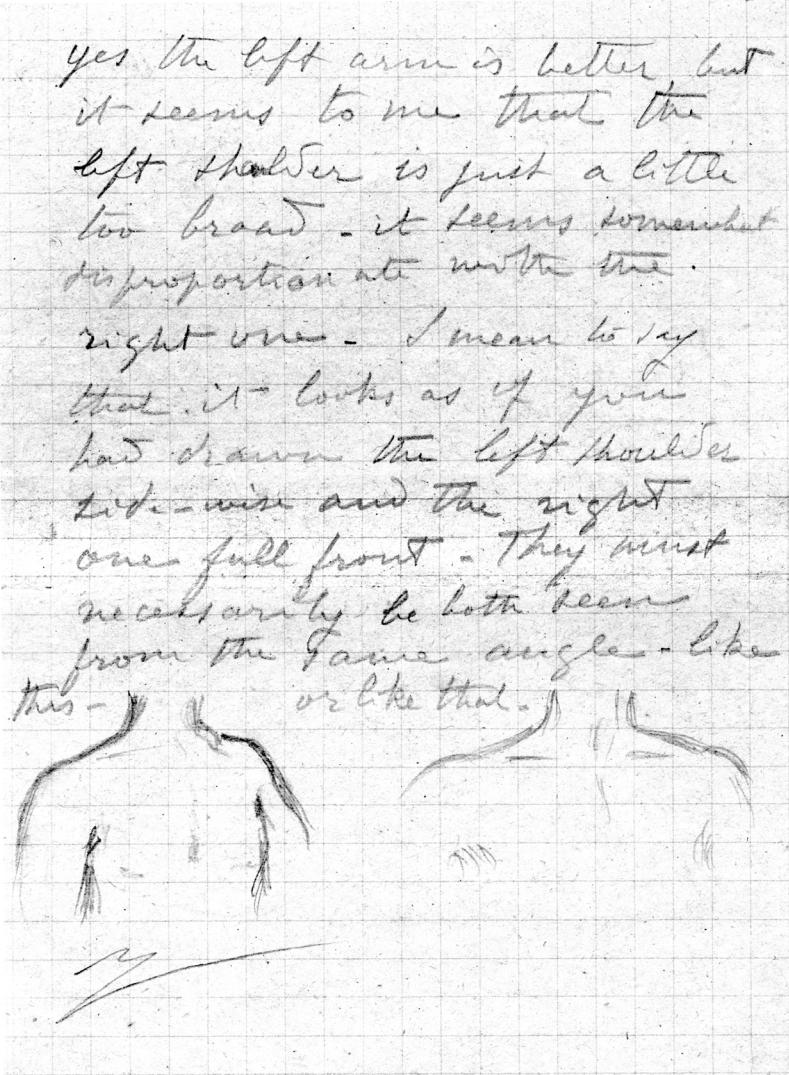
*

O my Mother,

*I have tried to improve yesterday's sketch. Dost
Thou find the arm to be all right this time? The feet I
could not do well. I shall try to make separate sketches
of them.*

Yes, the left arm is better but it seems to me that the left shoulder is just a little too broad—it seems somewhat disproportionate to the right one. I mean to say that it looks as if you had drawn the left shoulder side-wise and the right one full front. They must necessarily be both seen from the same angle—like this [sketch from side] or like that [sketch from front].

New Correspondences of the Mother—II



6 February 1934

*

Series Three — Sanjiban

O my Mother,

I am sending you a landscape I tried to copy from a British painting. I am not yet able to follow the technique of water colour painting.

The very composition of the picture is not quite successful, but that, of course, does not depend on your copy but on the original.

10 February 1934

*

O my Mother,

I could not manage the leaves of the trees on the left side. How can the leaves of the small tree be shown to be behind those of the bigger one?

It is because you have made the leaves almost of the same colour. Those behind must be more dull (with a bluish tint) than those in front.

Shall I make the water in the foreground a little darker and shall I put darker lines for the ripples?

The water must be of a much deeper blue. This is a view of the sea in the south of France and the sea there is of a very deep blue.

5 May 1934

*

O my Mother,

I am sending the sketch. Shall I leave it as it is or try to improve it? If it is to be improved I would like to have Thy suggestions.

The sketch has very much improved, but, I think, you can do something more; it is for the hair. So-called black hair is never black. Look at it attentively and you will see that in the shadows

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

there are deep browns, deep blues and purples. The lights are pale blue if the hair is very black and reddish brown if the hair is less black.

Try to arrange that and you will see that it will improve the picture very much.

I want to ask you to make a drawing for the back corners of a sari. Z will show you the model of the design.

I would like also a few pink and white lotuses to stick on envelopes.

24 May 1934

*

*O my Mother,
I have done two small lotuses.*

They are both *very pretty*.

When you will feel tired of doing lotuses you must tell me; and you can suggest anything else you would like to paint.

2 June 1934

*

*O my Mother,
I am sending three white lotuses. Ma, now I am
feeling less interest in doing lotuses. So wilt Thou
suggest something else to be done?*

These lotuses are very good.

It would be better if you found out something that you would like to do.

13 June 1934

*

*O my Mother,
I have made the rough outlines of the smaller
border of the cloth. I have tried to put fishes with*

Series Three — Sanjiban

long heads and long tails. Shall I put scales on them as I have attempted on one or some small lines as I have done on the other? If I put scales I think it will take very much time for X to embroider them, but she asked me to do them in detail. If I do not put the scales how can I fill in the blank space on the body?

All the drawings are very good and the border is quite successful. I think that scales or lines on all the fishes would make a confusion. I propose that some scales should be put only on 2 or 3 of the biggest front line. The others can remain plain as they are.

28 July 1934

*

O my Mother,

If I put scales on the five big fishes in front, will it be confusing or shall I put them only on the first two or three?

I suppose that some details are necessary on the front fish although they can be simplified to avoid confusion.

31 July 1934

*

Sanjiban,

Could you paint two or three flowers of Realisation as a preparation for drawing a new sari with flowers of Realisation. As usual, a broad border behind, a more narrow one at the bottom and quite a small one at the top.

You can send me a rough sketch before doing the actual design.

8 August 1934

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

O my Mother,

I have begun a rough design for the two borders for the sari—the top and the bottom ones—and would like to be corrected. In the portion behind I want to use some leaves also and want to put a big border.

Yes, these leaves are very decorative. I shall have them made in gold, so you must make them very light and in a decorative way. I am making behind a small sketch of what I mean.

The two borders are good.

Shall I put a small decorative border under them as I did in an earlier design?

Yes, it will be good.

13 August 1934

*

O my Mother,

I finished the peacock design. I also did a drawing of a lion yesterday. Even there the legs are not all right. I shall do more drawings of it.

The peacock design is very pretty. As for the lion he is still a little *woody* but with some practice it is bound to come.

With blessings always

*

My Mother,

I attempted three rough sketches of swans. If Thou wilt like and select one, then I could try doing a bigger one. Of course I shall try to do it in more detail and clearer.

It is the swan swimming which I like best of the three. I have marked it. It will be quite well for the apron.

Series Three — Sanjiban

Blessings

20 September 1934

*

My Mother,

*I have begun a big sketch of a lion which I want
to show Thee to know if the proportions are all right.
As tomorrow is Sunday I hesitate to ask Thee if I
could send it tomorrow.*

You can send it tomorrow (Sunday) morning with Nolini.

Have you given the swan to Lila? I ask because I have to send her the cloth for the embroidery. I wonder if it would not be better to trace it yourself on the silk? Surely it would be better for the exactitude of the drawing. If you are ready to do it, I shall send the cloth to you.

With blessings

22 September 1934

*

My Mother,

*About the lion. Is it necessary to finish it in detail
or shall I simply trace the outline on the cloth and go
on putting the shading there? Tara said it is better to
have the model. She also asked me to do it on paper.*

It seems to me that the best is to do the full drawing on the cloth and Tara can have the photograph from which you have made the study.

*Ma, to do it on the cloth I shall need charcoal as I
do not have it. I have never used it before and don't
know how it can be managed. I pray for Thy Grace.*

It would be better if you could find some in town as I am myself short of it.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

You use the charcoal as you would use a pencil—it is not difficult.

With blessings

24 September 1934

*

My Mother,

Something in me gets excited about doing painting and often it brings pressure and pain. Should I not get rid of it, as when I am calm I can better receive Thy Grace?

Yes, much better work is done when one is calm and concentrated. But surely you can become so.

With blessings

25 January 1935

*

My Mother,

I am sending a painting. Ma, what a style with bright colour is coming! Am I going out of the right way or shall I continue? Thou wilt make me conscious if I ever go wrong.

You are surely not going wrong. On the contrary your painting has considerably improved and it is growing into something more and more interesting.

7 May 1935

*

My Mother,

I thought of doing human figures for some time. I tried a coloured sketch of myself, but it is very difficult to bring out the resemblance. I wish to ask Thee how it can be improved. Should I not make the colour of the body darker to resemble me? If so, with what

Series Three — Sanjiban

colour should I give a wash?

I find your picture very good and resemblant. Of course the colours are not exactly those of nature, but one is always free to interpret as one likes. I do not see that it would be good to give a wash to the picture. Better leave it as it is.

Ma, it strikes me to ask Thee how artists bring out the tint of the model. Do they manage to bring it exactly as the model is or do they paint it from their mind with the idea of contrasting the light with complementary shadows?

I cannot answer in such a general way. Each artist has his own technique and does things as he understands them. Some choose to give a vivid reproduction of nature, some like better to translate or to symbolise.

18 June 1935

*

Mother,

I wish to show Thee one sketch I have coloured. I could not manage with the short hand and it looks very defective. I tried to bring out the colour of the body, but it is really so difficult; I could not succeed and there is not a clarity of vision. Also I could not choose a proper background or manage with the technique—I mean the application of colours on the paper. Everything is difficult.

You must not be discouraged because it is difficult. Moreover you are progressing. It is by practising that you will form your own technique and also increase the sense of colours. The arm “en raccourci” [foreshortened] is not so bad, it can very well remain.

July 1936

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Mother,

I wish to ask Thee if Thou wouldest like me to do some pictures from imagination or to confine myself only to portraits or to nature and still-life studies.

I do not see the necessity of sticking to one kind of thing only.
In diversity you can find more occasions of progress.

Love and blessings to my dear child

23 June 1937

*

Sanjiban,

Your design for the curtain is very beautiful, but Lila finds it difficult to trace on the satin cloth. Will you kindly do it for her so that it may not be spoilt?

My love and blessings

22 October 1937

*

Mother,

I came here to worship Thee and not with any other desire. I am myself weak and poor and my need is not much, but things from outside enter and torture me so much.

I don't feel depressed any more now and when I can open myself to Thee I am all in joy. But I did not let Thee know of my difficulties and that was why, it seems, I had to suffer so much.

Yes, if you inform me at once when the difficulties just begin they will have no power to last.

My love, blessings and help are always with you.

6 June 1939

*

Series Three — Sanjiban

Mother,

I am sending Thee an oil-colour sketch of a corner in the dining-room. I could not keep to the drawing well while colouring. Is it not true that I am always careless about the details and so the pictures look unfinished?

I find your painting very good and do not think it would be improved by putting more details; as it is it gives a stronger impression.

For my paintings, truly I do not know when I can find time to show them. But perhaps I might put a few of them (the small ones) in Pavitra's room and you might see them there.

My love and blessings

16 June 1939

*

Mother,

I was again feeling much like singing. Will you tell me if it would be a hindrance to my Sadhana or harmful to me in any way if I accept music again? If not, will you permit me to sing.

I can't do much painting now. I have not sufficient energy for it nor do I feel any inspiration. It is so dull!

If by singing you get some satisfaction there is no objection to your singing. But I regret that you have left painting because you were progressing well.

My love and blessings

11 October 1939

*

Mother,

I did not say that I have left painting. I am dragging on with it still. Whatever I try turns out to be

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

hopeless. I did not show them to you or you would have seen what I say. But I have not and will not leave painting especially as you have encouraged me throughout.

Mother, I wanted to ask you something. Do you have a Tanpura (the four-stringed instrument with the accompaniment of which people sing) which may be lying with you and not used by anybody? If you have no objection, could you spare it to me? I shall use it and return whenever you want it back or if I myself don't feel like singing. I am not sure it is with you but somebody told me you may have one—offered to you by someone.

Let your will be fulfilled in my life.

Indeed I used to have it (the tambura) for some time. But since a long time I do not have it with me. It may be in a box kept in Chandulal's room, or I might have lent it for use to somebody but in that case I do not remember at all to whom. You might inquire from Chandulal about it. If it is found I shall lend it to you very willingly.

I have received nice catalogues of oil paintings from Lefranc in Paris. Just now it is impossible to order anything but we shall see about it later on.

13 October 1939

*

My dear child,

There is no reason to be discouraged about the sex. However difficult it can be conquered and will be by keeping up perseverance and the will.

As you like singing what you can do is to do it as an offering.

You can be quite successful in painting; you were making very rapid progress at one time. If there has been a setback it is

Series Three — Sanjiban

because you were not concentrating on it owing to your being very busy with other things.

You can come for pranam on the staircase whenever you have something to show, as you used to do before.

With my love and blessings

P.S. You can come in the morning, afternoon or after meditation, any of these three times.

1940

*

Mother,

I have come to know that X is going to play the harmonium at Y's place tonight. Will you permit him to sing only one song (for a short time, say 40 to 45 minutes)? I would like you to hear him.

40 to 45 minutes is a *very long* time for somebody who has a sore throat.

I cannot give my permission as by doing it I would be false to my own view of things.

With my love and blessings

6 April 1941

*

My dear child,

Keep your faith and your courage—sooner than you believe your difficulties will be over.

I cannot give the flower work to anybody else because you are the only one who can do it as I want it to be done.

With my love and blessings

19 May 1941

Series Four

Correspondence with Kirankumari

Born in 1917, Kirankumari Kothari came to the Ashram on 21 November 1935 at the age of eighteen. She lived in the Ashram for seventy-five years, passing away on 24 December 2010.

The Mother put Kirankumari in charge of cleaning and repairing stoves and water-filters. Kirankumari regularly reported to the Mother about her work, mentioning any problems that arose; the Mother's words of advice and solace form the basis of this correspondence. Kirankumari always ended her reports, "Your daughter, Kirankumari", and the Mother always wrote, even when she made no comment on a report, "Love and blessings to my dear child". Entirely in English, the correspondence covers the period from 1938 to 1942.

My loving Mother,

The boy who helps me keeps his clothes in the stove room. It is a very dirty room and there is not much place for the clothes. Can he keep them in the kerosene oil room? U keeps oil there for the Golconde machines. He has no objection.

Yes, it can be done, but you must see that the boy does not take any kerosene away.

Mother, I am very happy with all the works. All my love and gratefulness to you.

Your daughter, Kirankumari

Love and blessings to my dear child

28 November 1938

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

My sweet Mother,

R asked for one new wind-shield for his stove. His old one was spoilt, but not very much. Still, my assistant M gave him a new wind-shield. I said to him, "Ask Mother first", but he did not ask. Why, Mother?

Yes, it is always better to ask me first.

Love and blessings to my dear child

22 December 1938

*

My loving Mother,

I am again feeling sorry today. I don't like it but I become sorry. People speak to me and I get angry with them. But Mother, I do not wish to be angry. I feel very sorry afterwards. You must make me very strong, Mother. I cannot control myself, so I become like that.

To do good work regularly you *must* learn to control yourself and not allow all these moods to overcome you. To do good work you must think only of the work and not of yourself.

Love and blessings to my dear child

23 December 1938

*

My loving Mother,

My left hand is a little burnt. I was heating milk and it spilled on my hand. I washed my hand with water, then put some spirit on it. But when M came, he scolded me. He said putting dirty spirit on my hand is bad. He brought a medicine from the dispensary, a yellow-like oil; it is picric acid. M put it on my hand. It is better now.

Series Four—Kirankumari

You must never put water on a burn and spirit also is bad. I am sending you a medicine which you can keep in the stove room and if ever you get a little burnt you must apply it immediately *without putting water.*

Love and blessings to my dear child

23 January 1939

*

My loving Mother,

Today is our cleaning day, so we have cleaned everything. Mother, there is no bird now in the cage; some other things are there in the cage. In the store room is a bag of corn. It is all near the boiler room. To whom shall we give these things?

There is no hurry to give these things away. Some grains can be put in the cage as I see birds entering there for food.

Love and blessings to my dear child

30 January 1939

*

My loving Mother,

M said he likes to take a certain boy for machine works. He is a big boy. But it is not necessary for us to keep this boy for stoves. If I get a very small boy, I shall teach him to work with me.

Yes, a young boy will be sent to you. You can try for some time and see if he is able to learn.

Love and blessings to my dear child

1 February 1939

*

Mother,

Am I not a little strong now? You make me strong and conscious and sincere for your work. My

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Sweet Mother, all my love and gratefulness to you.

Surely you are becoming stronger.

Love and blessings to my dear child

3 February 1939

*

Mother,

I sometimes feel my stomach burning. Some days it burns much. Before when this trouble was there, I wrote to you and it was all right. But now again it is happening. I do not understand it, Mother.

Probably you are not eating enough at mealtime.

Love and blessings to my dear child

10 February 1939

*

O my sweet, sweet Mother,

In the afternoon, Mother, I felt very sorry. Were you displeased with me? I could not understand. I could not go for work. I very much wished to go, but, Mother, I could not get up from bed.

I was not displeased but I do not want you to get upset by what people say, and I disapprove of quarrels. I do not want to hear about them. I hope you will be quite well by tomorrow.

Love and blessings to my dear child

13 March 1939

*

Mother,

Why is one harmonium in our place? A sent it with a chit saying to repair it. But, Mother, our room is no place to keep it. M said, "Keep it and learn music." But we do not know why it was sent here.

Series Four—Kirankumari

You can send it back saying that you do not know how to repair it.

Love and blessings to my dear child

24 March 1939

*

Mother,

I forgot to ask you if you have tasted my pickles?

Not yet because you said to keep them several days.

Papaya you can eat now and also the salt mango and sweet.

I will taste them tomorrow.

20 April 1939

*

Mother,

I am well and I am glad for all your flowers. If you took my pickles, Mother, you will tell me how it is.

I tasted the papaya pickles—it is very good.

21 April 1939

*

Mother,

I am much better by your blessings and I have worked all day. But today I did not go for Electrolux. I don't like to walk much. And M told me that women on earth are puny. I am very sorry, Mother. Why does he speak like this? In all other things he is very good. He helps us much. But sometimes he tells like that and I become very sorry.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Why do you mind? You have only not to listen.
Love and blessings to my dear child

3 May 1939

*

Mother,

Today P came to me with a hand-fan border to stitch. It is for Sri Aurobindo, she said. B did not give her a machine to do the work, so I stitched it for her, Mother.

You did well.

Love and blessings to my dear child

20 June 1939

*

Mother,

A came to give me a chair and told me to make a cushion for it. I was not careful—I made a burn-mark on the chair. Now I must be careful. All people now know, Mother, that I have burnt the chair. In the road many people asked me. I was very ashamed. I am well now, but I am also very sorry. Mother, you make me very careful and conscious.

You need not be sorry but you must be careful.

Love and blessing to my dear child

23 June 1939

*

Mother,

H said he knows one small girl who is 12 or 13 years old, a very good girl who can do work with us, if you give permission. But Mother, this girl may be too big. If I get a very small girl, it will be good.

Series Four—Kirankumari

We cannot take servants younger than 12 years old.

Love and blessings to my dear child

26 June 1939

*

My Mother,

I am feeling ashamed to bother you. I shall not write you much. Only I would like to know if I have done anything which you do not like. It will be a very easy and happy thing for me if you tell me my action which you do not approve. I am very, very unhappy; there is something that is not going well and it is making me more and more unhappy. I fear I may go mad. I mean I have come with a very bad fate.

My dear child,

I am very sorry to hear that you are so very unhappy, but, in truth, I see no reason why you could feel like that. You have done nothing wrong as far as I know and I am not at all displeased with you; on the contrary I have appreciated all the trouble you have taken and all the work you have done and are still doing since C has been unwell. To be unhappy like that you must be sheltering in yourself one out of two undesirable things, or even the two things together. The first one is jealousy, the second is an unsatisfied desire. Anyhow I hope you will soon get over it.

With my love and blessings

2 July 1939

*

Mother,

I am well by your grace and blessings. But every day something comes to disturb me. It always comes from something of U. I do not want to care about it at all, Mother, but I am not successful. I feel sorry. But

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

*your help is always with me. Mother, make this part
of me strong.*

Yes, you must learn not to mind all these small things.

Love and blessings to my dear child

17 July 1939

*

Mother,

*I am a little stronger everyday—my whole day
is quiet and I try to remember you always. Every day
some bad things come, but, Mother, I am always in
your protection. I am learning now not to mind these
bad things.*

Very good; they must not affect you at all.

My love and blessings to my dear child

18 July 1939

*

My loving Mother,

*You are not giving me anything to type. Give me
when there is something.*

Yes. You can prepare for me the *names* of all the *women* of the ashram, each name on one small chit (it is to pin on the sarees I shall give). You can ask from Nolini or Amrita the list of the women now living in the ashram—about 50 or 52. I need these names tomorrow at 2.30 when I see you.

My love and blessings to my dear child

2 August 1939

*

My loving Mother,

*Today I cleaned N's Electrolux refrigerator. She
says that Mother once came and said, "Don't leave*

Series Four—Kirankumari

the door open” and M also said, “It is not good to keep the door open.” I said, “I have come to clean it. There is much frost inside not yet melted, so I have to open the door.” Then N said, “Don’t take out the fruits.” But, Mother, there was some very bad smell inside—an onion smell or some other thing. I got a headache while cleaning. I was washing the cabinet with soap, but N came again and said, “Do not use soap, use soda.” She did not allow soap. What all this is, Mother, I cannot understand.

It is better to do as she likes because the électrolux is for her own use after all...

I am quite well by your sweet blessings, Mother, but M tells many bad things. I do not go to her for Prasad, so she is very angry with me. I do not care.

Do not mind what she says; it does not matter at all.

My love and blessings to my dear child

12 August 1939

*

My loving Mother,

I am very glad, Mother, if you will give me something to type.

I am sending you one page of which you will make 3 copies—taking care not to make mistakes and to type very neatly.

My love and blessings to my dear child

26 August 1939

*

Mother,

*You do not give me any other things to type.
Mother, give me.*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

When I shall have something to type I will give it to you.

My love and blessings to my dear child

5 September 1939

*

Mother,

N goes out of the house after meditation in the evening on many days. She returns after 9 o'clock —sometimes after 10 when there is music at D's house. So the big gate door is not closed. I sleep at 9 o'clock—some days at 8.30. But my room is very hot so I keep my door open. My room door is just near the big door. Is this safe, Mother?

It might be better to keep your door closed until N comes back.

My love and blessings to my dear child

8 September 1939

*

Mother,

I am very sorry because I displeased you. I do not understand all things. I do not want anybody's help; I only want your help. You make me free from this trouble. I want to do works for you quietly, Mother.

I want you strong and quiet and for that you must not let yourself be troubled by anybody's behaviour towards you.

My love and blessings to my dear child

3 October 1939

*

Mother,

I saw a bad dream last night. Three ladies dead in the Ashram—S, K and another I do not know. I pray, Mother, that such bad things I may not see again. And you give protection to all of them, Mother. Do not be

Series Four—Kirankumari

displeased with me for this. I did not wish to see such bad dreams.

Do not worry; dreams are not always true.
My love and blessings to my dear child

10 November 1939

*

Mother,

Some days I saw in dream my dead mother. It was quite bad, Mother. I did not like it. Yesterday also I saw that I was quarreling with her. She said something and I did not like it. Two years ago I saw my dead aunt in a dream like this. I told you about it, Mother, and by your Grace I did not see her again. For this dream also I am telling you. I have no connection with them, Mother, and she is dead, so I shall not see her any more, Mother.

Yes, this kind of dream must stop.
My love and blessings to my dear child

17 November 1939

*

Mother,

P told me to clean his typewriter. Yesterday I did not clean it. Some days ago I cleaned it—not yet one month ago, Mother. Shall I clean it again so soon?

He is working much upon it, so it may require cleaning more often.

My love and blessings to my dear child

18 December 1939

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

My loving Mother,

I am very happy by your sweet blessings, my Mother, and by your Grace. Make me completely yours; I am yours, my Mother. You are not giving me anything to type nowadays. Mother, give me.

When there is something I will not forget you.

My love and blessings to my dear child

29 December 1939

*

My loving Mother,

I have put a new typewriter ribbon in A's machine. B and I worked on it. It gave some trouble—at first the ribbon was not moving well. Mother, there are two ribbon wheels on each machine—on each is written RIGHT or LEFT. But with this machine the two wheels are RIGHT. No LEFT wheel. M said I have made a mistake. But no, Mother, I have not changed anything. Before I did this machine, many people were touching it. The market man repaired this machine. This is two or three months ago. Yet always M has a habit of telling me I make a mistake.

Do not mind it!

My love and blessings to my dear child

2 January 1940

*

My sweet Mother,

I had a very strange dream. It was a pranam day. All the sadhaks were in the meditation hall and one by one they were doing pranam—but not to you, Mother; one lady was sitting in your place. I was quite surprised. P was there. I asked him to whom are they

Series Four—Kirankumari

doing pranam? She is a queen of some place, he said, and Mother told us to do pranam to her, so we should. But I did not like it, so I did not do pranam to her. Many people told me to do it, but I did not. They were very displeased with me.

I looked once more at that queen. She was laughing very much when people were making pranam, but it was not like when you smile, Mother. She laughed just like people laugh. Also she was blessing, but it was not like your blessing. When all finished doing pranam, I saw you, Mother. You were standing a little far away and you were smiling, not telling anything to anybody. After that, the lady got up and outside one car came and she went away in that car.

Has it any meaning Mother?

You did quite well to refuse to do pranam to this person.

My love and blessings to my dear child

5 February 1940

*

Mother,

I have felt very weak now for some time, but I have no sick trouble. My health is very good by your blessings. I get headache sometimes. And some days, Mother, when I take rest, I find something coming upon me from the head side. I cannot get up then and I feel very afraid. I begin to call you for five or ten minutes; then slowly I can get up.

Why do you get frightened? You must not fear but keep quiet and call me, everything will be all right.

My love and blessings to my dear child

11 April 1940

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Mother,

Since it is war time, to save you expense, S can come to live with me. She and I can live upstairs, A can live downstairs. I told S about this; she was very pleased. Now if you tell A, we can arrange it. Our front room is very good, Mother, so we are thinking like this. It is good, Mother? We shall try to use very less. We will not take many things from the Stores.

It is very good, I approve of the idea. But if A comes in the front room where will you do the stove work?

I shall speak of your proposal tomorrow when I see you.
My love and blessings to my dear child

19 June 1940

*

Mother,

S is asking when she can come to my room? For her no repair work on the room is necessary. She does not need all the furniture from her room—only the almirah and one box of clothes. A big cot is not necessary; if there is a small canvas cot, it is sufficient.

She can move whenever she wants but must inform Amrita first and speak to H about the cot.

My love and blessings to my dear child

20 June 1940

*

If somebody throws anything in your house (litter or flowers, etc.), simply pick it up and throw it back into the street through the window, without even looking at the thing.

My love and blessings

24 June 1940

*

Series Four—Kirankumari

My sweet Mother,

I do not want the servant girl for work at all. If you make it a rule, Mother, people can bring their stove themselves to us and take it back. We shall keep the stove ready, clean and polished. What is needed we shall do, Mother.

We have now stopped giving clothes to a dhobi—we wash them ourselves. Also we do the house-cleaning. We are three people now, Mother, we shall do all this very happily. Mother, you accept my offering; it is not necessary to send this girl.

The girl can be stopped, but I do not find it would be good if everybody came to your house with the stoves; you would be constantly disturbed. I will have the stoves brought here in the garage where you repair the type-writers and from here some arrangement will be made to take them to your place and back here after repair.

My love and blessings

3 July 1940

*

Mother,

A was telling that she will ask for a servant for half an hour to wash her clothes. She is not very strong. But we can do her works, Mother. All the time she was not well, we washed her clothes. But she does not like this solution. Is a servant for her good, Mother? Our inconvenience will be if the servant comes when we are not at home; a servant coming I do not like at all. If you permit, Mother, we shall manage things ourselves.

You cannot go on washing her clothes but I have said that she must send her clothes to the Laundry for washing, because a servant in the house would be very inconvenient.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

My love and blessings to my dear child

5 August 1940

*

Mother,

This brush I am keeping for you. I took it from the Stores this month. I took it to the workshop to use there, but M saw it and scolded me very much. "Why you took it? Take another ordinary brush, etc." Mother, the nail brush we use often for stove work; grease and oil and black dirty things are on it. Our old one is spoilt. Two years ago M first showed us how to use it in U's house. Now he is scolding us. I did not ask for a good brush; I asked only for a brush. But I will try to manage without the brush, Mother. I do not need it; I am giving it back.

I am returning the brush to you; *you must keep it and use it.*
Why do you listen to what people tell you?

My love and blessings to my dear child

3 December 1940

*

My sweet Mother,

I am quite well by your sweet blessings and your sweet grace. Make me yours. Make my progress quicker, my Mother. I feel that I am not progressing at all now. My Mother, make myself absolutely open to you, so that I can become one with you. My Mother, time to time I feel very much depression and that I am not making progress. My Mother, make me your child.

What is all this nonsense! Do not worry about that. Everything is going on all right.

Series Four—Kirankumari

With my love and blessings to my dear child

16 December 1940

*

Mother,

I do not know what has happened to my body these last two days. It is bothering me. On Monday I could not eat sufficiently as my mouth burnt. Today I was feeling cold and feverish, but that is gone. But, Mother, there is a pain like a little needle pricking in my stomach all day. I have many works to do, but some I could not do. The type-writer work is not done today. I do not like to bother you, Mother, always telling you that I am not well. I felt very much ashamed so I did not tell you. But it is increasing more and more, so I am writing now, Mother. Tomorrow I must be very, very well by your sweet grace and blessings.

Take a big cup of hot milk, it will do you some good.

My love and blessings to my dear child

5 March 1941

*

Mother,

Tomorrow shall we clean the Ashram filter?

Yes—be careful about the candles and see carefully that they are not broken.

My love and blessings to my dear child

7 September 1942

Series Five

Correspondence with Jagannath

Jagannath Vedalankar's date of birth is not known. He joined the Ashram on 10 October 1945. At first the Mother sent him to work at the newly founded Ashram Press. Later, he taught Sanskrit in the Ashram school for many years. He lived in the Ashram for fifty-one years, passing away in January 1997.

Jagannath's correspondence with the Mother, entirely in English, deals mainly with his work at the Ashram Press between 1946 and 1950. There are also several letters of 1947 regarding help to his brother at the time of the partition of India.

Gracious Mother,

In my absences during working hours, who should keep the key of the Press keyboard? I consulted Mr. Pillai about it and he said that everywhere it is the gatekeeper's duty to keep keys. If you approve of it, I shall hand over the key to the gatekeeper whenever I have to go out during working hours.

Yes—I only hope he is a reliable man.

Blessings

10 December 1946

*

Gracious Mother,

Dr. Indra Sen has agreed to keep the key of the Press keyboard with himself in my absence from the Press. It will be safer.

I am busy preparing the manuscript for the February issue of Aditi, which is expected on or about

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

the first January. There is an offer from D to help me. He also helps R in driving the tiffin-carriers' cart. He wants to devote his spare time to preparing fair copies of the articles so that the Hindi section has no difficulty composing them. Can his help be accepted?

Yes, provided he does not give up the other work in order to do this one.

Blessings

12 December 1946

*

Divine Mother,

Aditya can be a useful hand for Aditi work because he is competent in Sanskrit and Hindi. He will joyfully spare some time for it with your blessing and sanction.

He is fully busy in the Granary and I wonder how he could find time to do some other work. But I shall see what he says about it.

Blessings

26 December 1946

*

Gracious Mother,

Almost every night, before going to bed, I utter in my heart, "O Mother, the duty of keeping the Press in the night is offered to Thee. Thou doest it. Thou alone canst do it. Make me a worthy vehicle for it."

Is it right, or is there anything ignorant in it?

It is all right.

You were to make an inquiry regarding the supply of filtered water for the Press. Although we are getting one pitcher of water from Cycle House, we also want

Series Five—Jagannath

a part of our requirement from the Dining Room, especially because it is nearer to our premises and the servant who carries the pitcher on his head feels more trouble to bring it from a farther distance. Is it possible to get at least three litres of water from there?

I have made an inquiry and have found out that the D.R. filter is not giving enough water for the D.R. There is only one solution to the problem. I am ordering two big filters, one for Aroum  [the Dining Room], the other one for the Press.

Blessings

11 January 1947

*

Divine Mother,

Today I am writing to you a few lines about an externality of life. Often I have been careless about dressing my hair. The main motive behind has always been that it is a sheer waste of time and energy which can be spent for a higher pursuit. There have also intervened periods when I was impelled by some other motives, superior or inferior, and either I became excessively careful and attentive to the dressing of my hair or else I became more inattentive to it.

But now something in me wants that I should take the right yogic attitude even in this matter. What is true and good for me—to let my hair grow freely and keep it in a beautiful way, or get it cut from time to time and also remain clean-shaved? Especially, what attitude should I keep about this externality of life?

Generally the motive behind all neglect of the body is a tamasic laziness. The right attitude is not to give an undue attention to these externalities, but at the same time to take all necessary care for the body to remain fit and strong. Moreover external

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

untidiness is always the expression and symbol of some inner confusion and lack of organisation, mental or vital.

With my love and blessings

15 January 1947

*

Divine Mother,

X wants the handbills advertising his books to be enclosed in the copies of Aditi and thus sent to all subscribers of Aditi. If you approve of it, we shall send the handbills along with the April issue. The handbills I am enclosing are samples for you to see.

Are you in the habit of putting handbills in *Aditi*? Otherwise I do not see why you should begin with these.

My love and blessings

27 February 1947

*

Divine Mother,

You did not reply about my request for furniture. Shall I remind R about the supply of the sanctioned furniture?

I did not reply because your furniture has *not been forgotten* but your need is one among so many others that have also to be attended to.

My love and blessings

5 March 1947

*

Divine Mother,

The postman who delivers posted articles to the Ashram Press says to me now and again, "I bring very heavy parcels of type for the Press, I deliver so many money orders to the Aditi office, but you do not give

Series Five—Jagannath

me any remuneration or gratification, whereas the postman who delivers postal articles in the Ashram gets two rupees per month from the Ashram.”

I know that as a rule the postmen are strictly forbidden to accept any fee or gratification from the addressees or payees, so I reply to him accordingly. But he has requested me to write to you, so I have conveyed his request to you.

He can be given something as a tip, not as a fee.

My love and blessings

11 March 1947

*

Divine Mother,

Since riots and disturbances have begun in the Punjab, my waking consciousness has been lowered down and sunk into the mire of attachment for my relatives who are suffering in their native place. When my mind is at rest, various thoughts come to it over and over again: “Oh, they have fallen on evil days!” “What would be their condition?” etc. etc.

How should I deal with these obsessing thoughts? How to overcome this strong attachment which I thought I had got rid of, but which has surprisingly attacked me and shaken my pride to its foundations?

Always circumstances come to reveal the hidden weaknesses that have to be overcome.

My love and blessings

20 March 1947

*

Divine Mother,

Several times during the last few days I have seen the taps of latrines and wash basins at the Press fully

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

open with water flowing out of them. Sadhaks as well as workmen, when they turn on taps for water and do not find water coming out, do not turn them off. Thus when there is some storage of water in the reservoir tanks, the water goes on flowing. That is why the scarcity of water has been badly felt for the last week or so. What should be done to recover the normal condition?

Put up notices in English and in Tamil: "Please close the tap."
My love and blessings

29 March 1947

*

Divine Mother,

A sannyasi has placed an order for two books asking for a 50% concession in price. Can he be granted the concession?

NO.

My love and blessings

16 April 1947

*

Divine Mother,

I want my meals in a brass carrier if possible, especially because I have no arrangement in my room to keep the carrier out of the reach of ants.

If you have a small basin, fill it with water, put in the centre a cement block and on the cement block place the tiffin carrier; it will be saved from ants.

14 May 1947

*

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Divine Mother,

Today I have fallen victim to a new physical disease—piles. I want to prevent this disease at its very outset. As far as I can see, it has been caused by the constipation that I have had for the last two years.

At any rate, I want to sort out this new disease of piles in embryo. What should I do as a preventive measure for this?

Sit in cold water for 15 minutes daily.

5 July 1947

*

Divine Mother,

My elder brother, who lives in the Pakistan area of the Punjab and is a rich man, asks me: "Should I continue to live in the Pakistan area or migrate from it and become an inhabitant in the Hindustan area? I am at a loss what to do. No one in our area has migrated as yet, though many intend to do so. But having no favourable conditions to migrate, people are still not moving from their native place. Advise me as to what I should do."

What reply should I give him?

All depends on his character. If he likes adventures he can stay; if he wants safety it is better to migrate.

My love and blessings

8 July 1947

*

Divine Mother,

Today J of the Garden Service has supplied eleven plants for the Press grounds and they have been properly planted in his presence. He says that there will be a lining of bricks all along the ditches that

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

have plants inside, for their safety.

Generally it is done with *broken* tiles (which can be secured from Parc à Chabon) and laid by a gardener, not a mason.

25 September 1947

*

Divine Mother,

My elder brother, who lives in the Pakistan part of the Punjab, writes to me in a letter received today: "Our native village has been looted and captured by Moslems. All Hindus there have fled away and taken refuge in a big town in Pakistan. My family is also there. But still, as refugees in Pakistan, we are always in danger of being attacked by Moslems. I am at a loss what to do and how to save myself and my family. Guide my steps at this critical moment."

What should I reply to him?

To keep faith and he will receive the right inspiration.

30 September 1947

*

Divine Mother,

Today you remarked, "The courtyard looks shabby." What is to be done to make it neat and decent?

You have arranged the courtyard as well as it can be under the present conditions. Nothing short of repaving it entirely could remove the shabby appearance. But it would be a too big and costly work to be undertaken now.

October 1947

*

Series Five—Jagannath

Gracious Mother,

Due to the influence of the communist union leaders, there is a difficulty as regards to cleanliness at the Press. I find that the workmen are now unwilling to act upon the orders that are given to them.

What should be done to remove this indiscipline?

It seems that there is not much chance to obtain discipline from them as *indiscipline* is part of the communist programme.

My elder brother writes to me: “The communal situation of our village [in Pakistan] seems to go from bad to worse. A great calamity is imminent upon the Hindu inhabitants of the village. We are all struck with a great panic. What should we do?

“It would be very good if you come to your native place and take my family with you to Pondicherry or somewhere else, say Hardwar (U.P.) or Guru-Kula Kangri or some other Hindu majority province. Wire us about the arrangement you make for us. At least I want to make my wife and children safe by sending them to a safer place. Will you come and take my family to Pondicherry, or, if we have to come to you, will you advise us about this journey to South India?”

What should I reply to my brother? How far am I concerned in the matter? Solely wedded to the Divine as I am and ever aspire to remain, what action should I do to express my inner attitude?

The difficulty is that if we admit people here in order to save them from communal trouble, we will soon have the whole of the Hindu community and surely Pondicherry is not big enough to hold it.

I agree that your duty towards the Divine goes before and above any other so-called duty. But if out of good heart and compassion you can, by writing a few letters, find some safer

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

place for them elsewhere, there is no objection to your doing so.

My love and blessings

End 1947

*

(Jagannath wrote letters on behalf of his brother's family and arranged for them to come to India. They arrived on 2 January 1948, completely destitute. Jagannath reported their plight to the Mother and asked, "In what way can I be of help to them in their critical condition?" She replied:)

Don't you know somebody in the place where they have reached or near about who could give them some assistance?

My love and blessings

January 1948

*

Mother,

I thought of R or K to help us in gatekeeping at the Press. Both of them have sufficient time to spare for it, but when I spoke to them about it they did not show any willingness at all.

Yes, they are very lazy.

My love and blessings

15 March 1948

*

Gracious Mother,

This afternoon during working hours an act of theft was reported to have been committed by a compositor. He was seen passing out some types and a composing stick through the bars of a high ventilator in the latrines to someone standing on the street side. Some other workmen also saw him commit this act.

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*But the man does not confess to it.
What should be done in this case?*

He must be put strictly under observation, and if caught red-handed he will be sent away at once.

My love and blessings

18 March 1948

*

Gracious Mother,

*Out of articles of food that we get from the D.R.,
is one more suitable than another for a patient with
piles? Out of rice and bread, milk and curds, pulse
and vegetables, is it necessary to take one exclusively,
discarding the others as disagreeable to health?*

The diet has not much effect, but it is very important not to be constipated. You might take from dispensary some liquid paraffin which would help.

29 March 1948

*

Gracious Mother,

*An ex-servant of the Press has again applied to-
day for a compositor's job. I thought it necessary to
inform you that he is a very staunch communist and
that he proved to be a very mischievous fellow when
he formerly worked in our press. His application is
under consideration with N. The matter of the ser-
vant's behaviour must be taken into consideration,
lest he should be carelessly readmitted and prove a
source of trouble.*

He must not be taken back. Show this to N.

24 May 1948

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Gracious Mother,

My friend B is helping me in the gatekeeping work regularly. I also want to take his help in key-boarding for Aditi and other Hindi publications. Once I got your approval for it, but R did not like it, so he could not be trained. Now as the work on the August issue of Aditi is soon to begin, I want B to be trained and become helpful. Your sanction is required.

First I must know, trained by whom? By training a machine often gets damaged and this must be done only under a very experienced supervisor.

Love and blessings

31 May 1948

*

Gracious Mother,

Unhappily and unfortunately there has arisen a conflict between Dr. S and myself. I feel as if he had shaken my vital and mental ego to their very foundations. But that would not have mattered much if he had not hurt the right feelings of my heart and mind. I have convinced him that he has suppressed my good feelings simply by hooting at me. As a result I cannot see eye to eye with him nor be with me.

Mentally burdened as I feel due to this discord and conflict, I implore to you to establish again a peaceful concord and harmony between us.

Surely harmony must be restored, and the first step is to quickly forget the cause of the disharmony.

Love and blessings

3 June 1948

*

Series Five—Jagannath

Gracious Mother,

I entrust my well-being to you with a child's confidence. Take care of my health and keep me ever strong and fit and energetic for your work. I aspire for the fullest faith in your Grace, which alone can save me from all inner and outer diseases.

R will give you some fruits to help for curing piles.

Love and blessings

16 June 1948

*

Gracious Mother,

Some time back, one of the workmen broke the asbestos door of their latrines. I showed the broken pieces to the president of their union and requested him to detect the mischievous worker. But nothing could be done by our enquiries.

Today again a part of another door is found to be broken as well as a part of the brick wall of the workmen's latrines. But the mischievous hand is not known, and as such acts are committed secretly, it is not easy to catch the mischievous fellow red-handed.

What step should we take to stop such mischief?

It can be announced that if such depredations continue without the culprit being found out all the workmen will be held responsible. The president must be informed of this.

Love and blessings

15 July 1948

*

Gracious Mother,

My maternal cousin, a devotee of Krishna, who stirred in my heart the feeling of lovingly sweet devotion, writes to me, "We, the Hindus of the west

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Punjab, have committed innumerable sins and have therefore been driven out from our native places and made destitute of all our belongings. Mysterious is the turn of fate. Our Karma has compelled us to part with our relatives who are all individually striving for their new homes and hearths in the Hindusthani part of Punjab.

“Will the wheels of fortune turn? Shall we have an opportunity to go back to our native homes and live there amicably with our Muslim neighbours?”

What shall I reply to him?

Hope is a big virtue and has to be kept in spite of all appearances.
With my love and blessings

23 September 1948

*

Gracious Mother,

The postman delivering post to the Press is allowed freely to enter into each and every section. But there, apart from his work, he has free talks with workmen in Tamil. In these days of elections, he has been engaged in talks with them which may prove to be noxious and mischievous.

It seems to be desirable not to allow him inside the Press, but rather to call the persons receiving postal articles to the gate and let them take the delivery of the articles there.

This is the correct way.

Something needs to be done to avoid the indulgence of the postman in random talks.

The arrangement of delivery at the gate must be enforced at once except for the post for B which can be given at the door of his office.

Series Five—Jagannath

Love and blessings

23 October 1948

*

Gracious Mother,

A few days back, when the judge of the local high court visited the Press in connection with the enquiries regarding a Press workman already taken into custody, we had to disturb M, who was resting in the room meant for visitors. Only then could Dr. S entertain the judge there and supply him with the necessary information.

I want to know whether some change in the use of the room needs to be enforced.

The room is meant for visitors. Those who occupy it will do so *at their own risk*; that is, they must be ready to pack off and leave the place *clean and neat at a minute's notice* (this can be communicated to them).

Love and blessings

November 1948

*

Gracious Mother,

(1) The gate area is still open to rain and showers. It needs to be covered as soon as possible.

(2) The shed above the Aditi office drips profusely due to cracks in asbestos sheets. It requires urgent repair.

Will you speak to K to see to these works?

Yes, but nothing can be done so long as it rains.

My love and blessings

16 November 1948

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Gracious Mother,

A subscriber of Aditi wants to organise a Sri Aurobindo centre in his native village, Isharapur, in U.P. He writes thus: "Kindly ask the Mother if I can be allowed to conduct a centre for Sri Aurobindo's work."

Yes.

"I want to disseminate the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. And if the Mother permits, what activities does she approve of for the fulfilment of the mission? Will it be improper in any way if I resign from the Congress in order to devote my time for Sri Aurobindo's work?"

It is not necessary to resign.

27 December 1948

*

Gracious Mother,

I do 15 minutes of running and about 1½ hours of walking exercise daily, and I am thus maintaining my health and strength by your Grace. I want to know whether I should join the P.E.D. games for exercise or continue my private programme of exercise.

You can continue your present programme.

5 March 1949

*

Gracious Mother,

The man who has opened a Sri Aurobindo Centre in his native place in U.P., is in great difficulty these days. There has been a riot among two parties of Zamindars. Somehow he has been involved in the criminal case bearing on the riot. He writes: "By the

Series Five—Jagannath

Grace of God and Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the report of the police and the medical man are in my favour and I will probably pass through it safely. But my mind is not at rest. Convey my respectful salutations to the Mother. By her divine advice alone I can get patience and peace. Write to me Mother's advice under the circumstances.”

What shall I reply to him?

“To keep faith in the Divine Grace and not to worry.”

My love and blessings

22 March 1949

*

Gracious Mother,

The head compositor of the English Section has requested me many times to try to give some job to his unemployed Hindi-knowing friend S. Each time I have refused, saying that there are already too many workers in our Press and it is not possible to employ any new hand. I advised him to find some other job for his friend.

Now, S simply wants to learn the job of Hindi composing so that he may become able to earn his livelihood by doing this job in some other Press. There is a very great demand for Hindi composers in Madras. He looks forward to you to grant him an opportunity to learn the job.

Is it possible to give this boy an opportunity?

It seems to me a strange proposal to take the trouble to teach this boy, for him to go afterwards and use elsewhere the knowledge acquired.

My love and blessings

9 April 1949

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Divine Mother,

This evening a workman in the machine section was caught red-handed with a packet of washing soda which he had hidden in his cloth bag; it was detected at the time of search. This man stole it from the machine section where it was stocked in a small quantity for daily use.

What action is to be taken so that such acts of stealing may be stopped?

You can give him a strong scolding and tell him that if he does it again he will be sent away.

Blessings

3 August 1949

*

Gracious Mother,

Some workman at our Press has pasted a hand-written notice on the wall of the workmen's latrines. The notice runs thus:

"We must have three months' bonus.

We must have 15 rupees dearness allowance."

This notice is motivated by the workmen of Rhodyard Mills. Yesterday evening at five, one of the Mills' workmen distributed a printed notice among our workmen just when they went out of the Press. The printed notice propagated similar demands on behalf of the labourers of the Mills.

This is just for your information and to seek your guidance in the matter, if necessary.

The best is to take no notice of such demands. These people will never be satisfied: the more we give, the more they ask.

My love and blessings

21 September 1949

*

Series Five—Jagannath

Gracious Mother,

One of your devotees wants your blessings and some consoling words about the sorrowful condition he has described in his letter.

You can send him blessings and tell him that it is not the circumstances that make us happy or sorry but the way in which the mind looks at them. If he corrects his way of thinking the sorrow will go.

My love and blessings

27 September 1949

*

Gracious Mother,

To make the Hindi composing section free from dependence on paid workers, it comes to my mind that we should train two more sadhaks for this work. Then the Hindi composing section will no longer require any employed hands. R is willing to spare one man, P, who has been permitted by you to stay here till the November Darshan. Also there are other candidates working under R, out of whom it will not be difficult to spare someone or other to learn the job.

Do you approve of it?

This man is to go in November. Is it worth while teaching him the job for such a short time?

28 September 1949

*

Gracious Mother,

I hear C is asking for a paid Hindi compositor for his section. But recently he has been supplied two sadhaks and I think that employing a new compositor would mean keeping him idle or else keeping the sadhaks idle. In total there are at present five sadhaks,

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

*three full-time workers and two part-time workers
—sufficient now for the work.*

No intention of taking any new paid man.

Love and blessings

21 October 1949

*

Divine Mother,

*I learn from Dr. S that the second warning to
the Press gardener has not been heartily approved by
you. I very much regret that somehow or other I have
gone against your will by my ignorant insistence in
the matter.*

*However, it was by no means my conscious in-
tention to transgress your will. I would therefore like
to withdraw the complaint against the gardener and
aspire to turn my consciousness towards the light.*

*May I be purged of any ill-will against the work-
man! May I have full faith in his capacity to improve
and become an admirable worker!*

*The warning has not yet been served to him and
your sanction is required if it is to be cancelled.*

Aspiring for the right consciousness.

I did not disapprove of the warning but of its wording. My remark was that a third warning was to be served before he is actually sent away—that is all.

With my blessings

2 August 1950

UNDATED PIECES

Gracious Mother,

Since the workman N was dismissed from the

Series Five—Jagannath

Press, rowdies have been harassing our workmen. Today our workmen did not take courage to enter the premises till the rowdies left the place and dispersed themselves. A similar scene occurred this evening after five. When our workmen left the premises, the same group of rowdies were taking part in it. The discharged hand, N, was also present. The rowdies have announced that they would continue their act for ten days or at least till N was taken back for work.

Let them do it. We shall see who gets tired of it first.

My love and blessings

*

Gracious Mother,

A Tamil compositor was found taking out seven copies of a prayer in French, English and Tamil without a permit from his section head. The copies really belong to the Machine Department. The workman has no satisfactory explanation for his act which falls in the category of hiding and trying to take away others' things without asking permission.

What is to be done in this case? I am enclosing the copies of the prayer.

Warn him a bit severely that his act is illegal, and you can add that in future if he wants something it is better and more simple to ask for it.

My love and blessings

*

Gracious Mother,

We need a better arrangement for the workmen to wash their hands before leaving the Press. P wants an immediate solution of the difficulty, since his bindery workmen are being harrassed by R who for so

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

long allowed each and everyone to use the taps near his machine room. What should be done?

It is all right for the moment.

P should not disturb the present arrangement unless B can make a better, more satisfying one.

Obviously some arrangement must be made for all the workmen to be able to wash after work.

Love and blessings

*

Gracious Mother.

Due to the cramped office space I find it very inconvenient and uncomfortable to carry out the office work smoothly and efficiently. Many times it happens that things get mixed up and jumbled up in a small corner of my room, so it takes a lot of my time to find them when required. This waste of time and energy in the present arrangement of things in a much congested place is not desirable for me. Especially when I see many urgent works lying before me and cannot afford to lose a minute, then these kinds of inconveniences and the consequent waste of time become all the more intolerable.

I hope that by your divine help all will go right at an opportune time.

This means what? What do you want? another room? some more furniture? I will see what I can do to satisfy you.

Blessings

*

Gracious Mother.

The desire to do translation work is deep-rooted

Series Five—Jagannath

in me. And how can I continue this work of translation when I aspire after the elimination of desire or preference for it? Is it good for me to discontinue this work so that I may become free from this particular desire?

No, it is not necessary to discontinue the work; the only thing necessary is to keep the aspiration to get rid of the preference.

With my love and blessings

Series Six

Correspondence with Debou

Born on 7 January 1930, Debkumar Bhattacharya joined the Ashram on 15 August 1943 at the age of thirteen. Debou, as he was called, was one of the first students in a small school started by the Mother in December of that year. In 1949 he became a teacher of French in the school. Later, he studied homeopathy and around 1967 became a practising homeopathic doctor. For decades he treated members of the Ashram in this capacity. Debou lived in the Ashram for sixty-nine years, passing away on 29 July 2013.

Debou's correspondence with the Mother covers the period from 1948 to 1968. In the early years she wrote several prayers for him and later wrote letters to help him understand and overcome his problems. The correspondence is largely in French and appears here in translation.

My dear mother,

If there were something like a mirror that could make me see whomever I called, I would be able to speak to you all the time.

It is very hard, isn't it, Mother, to gain a friend as dear as the Divine? I have no one. That is why I recognise you as my supreme mother. I would like to be guided by you. I depend entirely on you and I count on your guidance in the minutest actions of my life. Without that, I am lost.

The mirror of your heart is the best you can find, because truly

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

I am established there in your heart, always.

23 May 1948

*

Give me true consciousness and perfect consecration.

21 February 1949

*

“Sweet Mother, Your heart is my abode, Your heart is the reality of my being. In Your heart I am nestled and I have become Your heart.”

To Debou

With all my tenderness and my blessings

18 May 1949

*

Mahakali, my sweet Mother,

Grant that always I may be faithful to you; grant that my love for you may ever increase and my receptivity be so perfect that you can accomplish in me the total transformation.

21 October 1949

*

For Debou, a prayer

My sweet Mother,

Grant that I do not waste in a vain human relationship the splendour of the divine love that Your Grace is pouring out on me so generously.

24 October 1949

*

Series Six—Debou

I belong to You for eternity. Grant that nothing in me has the power to contradict this absolute consecration.

24 November 1949

*

- (1) Make me ever worthy of the Mother's love.
- (2) Grant that I may love the Mother with a true love, unselfish and unreserved.
- (3) Give me the full realisation of my entire being.
- (4) Grant that I may be a perfect servant of Your Work.

c. 1949

*

(Advice to Debou on what to tell his students on the first day of class)

My dear friends,

With the new school year, you have several new teachers and I am happy to be one of them.

You can be sure that I will do everything in my power to make my lessons always interesting and instructive. On your part, I am sure that you will do your best to be attentive and studious and *collaborate with me in this common work*, in order to learn a lot and make good progress.

5 December 1949

*

The lesson of the silk worm

The student expresses his surprise that the silk worm weaves his own prison. But the worm replies that he is crafting with joy the cocoon in which he will enclose himself, because it is inside the cocoon that the transformation to make him a butterfly

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

will take place. This is a same effort that the student makes to develop and express what he has inside him. One could say that few things are as ugly as a caterpillar, but then few things are as beautiful as a butterfly. To change the unsightly silk worm into a beautiful blue butterfly, while remaining for a time imprisoned in a cocoon, would surely be worthwhile.

In the same way for the student, school is a cocoon in which he must enclose himself with joy—because thanks to it all the capacities latent in him can be developed and expressed fully and freely.

c. 1949

*

For Debou

Give me the courage to realise my true self despite all obstacles.

21 February 1950

*

To Debou, a prayer for the 15th of August 1950

“Lord, grant that in all sincerity I may say to our Mother: “I am Yours for eternity.”

August 1950

*

“Sweet Mother,” I said one day just as I was going out, “You will never leave me.” Right, Sweet Mother? You were holding my hand in yours and you said, “Never” with radiant eyes. “But,” you continued, “try not to misbehave.”

A thought wanted to come out, piercing my heart: “Ma, if your poor child misbehaves some day, you will leave him!”

No, that is not what I wanted to say; I wanted to say: “Do not

Series Six—Debou

take advantage of my promise never to leave you to slacken your effort and misbehave.”

4 January 1950

*

Prayer for 1951

“My sweet Mother,

Grant that your love may give me the patience, the endurance and the perseverance necessary to go through to the end of my effort and realise the unity of my consciousness with yours, forever.”

To Debou, with all my tenderness

15 May 1951

*

O divine Mother, sweet Mother,

Make of me the hero warrior I aspire to become, so that I may fight successfully the great battle of the future that is to be born against the past that seeks to endure, so that the new things may manifest and we be ready to receive them.

A prayer for Debou¹

4 January 1952

*

Increase the inner repose; it must be there ever present, even in the midst of the greatest activity and so firm that nothing

¹ This prayer is a variation of the Students’ Prayer given by the Mother for the inauguration of the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre on 6 January 1952. (The University Centre was later renamed Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.)

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

can have the power to shake it: then you will become a perfect instrument for the Manifestation.

25 March 1952

*

To win the victory, one must *know how to wait* with tireless endurance.

Patience is the key to the doors of success.

5 September 1954

*

Open yourself to the new world and with it you will grow towards the future.

4 January 1958

*

Debou, my dear child,

Your mantra is very beautiful.

After Panditji's departure, when I have a little more time, I will call you one morning and ask you to recite it to me. No one else will be here and you will not risk being heard.

Be firm and regular in your meditation and I will always be with you to help you.

The results are certain.

With my tenderness and my blessings

8 May 1959

*

Debou, my dear child,

It is true that you are "my true son" and you will remain so always, even if sometimes, for some reason or other, your consciousness is veiled. So do not torment yourself, but take care never to forget the one true goal of life: union with the Divine. And whatever you do, you must do it without losing

Series Six—Debou

sight of this supreme goal.

My blessings are always with you.

22 March 1960

*

It is good, my child; I accept your gesture, but not the money.
That is not quite what I wanted to say.

I merely wanted you to become more conscious of the need
for a more complete consecration.

I have no objection to your buying a radio since you have
saved up for that.

And I hope that while listening to it your aspiration will
rise up more ardently towards the Divine Realisation.

With my blessings

*

Debou, my dear little child,

Not for a moment have I ceased to be with you, and I
am surprised by the feeling *you have* about me. Are you quite
sure about not letting anything or anyone come between you
and me? And could this not be the reason for this illness which
seems to have lasted for quite a long time?

Concentrate on me and you will see that my force has not
left you.

With my tenderness and my blessings

2 January 1962

*

Debou, my dear child,

Why this depression? Whatever happens should only be
an opportunity for some new progress, some new ascent, some
new opening towards the glorious eternal goal that we envisage.

I said nothing about what you call “the recent event”
because I was hoping that you would stay out of this affair
which has caused far more commotion than it deserved. In any

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

case, all is well now and the best thing to do is not to think about it anymore.

It is not in one place or another that solitude can be found. It is by isolating oneself from those around one through concentration in the depths of one's heart and through silence of the mind—there one finds that which is rich with the Divine Presence.

Nothing that can truly help has changed; that is to say, the Force and the Presence are always with you and you will feel them more and more as you become more concentrated on them.

Take heart, and let your faith and your aspiration sweep away all obstacles.

With my tenderness and my blessings

13 July 1962

*

Debou, my dear child,

I had been waiting for a letter from you for several days. Your thought has been coming to me with a sort of anxiety, as if you wanted to take a decision and you were not sure which way to go. My answer was always the same: "Do not forget the *true* goal of your life and let nothing come between you and me."

Now your letter has come to clarify everything.

S seems to be satisfied with the idea of taking you to Rameshwaram. So you will go there to reply to Panditji's questions. That is the time when you must *keep your consciousness concentrated on me* and not allow yourself to be influenced by other mental constructions, however attractive they may be.

The light and knowledge that Sri Aurobindo has given us infinitely surpasses all that has been taught previously. This must never be forgotten; and if you cling to me, you will get the necessary force and consciousness to resist any suggestions, expressed or otherwise.

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I will see you for a short while before you leave.
With all my tenderness and my blessings

9 April 1963

*

Debou, my dear little child,

I was pleased to read your long letter, except that your body should not resist the action of the Force and give you trouble. It must become more plastic and receptive.

As for food, you can certainly take fish if it suits your system. No doubt it is your aunt who will prepare it.

The progress in the sadhana depends far more on the sincerity of your aspiration than on the food you eat, especially if it is taken because it is needed and not out of desire. It is the vibrations of egoistic desire and attachment that slow down the progress, and the control of these vibrations is of primary importance.

I trust that you will have the realisation of the Divine Consciousness in your present life, but naturally for this, that Realisation must be the principal and essential thing for you—your sole preoccupation.

My tenderness and my force will always be there to help you.

With my blessings

3 August 1963

*

Debou, my dear child,

I hope that your health is better now.

There was no contradiction, neither in my thought nor in my word. I know that your life is consecrated to the realisation of the Divine, but in the progressive universal movement this consecration must be constantly renewed in order to be always in accord with the evolution. It isn't enough to say once and for all: "I belong to the Divine"; at every moment, one must give

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

oneself to Him and surrender one's will to His. Then the union becomes certain and effective.

With all my tenderness and my blessings

1 October 1963

*

Debou, my dear little child,

I was happy to receive your letter and to see that you were conscious of the beautiful experience that was given to you.

You must learn to be conscious of my presence in a very tangible way, so that you know I am always with you. However, if you feel the need to see me physically from time to time, it is not an impossible thing.

In any case, I am keeping a moment for you on 7th January for your birthday.

With all my tenderness and my blessings

13 December 1963

*

Debou, my dear little child,

We will try and find you someone suitable.

But to tell the truth, you cannot expect good work from a servant that you don't supervise.

That is why I always prefer to do the work myself rather than leave it to a maid or a man-servant. My most luminous meditations have sometimes occurred while I was cooking or polishing the wood floor. But it is true that it was not for myself that I was cooking or polishing the floor in my room.

The moral of the story is that one should not attach too much importance to these material things and that one must keep smiling in all circumstances.

With my tenderness and my blessings

7 February 1964

*

Series Six—Debou

Never be depressed, it is ingratitude, and when I scold you, take it as a sign of my love for you and a grace.

Your mama

1964

*

My dear Mama,

*There is a rumour in the Ashram that You said:
All the signs of Pralaya are apparent. Is it true?*

I never said that.

The Greek and Egyptian Gods exist, but their sadhanas seem to be forgotten. Are these Gods realisable, then?

What exactly do you mean by “sadhana” in this case? Do you mean the discipline or process by which one can enter into relation with them? In that case the process is always the same, no matter what entity one wants to enter into relation with: faith and aspiration.

With my tenderness and blessings

Yesterday night, I had a lovely dream: I sat in front of a statue of Shiva, very sad, but absorbed. All of a sudden You appeared behind Shiva and You told me: You will have the realisation.

It is good.

23 July 1965

*

(The opening of this letter is missing. It ends:) For a long time, I have been under the impression that the Greek gods are superior to the Indian Gods. Is it only in their aesthetic expression?

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Greek thought and art are far more materialistic, less spiritual than Hindu art and thought; that is why the modern mentality understands it better. But the future in its art and thought will totally surpass them and manifest a beauty and thought infinitely more integral, profound, rich and complete, in which spirit and matter will be united in perfect harmony.

Blessings

c. 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

*I would like to ask You a few questions regarding
the mantra You have given me.*

1. Should one set a precise time for the Japa?

You can do it if you find that it helps you to be regular.

2. Should one do it without eating?

This has no importance.

*3. You told me that I can do it sitting or walking.
Does this mean that a fixed place is not important?*

One must be able to repeat it constantly with concentration anywhere.

4. Should I continue at the same time the little fifteen-minute Japa of Panditji that I am also doing?

You can continue it if you feel no opposition. The aim is to establish the divine harmony so that no disorder, outer or inner, has the power to disturb you.

Tenderness and blessings

2 June 1967

*

Series Six—Debou

Debou, my dear child,

Your letter certainly did not displease me, but it saddened me because my love has never left you and I have always wanted you to be happy, peaceful and satisfied in the spiritual light and integral progress.

It is not because of a lack of interest or affection that I am unable to see you often; it is solely for lack of time.

Your note asking me when I could see you arrived at a moment when all my time was taken, taken in advance from long before. I wanted to see you quietly one morning and that is why I did not reply to you at once.

But *inwardly* I am always with you and you ought to feel it. You tell me that you have received blows, but they are not from me—I have *never* given you any.

I had planned to wash my hair on Monday the 18th, and I had kept my morning for this; but I am giving this up most willingly and I will see you at 10.15 on the morning of Monday the 18th, to make you understand and feel that you can always count on me.

In the meantime, meditate on the message that I have enclosed with my letter.² It will help you to understand what has happened to you.

With all my tenderness and my blessings

14 December 1967

*

My dear child,

I have not forgotten anything. I was just surprised that you could be so unhappy when my love has never abandoned you—your heart should feel it and know it... But let us not speak further about this obstinate unhappiness because I want it to go away. Come on 6th January at 8.00 in the morning. We

² This message is not available.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

will not talk about your birthday, but about the possibilities of the future and I will wish you a happy new year for all the years to come.

With all my tenderness

31 December 1968

*

If you are truly surrendered to the Divine, in the right manner and totally, then at every moment you will be what you ought to be, you will do what you ought to do, you will know what you ought to know. But for that you need to have transcended all the limitations of the ego.

*

It is to the sincerity of your aspiration that the divine love answers spontaneously.

Series Seven

Correspondence with Madanlal

Born on 16 July 1916, Madanlal Himatsingka grew up in Calcutta, married and became a businessman there. He visited the Ashram first in 1953 and then joined it in 1959 at the age of forty-three. From the beginning, Madanlal was involved in financial work for the Ashram. Dedicated to the publication and distribution of the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, he founded the All India Press in 1969 and the VAK Bookshop in 1980. For the last two-and-a-half decades of his life, he spent much of his time raising funds for the construction of the Matrimandir in Auroville. He passed away on 30 July 2004 at the age of eighty-eight.

Madanlal's correspondence covers the period from 1954 to 1973. It is entirely in English. The main topics are his personal life, his work and his spiritual effort. One senses in the correspondence both his desire to serve the Mother and his thirst for spiritual progress.

Ma,

There are many persons, groups and institutions in the West who feel that India is or will be the spiritual guru of the world; but we find that their knowledge of Indian spirituality is limited. Should we increase contact with these groups? Should we present them with books by Sri Aurobindo and you on a large scale? Which books would you recommend for foreign readers?

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Books recommended:

Sri Aurobindo: *The Ideal of Human Unity; The Human Cycle; The Life Divine; Essays on the Gita; Thoughts and Glimpses; The Superman; The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth.*

The Mother: *On Education; Words of Long Ago; Words of the Mother* (containing *Conversations with the Mother*); *The Four Austerities.*

Bulletin of Physical Education.

Mother, is there any possibility for me to realise the Divine in this life?

All depends on the sincerity of the aspiration. If the aspiration is sincere and steady, you are sure to reach the goal in this life. When one thinks like this, as you are doing, usually it is because things are ready in him for the realisation.

With my blessings¹

13 March 1954

*

Mother,

Who is the God Ganesh? I am told that you have written something about this God.

Mother, how to come in contact with Ganesh? Panditji² once gave me a Ganesh mantra and at times I repeat it regularly. First I say your name, Sri Aurobindo's name and then this mantra, trying to remember you in my heart. My childlike feeling is that if Lord Ganesh manifests before me, he will make me capable of doing a lot of work for the Mother—

¹ The two replies of this date were dictated by the Mother to Nolini Kanta Gupta. She signed the typed copies of them.

² Nilakantha Joshi of Rameshwaram.

Series Seven—Madanlal

giving me a lot of money for her. But I also feel that without the Mother's Grace, he will not appear. Mother, how can I know him?

My dear child,

In answer to your question I shall say that each one must invoke Ganesh according to his own feeling—the traditional way is not necessarily the best.

I will tell you my own experience about him.

In 1930 we were having regular meditations in the Prosperity hall on the significance of flowers. At one of these meditations, quite unexpectedly, Ganesh appeared suddenly to my inner view. He was of golden light and surrounded by a very luminous golden aura. His form was the usual one as in his images.

It was the first time I ever saw him and I expressed some surprise over his sudden apparition.

Then he told me, "You see I am a living being quite real and concrete—and to give you a concrete proof of my reality I shall send to you henceforth all the money you will need."

And on this promise he disappeared.

He kept his promise for years and the money was coming abundantly.

Then, in 1939, the Second World War started and everything got spoiled.

However, the true financial difficulties started only ten years later in 1949. Since then it is a struggle...

But if now you invoke Ganesh sincerely, he may resume his good offices through you. It can be tried.

With love and blessings

8 November 1962

*

Dear Mother,

I badly lack the intensity of aspiration and the initial effort needed to establish contact with the

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

psychic. Even there is no intensity in my prayer to You. Mother, help me to grow on the path of sadhana. I often feel that I am not progressing. Please do help.

Do not bother about the progress — it will come by itself with the growth of the sincerity.

Fund collection for the Mother will form a major part of my work in the future. In reply to my enquiry about Lord Ganesh some time back, You very graciously explained the whole thing and wrote at the end about collecting money: “But if now you invoke Ganesh sincerely, he may resume his good offices through you. It can be tried.” Since then I have been doing the Japa of the Ganesh mantra regularly, but it has not been effective so far. Even now I am doing this Japa, keeping Your image in my heart. Mother, should I change this traditional way and follow some other method?

Be plastic to the inner impulse, not too tied by fixed rules and programmes. Let your feeling have a more free play.

In any case you can be sure of the help.

With love and blessings

26 May 1963

*

Mother,

I do not know how things about me have been put before the Mother, so I thought at first of writing a detailed explanation. But ultimately the whole idea changed. “Why this explanation? Does not the Mother know everything? I am her child. She is here to bear, endure and pardon all our follies. Hence what is the necessity of an explanation?”

Mother, give us the capacity to receive and understand Thy guidance. I may not be able to express it, but my whole feeling is to be able to serve Thee in

Series Seven—Madanlal

*a way Thou desirest us to serve Thee.
Make me worthy of Thee.*

I know your feelings and appreciate your good will.
My love and blessings are always with you.

24 August 1964

*

(Madanlal's wife Karuna was dying of cancer. Two days before she passed away, Madanlal wrote:)

Mother Divine,

Karuna's condition is deteriorating every day. I am not so much worried now about her physical end, because the Mother's words that Karuna's soul has decided to leave the body have made me gradually prepared for this.

You said to me the other day, "I am trying to put her in contact with her soul and if I succeed I will consider it to be the Supreme Grace." But Mother, when the Divine Mother Herself is saying this, is it not already established?

Mother, we are your children, but after all we are children and have not any sadhana. Thy Grace alone can do something for Karuna, so that she gets the "conscious joy of contact with her soul". I feel that Karuna cannot aspire for it in her present condition of health. I earnestly pray to the Mother to grant this.

Madanlal,

Do as *she* asks—and be as calm as you can.

I am with you.

Blessings

4 December 1964

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

*(Madanlal's wife passed away on 5 December 1964.
Five days later, Madanlal wrote:)*

Mother,

*With humble submission I prayerfully ask the
following about Karuna:*

*(1) What is the significance of her passing away at
7.30 p.m. on the 5th of December?*

In the night of the 4th to the 5th, Sri Aurobindo, to whom I had spoken about her suffering, told me that she would leave her body peacefully on the 5th.

*(2) For two days before her passing away, she ap-
peared to be completely indrawn, although externally
conscious. Could she establish the contact with her
soul?*

It is because the contact with her soul was established that she was indrawn.

*(3) Why did she have to leave her body at a compara-
tively early age?*

This was a decision taken by her soul before this birth. The soul had chosen a kind of experience which could not last for many years.

*(4) Why was there such prolonged agony and suffer-
ing and then such a peaceful end?*

So long as the consciousness was turned outward and not aware of the soul's will, the agony was there. The union with the soul brought the peace.

*(5) Will her soul come again to take part in the
Mother's work of supramental manifestation?*

Series Seven—Madanlal

The soul is bound to come for the Divine's Work. When the time comes and the circumstances are favourable, we shall know about it.

Love and blessings

10 December 1964

*

Mother dear,

13th March is my wife's birthday. On the eve of this occasion, I wish to ask you more about her passing. You have said that there are two periods in life after death: first, the passage to the psychic world, and then the rest in that world. Did Karuna have an easy and quick passage to the final place of rest in the psychic world? Had she gone through it easily and unscathed? Are her physical, vital and mental sheaths dissolved or is she still in one of them, partially or fully?

The transition period was short; all the parts of her being connected directly or indirectly with me, are at rest and her soul is in perfect peace.

Had she still any memory of this life? Does she observe our movements and try to help us? She often used to say, "Even after death, I will keep a watch on you and try to help you to progress on the path of divine realisation." Is she consciously helping us? If so, why are we not aware of it?

This was a mental resolve and may not have lasted when she united with her soul.

12 March 1965

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Mother,

For the last few days I concentrate on your eyes as you very graciously look when I go for Pranam. I have selected the enclosed photograph for this purpose. I have hung up the photo and sit on my bed or in a chair and try to meditate to open myself to your Divine Force and reject the thoughts of the ordinary consciousness. I utter "OM Ma Mira sharanam mama" or simply "OM Ma". When thoughts come, I try resolutely to drive them away and utter "OM swaha".

Mother, is it all right? Will I receive Your Grace?

It is all right. Persevere. You are sure to succeed one day or another. My force and blessings are with you always.

31 March 1965

*

Mother,

What is preventing me from coming in conscious contact with Thy Grace? Mother, why don't you dissolve the obstacles or pull them out of my consciousness? I want Thee, Mother, and I want to serve Thee! Please do something. I can only pray.

Mother, does my prayer or call reach Thee sometimes?

I am always aware of your call and always send an answer.

In the quietness of the mind you will receive it.

With love and blessings

30 April 1965

*

Mother Divine,

In Thy own Divine words I pray to Thee: "What is this small meanness, stupidity, vanity, ignorance,

Series Seven—Madanlal

bad will that is there hiding in a corner, preventing me from crossing the threshold to the new discovery?"³

Mother, what is the defect and weakness in me which I am unable to find and pull out? Please help.

Madanlal, my dear child,

It is better not to concentrate on one's defects and weaknesses.

This life upon earth as it is at present is a constant struggle with all the opposite forces outside — to that constant exterior struggle, those who want to do yoga have to add the constant struggle against the inferior nature which stands in the way. To counterbalance this strain, it is better to concentrate on the positive side of the trust in the Divine's Grace and Mercy which is always there to help, guide and comfort.

If you can establish and keep in you this faith and confidence, then the way becomes easier.

With my love and blessings

16 July 1965

*

Mother,

I received a phone call from Karuna's mother, informing me that she is coming here on the 17th February by plane. She is not keeping good health these days. She is feeling very weak. She has asked me to pray to Thee for her health so that she is able to go to Thee for Pranams on every Friday.

I was thinking that if she finds it difficult to climb the steps, she can be brought up in a chair by our boys who are accustomed to do this work and will do it very willingly once a week on Fridays.

³ From the Mother's conversation of 8 June 1955. See *Questions and Answers 1955*, Collected Works of the Mother (CWM, second edition), vol. 7, p. 196.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

With love and blessings

11 February 1966

*

Mother,

Regarding the Coloured Flower Picture Diary. Friends suggest that advertisements in this diary will not look decent. We should raise funds from other sources.

I pray for the Mother's decision. Of course the diary will look nice without advertisements.

Yes, better *no* advertisements.

Blessings

8 July 1966

*

Mother,

At my request, Thou gave me the mantra “OM anandamayi chaitanyamayi satyamayi parame”. But Mother, the mantra “OM Ma Mira sharanam mama” has always appealed to me more, because I have faith that all the transcendental powers of the Divine Mother are embodied in Thee.

This mantra is good and you can keep it.

I often recite:

*“Cry not to heaven, for she alone can save.
For this the silent Force came missioned down;
In her the conscious Will took human shape:
She only can save herself and save the world.”⁴
Mother, shall I be able to realise this some day?*

⁴ Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo (CWSA) vol. 34, p. 461

Series Seven—Madanlal

Certainly you can.

Keep your faith steady and aspire with patience and confidence; the result is sure.

Love and blessings

29 August 1966

*

Mother,

As graciously permitted by Thee I keep on repeating the mantra “OM Ma Mira sharanam mama” and try to concentrate on the meaning of each word of it. This sometimes brings calm and peace. I continue to chant it often. But the greatest hindrance seems to be mental thoughts. Mother, when will the veil over the psychic be lifted? Will it happen at all? Sometimes I feel very depressed and find myself so weak. Sometimes I feel that I have not even started to tread the path.

Mother, I earnestly pray for the opening of my psychic. Will you do it? I am Thy child, so ignorant and foolish. Thou alone can help and save me.

Keep your aspiration ardent and steady — the result is *sure*.

With all my love and blessings

2 December 1966

*

Mother!

On New Year’s day, my written prayer to Thee was to grant me the boon that is to descend in 1967. Perhaps the non-reply to my prayer confirms my belief that it is not possible to become a divine instrument overnight, at least for a person like me whose psychic has not even come in the front and who is only guided mentally.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Anything is possible with faith and confidence.

My answer was not written but the needful was done and if your trust is steady, your aspiration will be fulfilled.

With love and blessings

My other query was about learning by heart lines of Savitri and meditating on them. I believe in the mantric efficacy of these lines and think they will help me to achieve more quickly the true aspiration for the true realisation. Mother, what is the best way for me according to my present nature? I humbly pray for guidance suited to my present needs.

You may use *Savitri* lines as mantra — they are powerful.

29 January 1967

*

Mother,

I am trying to remember Thee always. Often I am chanting the mantra “OM Ma Mira sharanam mama”. This I do regularly. But Mother, I find that this has led me nowhere and I am standing in the same place as before. Mother, how long will you allow your child to remain merged in ignorance? And in ignorance, how can I serve Thee?

Mother, outwardly there seem to be no problems for me; you have given me everything. What prevents me, then, from coming in contact with Thee inwardly? Mother dear, establish in me the inner contact with Thee. Otherwise there seems to be no chance for me in this life.

Earnestly praying for Thy guidance and help. I am your ignorant child.

Madanlal, my dear child,

Find your joy and satisfaction in being of service to the

Series Seven—Madanlal

Divine's work upon earth — which is a realised fact — and the rest will come in due course, surely sooner than you expect.

With all my love and blessings

6 April 1967

*

Mother,

I earnestly pray to be able to receive Thy inner guidance and to be worthy of Thy work. Mother, why is it not coming?

Surely it will come.

With my love and blessings

22 June 1967

*

Mother,

*May I take it that Thy response will be awakened in me and that your last utterances to me were a definite promise, such as we read in Thy Prayers and Meditations: “Our Divine Mother is with us and has promised us identification with the supreme and total consciousness.”?*⁵

This promise is still valid.

Mother, do I receive what you are trying to give to me?

You are progressing well and receiving more and more.

With love and blessings

6 August 1967

*

⁵ *Prayers and Meditations*, CWM vol. 1, p. 254

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Mother,

As my Guru, my divine guide, art Thou satisfied with my spiritual progress? Are there any special directions for sadhana specially suited to my nature?

In general, it is better not to speak of the “sadhana”. Even the guru does not speak of it usually; it is only when there is something wrong that he points it out to the disciple. In your case all is going on normally, so I have nothing to say.

Be quiet and confident. You are advancing properly.
With love and blessings

17 November 1967

*

Mother,

My wife's mother is declining fast. Due to a failing heart, water has accumulated in the chest. According to the doctors, her condition still continues to be serious. I have informed her family about her condition.

Mother, my only faith is in Thee. I know that the Mother is doing whatever is best. I only pray to Thee again that Karuna's mother remains under Thy protection and that her whole being returns to Thee only if it has decided to leave. Mother, do take her under Thy complete protection.

Mother, what should I do under the present circumstances? What are Thy commands for me?

You are doing what is necessary. The Divine Grace is with her. Now her soul will decide to stay in her body or to go, according to her spiritual need and the Lord's command.

My love is with her.

Blessings

c. early 1968

*

Series Seven—Madanlal

Mother,

Suddenly for the last two days I have a feeling of sex which has been almost absent for the last few years. I have a feeling that it is projected into me from outside. What is this, Mother? I pray that it goes away.

You must have picked it up during your journey in the North. Keep quiet and do not think of it—it will go.

5 February 1968

*

Mother,

Every day from seven to eight in the morning I am trying to call you sincerely. Other times also I try to remember Thee. Mother, do you receive my call in the morning?

Not only I receive your call, but I answer very regularly — are you not receiving the answer?... or do you mistake it for something else!

Love and blessings

30 June 1968

*

Mother,

These days I do not find joy in anything; nothing interests me from within; everything appears to be so dull and devoid of all happiness. Physically, vitally, and mentally I am better than before; externally—financially and otherwise—I have no problems as such. I miss something, I need something, but I am unable to locate or explain it.

What is all this, Mother? And how to overcome it?

It is the sign that you are ready to find out your psychic being

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

and to surrender to the Divine all the movements of your being.

Your birthday is on the 16th of this month. I shall see you in the morning.

Let it be for you a new birth, the birth to the Divine Consciousness.

With love and blessings

11 July 1968

*

Madanlal, my dear child,

It is not exact that you are doing nothing for me — on the contrary you are very helpful and your illness must pass away quickly, so that you may begin to work again.

The experience [of illness] you had in Calcutta was the result of an old formation that was weighing on your mind and for the removal of which I was working since several years.

Be confident and let the healing forces work fully, so that you may recover soon.

With love and blessings

4 March 1969

*

Mother,

Another night I have passed restlessly and sleeplessly. Now for the last three days the fever rises twice in a day; formerly it was not so. Asthma is constant.

Yesterday morning I had the feeling that the Mother is cleaning my whole system by taking away my cough and the impure things in the stomach.

Mother, I know that I have less confidence and am less open; but Mother, in spite of that, cannot Thy Grace, Protection and Blessings act? Mother, the suffering is much.

I want you to be cured and stronger than before.

Do not listen to the opposing forces.

Series Seven—Madanlal

Love and blessings

9 March 1969

*

Mother,

I bow down with gratitude at Thy feet for Thy written promise of "Ainsi soit-il" ["So be it"] for the removal of my illness. When the Divine herself has written, it is already done.

Last night for the first time I realised the importance of my illness.

Madanlal, my dear child,

It is good that you have been and are conscious; this helps the working of the force and hastens the complete cure that must be the result.

My love and blessings are with you.

17 March 1969

*

Mother,

Last night I had a feeling that by Thy Grace and Force the disease is almost over. In the morning when I went for Pranam, I had the same feeling that the fever and disease are gone. I pray that they may vanish completely so that the doctor does not insist upon giving me injections. Mother, are the injections necessary at this stage?

If the fever continues in the night, it is better to take the injections (I shall see that they do not interfere with the working of the Force).

If this night (from 18 to 19) the fever does not come, you might ask the Doctor to postpone the injection until the report of the test comes.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

With love and blessings

18 March 1969

*

Mother,

*At the end of the year, I wish to ask Thee: Have I
become more sincere to Thee and Thy work?*

I am quite happy with you and your work.

With love and blessings

31 December 1969

*

Mother,

I humbly put before Thee the following questions:

*1. It is said that the Ashram Press is the Mother's Press
and the New Press [All India Press] is Madanlal's.
Mother, is not the New Press equally Thine?*

Yes, it is equally mine.

*2. It is further said that the New Press has been started
in the spirit of competition and grabbing power. There
was no necessity for it. Mother, is the New Press not
useful for Thy work and has it not been started with
the sole intention of serving Thee and the Master and
has it not Thy full approval?*

Yes, it has been started with the intention of service and it will prove more and more useful.

Do not care about what people may say in their ignorance and be sure of my full support and confidence.

With love and blessings

16 June 1970

*

Series Seven—Madanlal

Mother,

I have taken up and am doing the publication work. I devote my full time to it. But, Mother, am I progressing spiritually? At least I do not feel it. I pray for Thy guidance and blessings.

The progress is often better when it is not felt. Continue with your work and do not worry. All is well.

Love and blessings

21 March 1971

*

Mother,

During my meditations, I try to concentrate on some aspect of the Divine. I am engaged now in printing and publishing the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. I am trying to do it with detachment and devotion. Most of the time I spend thinking of my work and praying for the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's help for its success. Mother, is this not equivalent to meditation and concentration, and will it not bring spiritual results?

Yes.

Sometimes when the work is not proceeding as expected, I feel depressed and uneasy. Mother, show me a practical way to overcome it.

The way is to keep always and in all circumstances an ardent and constant aspiration.

Love and blessings

2 April 1971

*

(Madanlal outlined for the Mother three projects he wished to accomplish. His letter ends:)

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

This work requires sincere effort in the spirit of dedication and involves much finance. I want to do it entirely as part of my sadhana. I pray to ask Thee as my Guru and Divine Guide: Will I succeed both spiritually and physically in the above three projects? What possibilities does the Mother foresee? Shall I go ahead fully?

Keep a steady faith.

My blessings are with you.

12 April 1971

*

I have just received your letter; let this year be the year of your liberation from all sex trouble.

Surely Sri Aurobindo will help you to conquer.

With love and blessings

14 July 1971

*

Mother,

Tomorrow is my birthday. Here is a short report of my work.

The Mother's New Press, called All India Press, has produced from January 1970 to July 1971 the following books: [details given about the publication of 46 books].

Mother, I have undertaken this work of Thine in the full spirit of dedication. This is the work of our Lord. I wish to know: Has He accepted my offering and is He, along with you, guiding me on the path through this work?

Bonne Fête

To Madanlal, with love, appreciation of his good work

Series Seven—Madanlal

and blessings for the realisation of his aspirations

16 July 1971

*

Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press and All India Press are both equally working for the Ashram and the work is completing one another. The work of both is quite satisfactory.

Blessings

7 April 1972

*

Madanlal,

Past experience has proved that when you are far from me it is not good for your health. But you must take rest. Is it not possible here?

Love and blessings

9 June 1972

*

Mother,

Tomorrow is my birthday. I pray to Thee:

- (1) *Give me good health to serve Thee better.*
- (2) *Make me free from desires, preferences and sex impulses, to enable me to grow in Thy consciousness.*
- (3) *Psychic contact is the first thing. It is said that sadhana does not even begin without it, so I have not yet started the sadhana of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. Mother, I do not know what I should do to progress on the path. You are my only refuge. I pray to know what is best for my sadhana.*

Do not worry, and go on with your work. You are progressing all right.

My love and blessings are always with you.

15 July 1972

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Madanlal,

I am quite satisfied with your work and have never expressed dissatisfaction about it. Why do you trouble yourself? It is for me that you are working and so long as I am satisfied, you ought to be at peace.

Love and blessings

21 July 1972

*

Mother,

From 1st October I decided to do the following:

(1) Half an hour sunbath in the morning at the time of sunrise, with the attitude that the Sun will help to open me physically, vitally, mentally and spiritually to the Divine Force.

(2) Half an hour meditation with a prayer for inner opening for contact, so that all works become Thy work and I get correct guidance.

(3) Taking food (breakfast, lunch, dinner) all alone, offering the food at Thy Feet with a prayer to open the entire being to Thy Force so that I can enjoy all-round health.

(4) To offer at Thy Divine Feet Rs. 1000 daily up to 24th November with a feeling of complete detachment and a prayer to become open to Thy Force to have inner contact.

(5) Visit Sri Aurobindo's room daily till 24th November with a prayer to give the victory over power, sex and wealth.

(6) Try to keep constant wakefulness in talk, work and sleep (which I try to do but fail constantly).

Mother, the gist of this whole prayer, according to my childish notion, is to break me open to Thy Force in order to serve Thee better. Praying for my prayer to be heard, I am Thy ignorant child.

Series Seven—Madanlal

This is quite all right and I fully agree.
You can count on my help for its realisation.
My love and blessings are always with you.

13 October 1972

*

Mother,

When I observe my past, I find that wealth and power have no special claim on me, but sex seems to be in the grain of my character from birth, and that is why it is so difficult to change. I am quite conscious of this defect and constantly trying to get rid of it, but always I fail. Mother, what should I do to overcome it? I find it very difficult.

Do not think so much about it. It will go.

Love and blessings

20 October 1972

*

Madanlal, my dear child,

Through your work you are doing sadhana — and your progress is quite satisfactory. Do not worry and go on quietly; you are not concerned with what the others do. It can in no way alter the usefulness of your own work.

Do your work as a service to the Divine and be in peace.
All is well.

With love and blessings

28 November 1972

*

Mother,

You have been so kind to me that I cannot express it in words. You have been and are giving me everything — but Mother, I feel that I am throwing it all

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

away and cannot retain even a portion of it. Mother, is there no way to make me hold what you so graciously shower on me? I find myself helpless and weak.

Moreover, Mother, I find no interest in life these days. No work interests me. It is a peculiar state. It is so intense that I feel no interest in living. Sometimes I pray that I may leave this body quietly and merge myself in Thy consciousness. Mother, what is this? I want to serve Thee sincerely, but how can I do this in the present state in which I am?

Mother, please help.

I shall tell you only one thing:

I need you for my work.

Have patience and courage.

My love and blessings are with you always.

9 January 1973

*

Mother,

In spite of all Thy help, I still feel very restless and unhappy. As my Guru you know all about my inner and outer difficulties. Mother Divine, I pray to know—

- (1) *What is the cause of my personal difficulties?*
- (2) *What should be done to get them solved?*

With a prayer to be really worthy to be called Thy child.

It is always the ego that is unhappy. Do not listen to your ego and rely for all on the Divine and peace and a quiet joy will enter your heart.

Love and blessings

7 March 1973

Series Eight

Correspondence with Gautam Chawalla

Born on 13 December 1934, Gautam Chawalla joined the Ashram in May 1952 at the age of seventeen. At the beginning he worked on an Ashram farm growing coconuts and assisted the Mother doing various tasks in the Ashram main building. Later, he founded AuroTravels, a travel agency in Pondicherry. He lived in the Ashram for sixty-two years, passing away on 15 June 2014 at the age of seventy-nine.

Gautam's correspondence with the Mother covers the period from 1953 to 1968. At first he asked questions about himself and his work, but then began asking general questions about sadhana and the future. The correspondence is in French, with a few exceptions, and appears here in translation.

When you go to Mother, you should always smile.¹

20 June 1953

*

Mother, take me in your arms so that I can sleep there quietly like a child, and nothing bad will be able to separate me from you.

To Gautam,
With love and blessings

4 April 1954

*

¹ This sentence and the next were written by the Mother in the third person.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

He who has need of outer changes is not progressing inwardly; but he who is progressing inwardly can always live in the same outer conditions, for they constantly reveal new truths to him.

30 January 1958

*

O Love! You have isolated me...²

Have patience.

I am in your heart—and the day of working in the physical presence is sure to come again; one must know how to wait.

13 May 1962

*

Gautam, my dear little one,

Bravo for the letter in French! Continue to learn it well; it will be useful some day.

And do not forget that I am always with you.

With my blessings

18 May 1962

*

*Ma, Y is giving me French lessons twice a week, from six to seven in the evening on Mondays and Thursdays.
I find it very helpful.*

She is a good teacher. Be a good student and you are bound to succeed.

With my blessings

29 May 1962

*

² The disciple had been working directly with the Mother.

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

Ma, Your coconuts are happy. Yesterday we had 4350 cocos. This is the most till now.

Bravo! for the coconuts and my affection to Gautam.

20 June 1962

*

Ma, I have had a problem for some time. When I look at Your photographs, no matter which ones, a suggestion comes to me: "This is not Mother", even though I know it is You. Ma, I don't know if it is a hostile suggestion. In the photograph You have a form, yet it is not the form one usually sees. It is difficult to express.

Ma, You know everything. I have put the problem as clearly as possible and the rest you know.

It is not a hostile suggestion but a partial, incomplete experience. Photographs merely show an incomplete fragmentary image of a form that is itself transient and fleeting.

My consciousness, my true being not only has an eternal form but many immortal forms, and each person can see the form that is in accord with him. Some day you will surely see one of my true forms.

With my blessings

7 September 1962

*

Ma, the soaps have been outside for some time. You said that you wanted to arrange them. If you have a little time, I am ready with the list of powders and powder-puffs.

I have marked on the soap list those that I want you to bring. Arrange them according to place and kind—all the Indian soaps can be put *at the bottom* of the cupboard. But if all do not fit in one cupboard, I was thinking of discarding the Indian soaps. Try

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

this arrangement first and come on Wednesday at 10.45.

16 September 1962

*

Gautam, my dear child,

The new room will be cleaned by Dyuman and Champak-lal who are already taking care of the old room. So, for the time being, no one else is necessary.

Anyway, I know very well that you wanted to do this work, thinking it would give you the opportunity to see me more often—but that is not the case because the room has a particular entrance, and [end of reply missing]

14 December 1962

*

Sweet Mother, the two gardeners at the Industrial Garden do not wish to work there from this Saturday, because they are not satisfied with Rs. 1.00 a day. They say that the work is more and the pay is less. Secondly, many workers in the Paper Factory have got an increment—this the gardeners know and so they expect the same. They are good gardeners and they work well.

I pray to Mother for the decision.

P.S. It is difficult to get anyone to work for Rs. 1.00 per day nowadays.

You can give them 1.25 a day.

10 January 1963

*

One single thought of You, O Love!

The calm of Eternity and the felicity of Peace!

11 February 1963

*

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

Ma, the Doctor has given me permission to go to the Ashram tomorrow, Sunday. Do You think I can start work on Monday? I feel perfectly fine.

Ma, I will take the necessary precautions, but let me do the work.

Gautam, my dear child,

You can come to see me for a minute tomorrow, Sunday, at 10.15, so that I can see if you are in a condition to work.

6 March 1963

*

Gautam, my dear child,

Do you believe it helps you to progress in yoga by speaking crudely and having bad manners?

18 March 1963

*

Gautam, my dear child,

About ten days ago, I saw around you a dark and aggressive cloud which was unpleasant. As a result I wrote you a note to alert you, but I did not send it, hoping that under the pressure of the Divine Consciousness you would become aware and tell me what it was about. But nothing came and I kept the note.

I am sending it to you today—it will be for the future.

I have thought about you a lot these days, but I have a lot of work as well and I cannot call you. I will see you on the first.

With my blessings

26 March 1963

*

Gautam, my dear child,

I wrote because of what I had seen.

I did not attach much importance to the M affair because

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

I know for certain that when people fight they are all equally wrong.

But in your nature there is something intolerant that gets angry very easily, and this is most contrary to spiritual development because it is a narrowness of mind that prevents you from putting yourself in the place of others and understanding their viewpoint. Also it is a lack of control over the vital, which is absolutely contrary to the self-mastery required for the sadhana.

With my blessings

26 March 1963

*

Gautam, my dear child,

Cling to me and fear nothing—soon it will pass.

With my tenderness

30 March 1963

*

Certainly, my dear little one, I expect to see you tomorrow morning. I know that what you have is quite painful, but that is no reason for not coming, if you take precautions and walk slowly.

Tell the Doctor that you can come and that I have permitted it, and I am sure he will let you come. Come at 10.30.

Do not think of your pain, think of me instead, and you will see that you suffer less.

With all my tenderness

31 March 1963

*

My child, today you will be born to Divine Love—the True Love.

With my blessings

1 April 1963

*

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

Gautam, my dear child,

Your observations are correct and I am happy that you see clearly into yourself. Every person always has a part in him that is slower to change and holds him back. One has to have patience and deal with it like a child who is going to school; that is, keep repeating the same thing to him and make him conscious of the need to open to the Divine Force and be transformed.

So you have to be patient, but at the same time *very confident* that you are on the right track.

I am always with you.

Tenderly

2 April 1963

*

Ma, I have come from the hospital. They have not taken an X-ray because they found too much gas in the stomach, especially in the kidney, so they have given some tablets to be taken for two days. On Tuesday the 16th at about 3.30 p.m. they will try again.

Ma, is it necessary to go through all this once more? I really feel there is nothing inside. The drugs, injections, etc. are not very encouraging. I wait for Mother's guidance.

It is better to go through it once for all and finish with it.

Love

14 April 1963

*

Ma, since you wrote to me I truly wanted to have that X-ray test. But they only found some gas in the kidney. You know, Ma, I have spent the last four days in an intolerable state of consciousness: the medicines, the injections, the purgatives, the fever and the hospital—all this has weakened me. Now I need to rest.

Ma, I pray to You with all my love to take pity

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

on me and keep me far from this affair. I am not complaining, but something in the body is resisting. You know very well that this X-ray will be useless.

Ma, I don't want to go. How to explain to others what is going on in me? You know, and that is why I am imploring You not to let me go.

O Love, You are my only refuge.

All right, my dear little one. I wanted to write to you this morning to put an end to all this. It is really quite useless. Rest, and on 19th morning come with Champaklal to arrange the curios.

And we will speak no more about illness!

Tenderness and blessings

17 April 1963

*

Ma, after writing to You, I went to see the director of agriculture in Pondicherry State and he gave me for free some Delidrine, a medicine against termites. I myself worked with the gardeners there till seven in the evening.

Ma, while I was spraying the trees with water and medicine (we treated 300 trees yesterday evening), I felt a contact with the trees which had been interrupted during my illness. And at a certain moment I knew that all will be well.

Ma, I am not tired; on the contrary, I feel the joy of being Your instrument.

My dear child,

I am very happy you took care of the trees. I knew that it was because of your “illness” that they fell sick, and now I am sure they will recover.

Tenderness

30 April 1963

*

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

O Love! Your child

Dear child,
My love is always with you.

22 May 1963

*

Ma, this time You have 3765 coconuts.

Tenderness and blessings

9 July 1963

*

*Ma, Your goodness is beyond compare. O Love, take
me into Yourself.*

I keep you always in my protecting arms.

25 September 1963

*

*Ma, these shirts have been made for the USA. I have
24 in all, but I am sending you a few for your opinion.*

*Ma, my thoughts are full of You and my heart
adores You. Just give me patience till I see You on the
first.*

Your shirts are very beautiful and well arranged.

The first is only two days away, so you don't need a lot
of patience. Don't you know there is a great joy in waiting for
something you love?

Tenderness and blessings

29 December 1963

*

*Ma, M has arrived. She is very fine. She has given this
pen to me, but it is too beautiful for me. Ma, I offer it
to You. It is eternal—no refill is necessary.*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

How does it work? I will keep it for a few days; then I will return it to you so that you can use it... eternally!

Blessings

2 January 1964

*

Ma, we have water in the Industrial Garden. I pray for Your blessings.

Welcome to the water, and my blessings.

20 January 1964

*

Ma, tomorrow morning D and M are going to Madras. D has fixed an appointment with the dentist. I have toothache, so if You agree I can go with them. But Ma, I have work here. I cannot decide what to do.

It is not you who are deciding, it is your teeth that have decided to ache.

So you can go with D and M, and I give all three of you my blessings!

6 February 1964

*

Ma, we have received an order from the USA for 700 large marbled sheets of paper. The marbling must be finished before the end of the month. I started yesterday, but something is not okay. Ma, I pray for Your help.

Concentrate before starting the work and work *calmly*.

Everything will be fine.

Blessings

18 March 1964

*

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

Ma, this time You have 4086 coconuts.

Very good.

Love

27 May 1964

*

Gautam, my dear child,

Your blunder is forgotten—but do not do it again.

With my blessings

23 July 1964

*

Ma, this time You have 4188 coconuts in Your garden.

Bravo!

Blessings

22 September 1964

*

Ma, that day blessed of all days—service in Your physical presence—is it still far away?

“A day will come” (as the perfume Arys says). But one must know how to wait and hold on.

Tenderness

11 November 1964

*

Ma, thanks to You, this time in full winter Your coconut trees have given 5698 coconuts.

Bravo!

Blessings

10 December 1964

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Gautam,

I would like you to arrange the exhibition of Ashram products for export which will take place in the town on February 6th.

A lovely occasion to display your good taste!

Blessings

2 February 1965

*

Ma, this time Your coconut trees have yielded 3860 coconuts.

Blessings

24 February 1965

*

Ma, this time You have got 2568 coconuts.

Bravo!

Blessings

5 May 1965

*

Ma, You are my only refuge!

Remain tightly nestled in this refuge.

Tenderness

7 May 1965

*

Ma, enclosed are two photos of our new dog. The photos are not good, but she is really beautiful and very sensitive and intelligent. Ma, the dog has no name. I pray to You to give one—a French name.

“*Fidèle.*” She is gentle.

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

Blessings

May 1965

*

*Ma, I do my work, but I no longer have the privilege
of service to You. And yet my dreams are of service
alone.*

You must take this morning's flower as an assurance for the future.

Blessings

15 June 1965

*

Ma, teach me disinterested work.

Yes.

With my blessings

7 July 1965

*

Money is like water, to remain pure it must run.

15 August 1965

*

*Being conscious of all the movements of one's being is
not enough, is it? One must also know how to change
them. How to do this?*

This is precisely the object of the integral yoga. It is by making the higher consciousness come down into the fourfold material³ that one can change one's character and all the movements of one's being.

6 January 1966

*

³ Mind, life, body and soul.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

My little one whom I love,

I am not at all angry. But it will be good if you listen to my direct communications!

3 June 1966

*

Ma, yesterday You once again had 4670 coconuts.

Totally You have had 9162 coconuts in a single month.

Your trees are happy, but...

Bravo for the coconuts! And bravo for the trees if they are happy!

Being happy is the best way of showing one's gratitude to the Divine.

With my tenderness and my blessings

16 June 1966

*

Love?

You doubt it?!! Mine is always with you.

15 July 1966

*

You told me that you are my friend. But circumstances separate us, don't they? This has always happened to me.

I see that your vital is pessimistic. Pessimism is the enemy of spiritual life, which requires a peaceful and luminous trust.

When your vital gives way to its defeatist imaginations, tell it: "Keep quiet, you are blaspheming the Divine!"

7 September 1966

*

The world is a matter of the degree of Consciousness,

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

isn't it? Difference creates authority, and fear follows authority—so where is love?

Yes, it is like that in the vital world, which is the domain of the adverse forces—despotism and fear are the great tools of the Asuras. But that has nothing to do with the divine world. Indeed, it is the negation of the divine world, it is the falsehood that Truth must destroy and replace with compassion and love.

8 September 1966

*

*Behind my work there is ambition, behind my love
there is personality, and behind my purity there is fear.
O You!!!*

Since you are conscious of this, it proves that you are on the way to their elimination. The vital mixes its egoistic impurity into all movements. But when one becomes conscious, one should offer all these impurities to the Divine and they vanish.

9 September 1966

*

*We are judging things as good or bad depending on
their advantage to us. What bargaining!*

Yes, this is precisely the human way of judging, and this is why it is completely false. The Divine alone sees the true value of persons and can help them to become the best they can be.

10 September 1966

*

Observation: Nature—an élan of aspiration in complete repose. Man—a horrible mixture of gross needs in agitation. And yet man is evolved?

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Yes, he has come out of pure animality, but he still has all his roots in it, and he will break out of animality only when he will have gone beyond the mind.

It is the mind that has placed man above the animal, but man is merely an incomplete intermediary being. It is only when the Supramental manifests that this being will become divine.

11 September 1966

*

*Innumerable are my stupidities—but a path is there
and the thirst for an Absolute Perfection. Guide me,
O Love!*

Yes, the path is open before you.

And I will lead you by the hand. You are sure to reach the goal.

12 September 1966

*

Who are You?

I have already told you.

What do I have?

The Divine at the centre of your being.

13 September 1966

*

At a certain point, everyone is very sensitive. Touch that point, even in the most developed beings, and it is over. Why?

The more developed and conscious one is, the more sensitive one becomes, and as a result one becomes more vulnerable to the shocks of outer disorder, unless one can face it with the

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

imperturbable calm of the Supreme Harmony.

14 September 1966

*

To what extent is the supramental force effective upon earth?

Exactly in proportion to the goodwill and receptivity of each one.

15 September 1966

*

*For some time now I am able to foresee events, but they are always commonplace or not at all pleasant.
Why?*

These are the first experiences of knowledge by identity, and in these experiences the phenomenon of identity is much more important than the circumstance of the identification.

Later, when the capacity has become conscious and voluntary, then one can choose the object of one's identification.

16 September 1966

*

Sri Aurobindo has told us that the Supramental is All-Powerful—so why this condition: “in proportion to the goodwill and receptivity of each one”?

It is not a *condition*. It is a *fact*. Because He wants it that way.

17 September 1966

*

Tired. I am tired of everything. O friend, save me from a bitter, dried-up heart.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

There is only one remedy to this malady which comes from a dissatisfied vital. It is to find your psychic being (the vesture of the Divine) and to unite with it. Then you will find joy in the Divine Force and the tiredness will disappear. If you decide to take up this liberating work, you can count on my full help.

18 September 1966

*

Love among humans is based on remembrance, isn't it?

In the material world, love expresses itself through the need to be close, to unite, to become one. The persistence of remembrance is rather the effect of love and not its basis.

19 September 1966

*

I have suffered enough! If You truly love me, set me free at any cost. How can I find my soul?

Stop complaining. You are suffering because some part of your being has a perverse attraction to suffering.

In fact, the circumstances of your life would seem perfectly enviable to many people who aspire for a spiritual life.

Observe this mania for suffering sincerely and you will see that it is a pose of your vital which hopes in this way to attract the sympathy of others and maybe even the divine compassion.

20 September 1966

*

If one loves somebody, to what extent can one act and change the life of the person one loves?

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

It all depends on the quality of the love. If it is an egoistic, monopolising love, one can do nothing for the person one thinks one loves.

Only divine love has the power to change someone's life by opening in him the doors of his soul.

21 September 1966

*

What You have written to me is quite true—but I just want to tell You that I have never complained to anyone except the Divine (You). Divine Grace I have not felt, but Your Love, yes!

What difference can you make between Grace and love? Love is the Grace's means of action, so it is quite natural that one feels love first.

22 September 1966

*

A beautiful landscape has always helped me come out of my smallness. Once again life is beautiful and calm.

Bravo! That's good!

23 September 1966

*

It is said that Time is the great healer. It is true, isn't it, because with the passing of time one forgets the cause of the injury? A question of memory.

It is not because one forgets that the saying is true, for then it would be meant for men who are completely ordinary and live in their surface consciousness. But what is true is that the whole world is in perpetual transformation; everything changes at every moment, and for those who aspire and are supple,

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

time is the great remedy because with time they can cure all their ills and imperfections and transform themselves totally.

Sri Aurobindo has said: “Learn how to wait and you will put Time on your side.”

24 September 1966

*

You speak of the perpetual transformation of the world—but what is it that changes? Nature? Matter? Consciousness? Then why are the problems the same since the beginning?

There is only one problem—that of “separation”. All the others follow from it. And there is only one solution. This problem will remain until the separation has been abolished and fusion with the Divine Consciousness has become a reality. But the whole creation is moving towards this in a perpetual state of change. It is only for a superficial, short-sighted, limited vision that the world does not seem to change.

Have you read *Savitri*? This theory that the world turns perpetually in a circle without changing or progressing is the great argument of Death in his effort to prove to Savitri that her hope of transformation is far-fetched.

26 September 1966

*

What are the conditions to be observed in order to earn money for You?

Sincerity, straightforwardness, scrupulous honesty, disinterestedness, courage, endurance, perseverance—and never to forget what dignity and honour there is in working for the Divine.

With all that, one is sure of success.

26 September 1966

*

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

Yes, I have read Savitri several times and I have understood and felt the truth of what Sri Aurobindo says. But tell me, what has changed? I don't doubt the possibility of a total change, but nothing has completely changed, has it?

If you apply the word “change” to the supramental realisation, then certainly it has not taken place in a concrete way upon earth. But before that happens, a number of changes have to take place, many progressive changes, and these are the ones I am talking about.

Life is in perpetual transformation so that it may achieve the integral transformation in the Divine Life.

28 September 1966

*

What is the power of a prayer?

Prayer, if it is sincere and spontaneous, has the same power as aspiration. I am talking about prayer that arises spontaneously from the heart, not about prayer that is memorised and repeated more or less mechanically, because that has a very diminished power and almost no effectiveness.

30 September 1966

*

Many people here have lost their sense of security. Why?

Because instead of keeping their faith in the Divine Grace intact, they have started to think about what will happen to them if I leave this body.

There are others who are here only for their material comfort; they are frightened because they find the financial situation uncertain.

3 October 1966

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

*It seems to me that here, instead of losing our egos,
we nourish them—and You encourage us. Why?*

It is the concentration of power that has this effect. Instead of using this power to transform themselves, as it ought to be used, most people use it to strengthen their ego.

I certainly do not encourage this, far from it. I am a distressed witness.

4 October 1966

*

*Even those who have been here for a very long time
become strange in their old age. Is it because con-
sciousness depends on one's health?*

In no way. Consciousness is eternal and nothing can affect it. But the physical body is rarely infused with consciousness, and, even when it is, it is only partly infused.

The body, as it is at present, is like a musical instrument (piano or violin) and if some strings or notes are missing, then even the most perfect musician cannot perfectly express music through them.

The consciousness is intact, but its expression is incomplete.

5 October 1966

*

*In the last four years since you have withdrawn, the
Ashram has changed a lot. There is chaos everywhere.
People are concerned only about their personal affairs,
and each one exploits You. Why???*

Probably their ego interests them more than the Divine or even more than the divine life. Or rather their ego is master of the house—it runs the house!

6 October 1966

*

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

We call You “Mother”, but this name is associated with a human quality, maternal and imperfect. How do you see “the Mother”?

It is Sri Aurobindo who called me Mother and it is his conception of the mother that he wanted for me. For him, the Mother is the Mahashakti, creatrix of the universe, as he has explained in his book *The Mother*.

7 October 1966

*

Our actions and insincerity are responsible for the present financial situation, aren’t they? But You say nothing and allow us to do things. Why?

Have you forgotten the Grace? Without the Grace, those who are guilty would be punished by the very consequences of their actions, and then...

Love and blessings

8 October 1966

*

What I would like to know is this: here on earth and in this body, what relation do You have with us when we call You “Mother”?

The relation with one without whom you would not exist and from whom you can expect not only a total and limitless understanding but also an integral and infallible goodwill.

Where then in all this can there be any place for fear?

9 October 1966

*

It happens that after every spiritual experience, I experience a drop in consciousness or rather a sort of negation of that experience. Why?

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

This is one more proof of the division in you. One part wants the light, another part clings to its obscurity, and as the first part progresses, the other hastens to demolish it.

The unification of your being is imposing itself in an urgent way, and for this the luminous part has to dominate the obscure one and educate it, instead of letting it do whatever it wants—in other words, letting it spoil your life and make you miserable.

You must regard this part of your being not as yourself but as a hostile formation that you must convert to the truth.

10 October 1966

*

We are afraid of You only as long as You allow it to exist. As soon as You consent to be intimate with us, the fear vanishes. This privilege, however, is not granted to all.

There are disciples who have never been intimate with me and who have never been afraid. It is when one's consciousness is not at ease that one is afraid. Somewhere one feels that one is guilty and one is afraid of being caught. When one's consciousness is clear, one is never afraid.

11 October 1966

*

What You wrote to me yesterday, I know very well mentally. What I want is to live it, a decisive experience. O Love, that is all I ask of You.

When you will be open only to the divine influence and to no other, then you will have the *Experience*.

12 October 1966

*

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

At the end of each day, I see that I have repeated the same comedy as the day before! O You...

Yes, it is like that as long as one is not doing sadhana. It is only the sadhana of integral perfection that makes each day, each hour new and interesting.

13 October 1966

*

You speak precisely of sadhana. I wanted to ask You this: after what Sri Aurobindo has written in The Synthesis of Yoga on the sadhana of the Integral Yoga, who is doing it here? Not a single person. Yet life is quite satisfactory.

So do the sadhana yourself and you will be the first!

14 October 1966

*

Truly speaking, does the question of the relativity of things exist on earth?

Everything is relative except the Supreme. The Supreme alone is absolute; but since the Supreme is at the centre of each being, each being carries in himself his absolute.

14 October 1966

*

When one does not see the way clearly, what should one do?

Consult me.

16 October 1966

*

I see how weak I am, but in the consciousness I find a small part that is the witness.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

It is the part in your being that is in contact with the psychic. The contact goes on intensifying and becoming more and more precise, until your psychic being becomes the conscious centre of all your activities.

17 October 1966

*

How to be truly grateful to someone who has helped you? I have found people who have goodwill for everyone.

These are the *true sages*...

The divine compassion is spread over everyone, and each is able to receive its help according to his capacity.

It is to the Divine that our gratitude should go, *always and for everything*.

23 October 1966

*

What does tolerance mean? Is there a limit to tolerance?

Human tolerance is limited, because everything in human nature is limited.

From the Divine point of view, tolerance is to allow everything and accept everything. But for man, tolerance means not to react violently against what one dislikes or rather against what one disapproves of.

25 October 1966

*

Don't You find that work often suffers because of tolerance? Because man takes tolerance as a permission or an opportunity to take his own advantage, isn't that so?

It is not the fault of tolerance but of man's insincerity, and

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

suppression or punishment would only make it worse. It would give a sort of legitimacy to his insincerity.

26 October 1966

*

Life is full of preferences and the most perfect men simply have subtler preferences, isn't that so?

Perhaps... but a perfect yogi cannot have preferences.

27 October 1966

*

If I am angry, a very strong vibration comes and I lose my equilibrium. There is also a sort of trembling in my body. Why?

These are vital vibrations of a lower order that come; the vital forces of this type are brutal, violent and destructive. One should never let them enter, and for that one must never get angry, which in itself is an ignorant lower movement.

28 October 1966

*

Why does man always need someone in order to express his feelings?

Not all men and not always. It is those who are weak and live on the surface, those who have not developed their inner life who are like that.

29 October 1966

*

Guide me, I cannot see anything...

You can count on me. I will open your eyes.

30 October 1966

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

For some time, every time I go to sleep I find myself in strange places, and what is odd is that even after waking up I cannot recognise my room. Why?

It is because you have become more conscious of the part in your being that dreams and that, on returning to your body, still dominates your waking consciousness.

31 October 1966

*

A great confusion in my being. What to do?

It is a big work to put it in order. It is the same thing as putting a room or a cupboard in order. One must begin in one corner and go till the end.

To put one's being in order, one first has to find in it that which is conscious of the Divine or at least aspires for the Divine.

Then one places this at the centre of the consciousness. Next all that comes afterwards, all the thoughts, [end of reply missing]

1 November 1966

*

Often one does things out of habit. How to replace them by conscious acts?

By a sustained will and daily practice.

2 November 1966

*

When will this problem of money be solved? Every year it is getting worse.

It is because expenses are increasing and revenues are decreasing. But it certainly needs to be set right!

3 November 1966

*

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

Goodwill is not always effective. Why?

Goodwill is indispensable, but it is not all-powerful. The factor of ignorance has great importance. Ignorant goodwill is almost always ineffective.

4 November 1966

*

Nature had promised You her collaboration, but we have just had our second cyclone this year. Why?

It is probably her way of collaborating. She gives lessons, but these lessons are not on a human scale. They are on the scale of the universe.

4 November 1966

*

We suffer because of our karma, don't we?

Suffering is the result of separation and ignorance. Karma only determines the kind of suffering that each one goes through, according to one's nature and actions, as the fastest way to make progress. Suffering is *not* a punishment, but a logical and inevitable consequence—inevitable unless the Grace intervenes, and the Grace always intervenes in response to faith.

5 November 1966

*

What lesson does Nature want to learn? And why?

Sincerity in aspiration towards the Divine.

6 November 1966

*

What is the power of thought?

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

The power of thought depends considerably on the power of the thinker. Every well-formed thought has its own force of realisation, which gives it a power of realisation in the mental domain. It can act in the physical world only through a mental human being.

7 November 1966

*

Do You like flattery? Even certain persons close to You don't tell You things as they are, and when one asks them why, the answer is: "It would not please Sweet Mother."

It is not necessarily a question of flattery. Since I am extremely busy and don't have time to listen to what each person would like to tell me, it is quite natural that those around me prefer to tell me pleasant things first and keep the unpleasant ones for afterwards.

To tell the truth, it is important to tell me things only when I have to intervene, and those things are not so many.

8 November 1966

*

Does the will that a thinker puts into his thought have a power of realisation?

Certainly, it is one of the important elements of mental formation. But since each thinker has his own will, it leads to a great conflict of thoughts, which results in doubts.

Only will one with the Divine Will is all-powerful.

9 November 1966

*

What good is it to tell You pleasant things?—because it is always You. What is not pleasant is what we are

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

—and if we hide ourselves from You, if we are not ready to tell the truth, how can we live the truth?

For me, pleasant or unpleasant has little meaning; these are very relative ways of seeing and feeling the play of the eternal consciousness—and the proof of this is that the same thing or circumstance can be pleasant for some people and unpleasant for others.

From the practical point of view, I always take note of things that are useful to say because they require my intervention (compassion for a mistake committed is certainly part of them). And words that are spoken only for the pleasure of speaking, that is to say, useless [*end of reply missing*]

10 November 1966

*

*The economic and political situation of India is bad.
The solution?*

To turn to the Divine—and to serve the Truth.

11 November 1966

*

*One loves someone—that person loves someone else.
It is rare that people love each other with the same intensity. Why?*

Because what men call “love” is rarely love. It is usually a physical desire or a vital attraction or a sentimental affinity.

Love is something very profound, very intense and very lasting; it does not need reciprocation in order to exist, and it manifests very rarely among human beings because it cannot exist along with egoism.

12 November 1966

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

*Does the Lord decide everything when one takes up
Yoga?*

Yes.

12 November 1966

*

*The solution You have given for India is not practical,
and You know this better than I. So what is the practical
and immediate solution?*

THERE IS NONE.

All the so-called *practical* means are childish, and with them men blind themselves, so they do not see the real need and the only remedy.

13 November 1966

*

*After what You write and what Sri Aurobindo has
written in The Human Cycle, it is evident that the
solution lies in Truth. Then why the delay?*

Because Truth is supremely destructive of falsehood and ill will. If it were to act immediately on the world as it is, not much of it would remain!... It is patiently preparing its own coming.

15 November 1966

*

*I have so many ideas! And along with them is a force
that wants to manifest itself. If only I could realise
them... You would always have material riches at
Your feet.*

Well, this is good!

Cultivate in yourself a growing, unshakeable faith in the

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

Divine Grace, and you will succeed.

16 November 1966

*

There are times when nothing seems to move. Why?

It is when for some reason, usually the ego, one has strayed from the universal harmony.

17 November 1966

*

Your force is more effective universally in the world than it is with us here. Still, you look after us. Why?

The force and power are the same here and in the world. And even here in some respects, the power is greater. But those who live here are so accustomed to being bathed in this force that they don't even notice it, and most of them have to leave here to realise that it exists.

18 November 1966

*

We see circumstances according to our Sanskaras—so we never see the reality, do we?

Certainly, as long as there is an ego, one does not see things as they truly are. But as one's consciousness unites with the Divine Consciousness, one's vision becomes more and more true.

19 November 1966

*

Where is there justice upon earth?

Nowhere. Even (and perhaps *especially*) human justice is not just. Here on earth, justice is replaced by Divine Grace. Because

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

if Divine Justice were to be applied, the freedom necessary for evolution could no longer be exercised.

20 November 1966

*

Don't you want to get rid of the parasites who are here?

I treat them as if they were not so, and then they are obliged either to change or to go.

21 November 1966

*

Ordinarily Grace means "we can get what we want". There are very few persons who have realised all that happens as Grace. So in that case, is there anything like "justice" or "just"?

There is the Divine Justice, supreme and irrevocable. But it is so marvellous that men cannot understand it. When they manage to perceive it, they feel overwhelmed.

22 November 1966

*

When the Lord closes a door, he opens a window somewhere, isn't that so?

If you mean to say, closing the door that leads downward and opening the window that looks up at the sky, it is indeed correct.

23 November 1966

*

Make me also drink Ananda, as You drink it.

That is hardly my concern. My concern is to be exactly what the Lord wants me to be. When He gives me Ananda, I try not

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

to lose any of it, nor to add anything to it that might distort it.

24 November 1966

*

*There are people who succeed in life and there are others
who don't manage it. What determines these things?*

Their own nature. What one carries in one's nature is reflected in one's surroundings. Optimistic, harmonious natures attract and meet with success. Pessimistic, discontented natures attract failures and difficulties.

25 November 1966

*

Is suffering the means for coming out of tamas?

Certainly *not* if one inflicts suffering on oneself.

If one seeks suffering or makes oneself suffer deliberately, one only adds *perversion* to tamas and make it more incurable.

27 November 1966

*

*Each time You have a little disorder in Your body You
stop eating. Why?*

Because for this body the only remedy is to enter into the immobility of the Lord.

28 November 1966

*

*Your presence alone makes life agreeable. Read all
that I have not written and save me.*

It is from yourself that you must be saved. Because the circumstances of your life are such that many people—all those who believe in the possibility of divine transformation—would

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

truly be happy and grateful to find themselves in your place.

One more proof that one is the instrument of one's own torment.

29 November 1966

*

Deep down, I feel how disgusting this life is. There is nothing in it that is not full of ego and falsehood. But to come out of it... where and how and when?

Right now, by sincere self-offering to the Divine, by complete consecration of all one's energies and work, and by renouncing one's desires and preferences.

30 November 1966

*

I am grateful for all that You do for me and I want to be happy as before, and despite myself You want to save me—so I love You more than ever.

Well, this is good. But there is the Gautam who wrote this evening's letter, and that Gautam refuses to be saved...

You have to find your psychic being—then you will be happy and contented, and progress will become easy. It is your psychic being that loves me. Can you not identify yourself with it? Then you will be saved and happy...

1 December 1966

*

“Consent to be nothing and none”—these words kept repeating themselves in me.

Then you have indeed heard the answer the Lord has given to your ego.

2 December 1966

*

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

I have never written that I will not be saved. The psychic being is hiding itself; help me to find it.

I never said that you will not be saved. Certainly you will. But if your *whole* being wants it, it will be a lot faster. It is not the psychic being that is hiding itself; it is your desires that are hiding it.

3 December 1966

*

How should one spend the fifth of December?

Like other days—in a sincere aspiration for perfect consecration.

If one can, one should intensify one's aspiration on this day.

5 December 1966

*

A new door is beginning to open. Is the yoga of the body always so interesting? I had the impression that even the body was smiling. Is that possible?

Completely possible. The yoga of the body is full of marvellous discoveries.

6 December 1966

*

Is there a difference between innocence and ignorance?

Very often the word innocence is used indiscriminately. Between *real* innocence and ignorance there is the same difference as between truth and falsehood.

7 December 1966

*

Sleep absorbs everything, especially an experience. Is everything lost?

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

What you want to say is not very clearly expressed.

Do you want to say that during sleep one has many experiences but they get lost because one is asleep? This is true only for those who are unconscious in their sleep and remember nothing when they wake up.

But through a well-organised education, one can remember all the activities of the night. And then, instead of getting lost, they become very useful and instructive.

8 December 1966

*

I have not understood Your answer. Innocence means that one does not know or is not aware, and ignorance means that one no longer knows or is unconscious. So how is one pure and the other is not?

The true meaning of innocence is “without defect, without sin”—in other words, one who has kept the divine simplicity of the Origin, one who has not taken part in the deformation of separation.

9 December 1966

*

What I wanted to say is that an experience during the day is absorbed by sleep. Isn't that so?

No. It is only an appearance, and the experience is never lost. But for those who fall into unconsciousness during their sleep, the experience of the day sinks down into the subconscious and seems to be lost, though it continues to have its effect, but in a veiled way.

10 December 1966

*

“The lion, when stricken to the heart, gives out his mightiest roar. When smitten on the head, the cobra lifts

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

*his hood. And the majesty of the soul comes forth only when man is wounded to his depths.”—Vivekananda
Is this true?*

It is only a *little bit* true and a lot is literature—because the state of Nature which makes this necessary must be surpassed.

We aspire for the time when it will no longer be necessary for Sri Aurobindo to die.

11 December 1966

*

As long as Nature remains what it is, the law of ignorance reigns. But a day will come when the Truth will manifest and terrestrial immortality will be one of its results.

But he [Sri Aurobindo] knew everything—so why did he once again enact this game of birth and death?

Because he came to the earth not for his personal satisfaction but to give a new impetus to terrestrial life and hasten the transformation.

13 December 1966

*

Will the Grace protect us from the consequences of our insincerity?

Yes, provided you remain *sincere* to your faith in It! Or, more practically, if you allow It to do it and in the process do not undo the work It does.

14 December 1966

*

In an experience I felt (or rather I was) an intense unformed aspiration—there moral good and evil

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

and even spiritual values had no importance. I could have been a beast or a divine being—it would have changed nothing. Oh, to be that intensity always...

This is truly very good. It is the forerunner of a state that can be constant.

15 December 1966

*

As a friend I am asking You to pray to the Lord to send me a sign or give me a call, for my heart is in anguish.

Both the sign and the call are already there. But you must open the eyes of your heart to see the sign, and you must keep your mind silent to hear the call.

16 December 1966

*

This year was hard, yes, very hard for me. Will You grant that '67 will be a year full of You?

I am always there—in you, with you constantly, but you do not perceive it because you are thinking of other things, maybe a little too much of yourself...

17 December 1966

*

Despite myself, make me see the sign and hear the call. I love You.

And if I tell you that *you see and you hear*, but your ego refuses to recognise it! ...

Happy birthday!

18 December 1966

*

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

*Love for You. This is the cause and this is the solution.
I found it through a simple experience.*

This simple experience must now become a constant reality
—and all will be well.

19 December 1966

*

*“O living inscription of the beauty of love.” I am so
close to You in my heart.*

Now that is good and true, and it should give you continuous
happiness.

20 December 1966

*

*Indian tradition says that the name of God has more
power than a god. Is it true?*

Undoubtedly. This means that the sound OM, which evokes the Supreme, is more powerful than a god of the “Overmind”.

21 December 1966

*

When You speak of Truth, what do you mean?

Truth is one of the attributes or aspects of the Supreme Lord. It cannot be described mentally, but one can live it if one gives oneself to it totally.

22 December 1966

*

*“Sometimes naked, sometimes mad, now as a scholar,
again as a saint. Thus they appear on the earth, the
Paramahansas.”—Shankaracharya*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Isn't this rather a sign of weakness than of a growth of consciousness?

Yes, certainly. Formerly in spiritual life, one did not care about the body; one even despised it, and at the first opportunity it was rejected and its imperfections became apparent.

23 December 1966

*

Is it possible for You to have and feel all the reactions of human life? If so, to what extent and under what conditions?

Like this, the question makes no sense.

All that the Lord wants me to feel, I feel.

All that the Lord wants me to know, I know.

All that the Lord wants me to do, I do.

25 December 1966

*

Make me an optimistic being. There is something that still clings...

It is the old habit—but it will pass.

27 December 1966

*

Even human love, when it takes hold of us, gives us joy—but inevitably it is followed by suffering. Why?

This world is impermanent and all is passing. Love in its essence and origin is eternal, but the forms in which it manifests on earth are impermanent. It is this in the human consciousness that veils the felicity inherent in love.

29 December 1966

*

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

What is the place of comfort and luxury here in the Ashram?

Comfort and luxury are tolerated but not encouraged because they are not necessary for yoga, though one who is truly sincere can learn detachment and equanimity even in the lap of comfort and luxury—but it is more difficult.

30 December 1966

*

*The end of the year and with it the end of unhappiness.
You wished me “a very happy new year” and with all
my trust I am guarding your wish.*

Yes, be quiet and trusting—then the wish will be fulfilled.

Happy New Year!

31 December 1966

*

The first step towards one's soul is to awaken in one's heart gratitude for the Divine Grace.

c. 1966–1967

*

Who do you call a true friend? Why? Do these qualities exist in a being on earth?

A true friend is a person (man or woman) who helps you to progress towards the Divine. Certainly there are beings who can do this on earth. And the best way to find one is to be a true friend to those who are around you.

c. 1966–1967

*

Is there a reason for what one does? Everything seems like a badly acted comedy.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

There is a reason or rather a purpose for all that one does: it is to become conscious of the Divine. But since nearly all are unaware of this purpose, the comedy is indeed very badly acted and seems absurd.

c. 1966–1967

*

Happy New Year to You, O Love!

Happy New Year! In Peace, Love and Joy.

1 January 1967

*

After Sri Aurobindo's prophecy for the year 1967 (the realisation of the Supramental upon earth), what will be its visible results?

Sri Aurobindo has never written or said that in 1967 the Supramental will be realised upon earth. He has simply written that we will begin to see the effect of the action of the Supramental Power on the governments of different countries.

It is only this that one should expect, [end of reply missing]

2 January 1967

*

There are quite a few things that go on in Your name —“Mother said”, “Mother wants”, etc. Your name only serves to support the desire of those who speak.

I know it very well. That is why I always warn those who don't know, that they should never believe those who say “Mother wants”, “Mother said”, etc.

3 January 1967

*

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

*So until people change, will You continue like this?
The work is suffering and these people are not setting
a good example—and Your difficulties...*

If there is someone who can do the work better than me, I shall willingly give up my place!

4 January 1967

*

What a waste of all that you are giving us—a department with great capacity, but...especially money flows out of it like water. Will this always go on?

Which department are you speaking of? One of them or all?

It is not just a department or departments that are wasting here; it is nearly everyone or at least a large number of persons. That is why the situation is so difficult. It will end when each one will choose to serve the Truth.

But to be fair, it must be said that the opposite is there, and that a large number of individuals and even departments are trying to be as economical as possible and not only are they spending usefully but even helping to earn money and meet the general expenses.

7 January 1967

*

There are astrologers who speak about the possibility of the dissolution of Pakistan this year. Do You see this?

Up till now I have seen nothing precise.

8 January 1967

*

What I wrote to You was about a particular department. I don't know what goes on in other departments,

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

though one hears all sorts of things. But since I am working now in this department, I see and it is true: on the one hand You have sold all Your jewels, etc., and on the other You have paid for the satisfaction of someone's personal desires. Can You explain this to me, O friend?

I did not sell my jewels or give whatever I had to maintain any department. It was to pay for food, for accommodation and for the domestic staff. And this last expense is *truly false*.

9 January 1967

*

Insult, self-respect and so on—do they have any place in sadhana?

Insult, self-respect and other such movements belong to the “ego” and they have no place in the yoga of transformation. As soon as one has found one’s psychic being and identified with it, all this seems ridiculously infantile—until the time comes when these things can no longer exist because they do not correspond to anything real.

10 January 1967

*

At times it seems so easy to change everything, even one's nature. And at other times it is impossible. Why?

It depends on the state of consciousness one is in. When one is in the psychic and above, the work of transformation is relatively easy.

In the lower regions, vital and material, which are subject to desires and the iron law of habits, the task seems impossible. But in the end, nothing can resist the power of aspiration.

It is consciousness that brings perfection. On the degree of

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

consciousness depends the degree of perfection.

11 January 1967

*

*Perfection in work depends upon the time one spends
on it, doesn't it?*

No, it depends on the *power of concentration*. The capacity to do something depends exclusively on the capacity to concentrate on what one does. And the greater the concentration, the more perfect the execution.

12 January 1967

*

*Intensity of desire can be transformed into aspiration,
can't it?*

The two movements are of a different nature.

The vibration of desire wants to take and possess.

The vibration of aspiration gives itself.

13 January 1967

*

*Things are not going well. Surely there is a reason,
but...*

One is made up of many parts. They are not all at the same level of consciousness and development. Moreover, one is immersed in the general atmosphere and it is not possible to escape the contagion completely.

14 January 1967

*

*You say that perfection depends on consciousness.
Does this mean that the more one is at the height of
one's consciousness, the more perfect in work one is?*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

*But I know people who work as perfectly as possible
but are ordinary.*

They cannot be “ordinary” and do perfect work. Surely their physical consciousness of the material world is highly developed and they must have *great concentration* in their work.

15 January 1967

*

Tradition speaks of obedience to the Guru, but nowhere is this clearly explained. Can You explain it?

The Guru should be considered as a representative of the Supreme Lord. Therefore one owes him the same absolute obedience that one owes the Supreme Lord.

16 January 1967

*

When one thinks of someone, is one with him?

Yes, mentally and sometimes vitally if the sensation of his presence is very strong.

17 January 1967

*

If it [obedience to the Guru] is the same obedience that one gives to the Lord, it will be very easy—for we are neither conscious of the Lord nor of His will. Perhaps He demands nothing from us because He is all. But a Guru...

All this is a most superficial and ignorant way of seeing things and expressing them.

In this state of mind, one understands nothing about anything.

18 January 1967

*

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

More and more it seems that the Ashram is changing into a society with goodwill towards the Divine. Is this what You wanted to do when fifty years ago You started a spiritual community (the Ashram)?

I never started a *spiritual community* and I never wanted to make one, because this was never Sri Aurobindo's will. What he wanted me to do I have done, and I continue to do what he wanted to do, *in accordance with the divine will*.

19 January 1967

*

Are You also angry with me? I put my doubts and questions before You for you to shed light on them.

No, I am not angry. But precisely because you ask me questions, I think you are sincere and want the true answer—so I give it even if it is not pleasant.

20 January 1967

*

Here is an experience: Since the beginning of this year I see and feel that in spite of myself I am on the path. If You can work this miracle in me, the day is not far when this little world called “the Ashram” will change. You are the true Friend.

This is good, my child; may the Supreme Lord bless you.

21 January 1967

*

Often I feel very strongly that one (all of us) can do many things—we can, in a certain sense, create a very beautiful little world here. But on the other hand, we more and more cling to our egos.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Yes, the ego resists as much as it can before disappearing.

22 January 1967

*

I would like to do something for You—an activity that could bring material benefits—but nothing seems to be working out. What to do?

Persevere.

23 January 1967

*

When You are in a perfect union with the Lord, does Your body continue with its functions?

The communion is *constant* and it is through this that the work of transformation is being done. But it is a *long and slow* work whose visible results will be last.

24 January 1967

*

You can identify with anyone, and that is how You know what is going on, isn't it?

Yes, something like that.

25 January 1967

*

If the visible results will be last, they will be miracles and not gradual changes—isn't that so?

I will tell you when it happens.

26 January 1967

*

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

*Then in that case, by its very nature You must know
the Truth of each event...*

Yes.

*and Your will is, in a certain sense, the most powerful
will on earth, isn't it?*

It does not exist.

The Lord's will is all-powerful and this body is conscious of it in proportion to the purity and transparency of its consciousness.

27 January 1967

*

*Why don't You say all that is happening in You? Surely
it is a lot more interesting than what we are.*

In "Notes on the Way" (*Bulletin*), I am giving something of what can be understood.

28 January 1967

*

*More and more You are taking care of the smallest
details of my life. Why do You do so much for me?
You are the only person I love without fear.*

All that I do, I do out of love.

29 January 1967

*

I depend on You. Everything is blocked.

It will get unblocked!

30 January 1967

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

*Yes, You speak about Your experiences in the Bulletin,
but You leave many things out as well. Why?*

Because nobody would understand.

31 January 1967

*

*Here too we have started a sort of religion. Is this
inclination in men to reduce everything to religion
inevitable?*

It is not at all inevitable. It is the mind that likes dogmas (the inevitable basis of religions), because this avoids the bother of seeking to know always more and better.

I am progressively demolishing all dogma.

1 February 1967

*

*Is man the centre of the occult world as he is of the
mental one?*

There is not one occult world but many occult worlds that are governed by the beings of each of these worlds.

2 February 1967

*

*If You continue to give money so freely to certain
departments, how do You think they will change their
methods and habits?*

I do not work in the usual way by trying to correct the outside. I act from within outward to change the causes, which automatically changes the effects.

3 February 1967

*

Series Eight—Gautam Chawalla

In the Bulletin of August 1958, You end the conversation titled “The True Superman” by saying, “If things continue to move at this speed, it is more than possible, it is almost evident, that what Sri Aurobindo wrote in a letter is becoming a prophetic announcement: ‘The supramental consciousness will enter into a phase of realising power in 1967.’”

Neither You nor Sri Aurobindo have spoken of governments or politics. If You have some time, read this conversation. It is marvellous.

When it is a question of active power, it is always a question of government, because without control over the government, power is incomplete on the material plane.

4 February 1967

*

It happens that I catch the thoughts of others before they have them. How?

If it is before they have them, it is because they are thoughts that come to them from outside, from the atmosphere, and you catch them before they enter their heads. If it is before they express them in words, it means that you read their minds directly, so you catch what they want to say even before they have spoken.

5 February 1967

*

In this lonely life You are the only refuge. Never leave me.

I have no intention of leaving you.

6 February 1967

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

I don't know what to do. Help me, O friend!

Instead of trying to do something which is necessarily artificial, wait in peace for the Lord to make you do something which will necessarily be a divine action and give you the plenitude you desire.

7 February 1967

*

Time is passing. I have been here for fifteen years and what have I found? Nothing! My soul is as veiled as ever.

Despite all the help given and all the opportunities offered, those who have a dissatisfied nature will always be dissatisfied. But they are making progress in spite of themselves.

8 February 1967

*

Do You think that the Lord will tell me what to do some day? I think He is too busy...

Do not speak like the stupid, ignorant people who imagine that the Supreme Lord is a magnified man!

The Supreme Lord is *in you*, and if you sincerely want it, He will guide you. Or rather, he is always guiding you, but you are not listening to him. You are listening only to your “ego”, which cries very loudly.

9 February 1967

*

I was always happy and I want always to be happy —and it is You who must make me happy.

I am quite willing to make you happy, always happy, but your

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happiness must coincide with the Will of the Lord, for I am only the Will of the Lord. So I advise you to will what He wills; then all will be well.

10 February 1967

*

One can be free only after having shaken off the slavery of desires.

Love and blessings
Given with the power to do it

19 December 1968

*

(The French disciple Pavitra, Phillippe Barbier Saint Hilaire, passed away on 16 May 1969. What follows in Gautam's report of what the Mother said to him on the same day.)

Mother to Gautam (at about 10 o'clock in the morning)

He [Pavitra] came to me at night. He did something I wasn't expecting. I didn't know he was capable of doing it because he never told me. He entered into me; he lost all his individuality. Now there is no difference between bodies.

From the beginning, that is, from the time he came here, he was always sincere with a perfect self-offering, not a minute of wavering.

If it was like this, Mother, why did he have to suffer so much?

Do you think that the Divine is like a school teacher—if you do good I give you a toffee and if you do bad I must punish you? That is not how these things work. It depends on the general condition of the world and the present state of people's consciousness.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Must he come back and start over the next time?

I am telling you that he has entered into me and there is no *next time* for him. He has entered into his origin in full consciousness and he is very happy.

He worked for the whole world...

He is a beautiful example for everyone...

Do you want to be like him?

16 May 1969

Series Nine

Correspondence with Shyam Sundar

Born on 5 May 1927, Shyam Sundar Jhunjhunwala was a lawyer and businessman living in Calcutta. From 1949 he began visiting the Ashram regularly and finally joined it on 1 January 1965 at the age of thirty-seven. In February 1971 the Mother appointed him as her secretary for Auroville affairs, a position he held for about a decade. In 1972 he became the editor of the monthly journal Sri Aurobindo's Action and remained its editor for nearly forty years. He also wrote, compiled or translated a number of books. He lived in the Ashram (and sometimes in Auroville) for forty-six years, until his passing on 28 July 2011 at the age of eighty-four.

In this correspondence, Shyam Sundar's questions and comments elicit from the Mother many truths about spiritual life and its practice. The correspondence is in French and appears here in translation. It covers the period from 1966 to 1970.

How can my effort to serve the Divine become more perfect?

By wanting Him more and more in every part of your being— integrally.

11 October 1966

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

*Men, countries, continents!
The choice is imperative:
Truth or the abyss.¹*

The Mother

*A prayer: May I make the choice consciously, sincerely
and integrally, as the Divine Mother wishes.*

A happy new year of great progress towards the light and the total consecration.

1 January 1967

*

In 1958 the Mother said, “If things go on advancing at this speed, it seems more than possible, almost evident, that what Sri Aurobindo wrote in a letter is a prophetic announcement: ‘The supramental consciousness will enter a phase of realising power in 1967.’ ”²

Have things advanced at the required speed?

Yes.

2 January 1967

*

*Can I try to make my nights conscious? I pray for
Your guidance.*

1) A short concentration before going to sleep, with an aspiration to remember the activities of the night when you wake up.

2) When you wake up, do not make any sudden movement

¹ New Year Message of 1967 — *Words of the Mother III*, CWM vol. 15, p. 175.

² *Questions and Answers 1957–1958*, CWM vol. 9, p. 315.

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of the head and keep still for a few minutes, with a concentration to remember what happened during your sleep.

3) Repeat these exercises every day until you begin to perceive a result.

18 January 1967

*

Something in my being rushes towards You and wants to remain at Your feet. This movement occurs repeatedly, almost spontaneously, without emotion. Is there a significance?

It is your psychic being, the terrestrial individualisation of your soul, which wants to realise the divine life during its human life.

28 January 1967

*

In the human being, is the psychic being the entire soul or do both the soul (in its essence as a spark of the Divine in all creatures) and the psychic being exist together?

The soul is the eternal essence at the centre of the psychic being. The soul is indeed like a divine spark which puts on many states of being of increasing density, down to the most material; it is in the body, within the solar plexus, so to speak. These states of being take form and develop, make progress, become individualised and are perfected in the course of many, many earthly lives and form the psychic being. When the psychic being is fully formed, it is aware of the consciousness of the soul and manifests it perfectly.

Blessings

1 February 1967

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

The spiritual goal You have shown to me for my present life is very high and far off. On the other hand, I have wasted much time and energy leading the ordinary life and my aspiration is not yet constant. But I feel that if the Mother is with me, I will attain the goal. I pray that You may be with me.

I am with you and I will lead you to the goal.

Keep an unshakable faith and all will be well.

Blessings

6 February 1967

*

When I concentrate on You in my heart, sometimes Your image disappears and I see only a Light. This transition takes place instantaneously, but very smoothly. I have begun to love this Light. Its colour is white, but sometimes it has a blue tinge. What do the two colours signify?

The white is integrality, totality. It is the light of the Mahashakti. When it is tinged with blue, it indicates Sri Aurobindo's presence.

9 February 1967

*

The “Savitri” exhibition is full of paintings depicting Savitri, the ascent of the being, the descent of the divinity, and the divine play. The paintings radiate a light that is as beautiful as it is strong, similar to what I feel near You. Is this my imagination or is it true?

It is quite true and I am glad that you have seen it.

13 February 1967

*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

As soon as I meet or see certain people, certain lower, wrong vibrations arise in me. This is an invariable habit, in spite of the fact that I want to get rid of these reactions. What should I do?

The radical method is to cut off all mental and vital connection with these people; but until you know how to do this, you must persistently eliminate from your consciousness the effect produced by their influence.

18 February 1967

*

You have said: “The Divine is with you according to your aspiration. Naturally this does not mean that He bends to the caprices of your outer nature—I speak here of the truth of your being. And yet, sometimes He does fashion himself according to your outer aspiration, and if, like the devotees, you live alternately in separation and union, ecstasy and despair, the Divine also will separate from you and unite with you, according as you believe. The attitude is thus very important, even the outer attitude.”³

What is the meaning of “outer aspiration” and “outer attitude”? What is the best outer attitude?

Unless one practises yoga in the physical being (the outer being), it remains ignorant—even its aspiration is ignorant and so is its goodwill; all its movements are ignorant and so they distort and disfigure the Divine Presence.

That is why the yoga of the cells of the body is indispensable.

25 February 1967

*

³ *Words of the Mother I*, CWM vol. 13, p. 76.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

When I see Your symbol, either with my physical eyes or when it appears during meditation, most often I see it in movement, turning like a disc. Mother, why the movement?

Movement is the symbol of the progressive evolution of the creation.

1 March 1967

*

“The Dawn that does not pass away”⁴—what spiritual state does this marvellous Dawn represent?

Perpetual renewal.

6 March 1967

*

This is how I understand the Purusha:

The Lord is the Supreme Purusha, the Purushot-tama.

The Atman is the universal Purusha.

The Jivatman is the individual Purusha and the physical Purusha, the vital Purusha, the mental Purusha and the secret Purusha in the heart are projections of it.

The soul is the Purusha that enters into the evolution.

Is my understanding correct?

This is one way of putting it. Mental definitions are never more than approximations, ways of speaking.

10 March 1967

*

My body is very weak and full of unconsciousness

⁴ The Mother, *Prayers and Meditations*, CWM vol. 1, p. 229.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

and tamas. How can this body become Your good instrument?

At the centre of each cell lies the Divine Consciousness. By aspiration and repeated self-giving, the cells must be made transparent.

18 March 1967

*

“To be aware of the consciousness of the soul”—is this the same thing as to unite with the Divine?

To become aware of the consciousness of the soul is the surest and easiest way to unite with the Divine.

25 March 1967

*

The region below my heart harbours parts of my being that are very dark and recalcitrant. I feel that for more than three months You have been acting especially on this region and that, in spite of the lack of collaboration on my part, You have awakened a flame there. Now it has to be guarded and strengthened. Is my feeling right?

Yes, it is right. It is the flame of Agni that I have kindled, the flame of psychic aspiration that opens the way leading to the Divine. Without this flame of Agni, no spiritual progress is possible. Now you are beginning to advance on the path.

1 April 1967

*

You are giving all that we need, but my capacity to receive is very limited since it takes me a long time to assimilate even the little I am able to receive.

Untroubled, I pray: How can the situation be improved?

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

This difficulty usually comes from a lack of unification of the being. Certain parts are recalcitrant and refuse to receive. They have to be educated little by little, just as one educates a child—and little by little too the situation will improve.

7 April 1967

*

Looking at the present state of the world, we can say that the worst has already happened. We await the day when the Lord will take the earth into His arms and “the earth will be transformed”. Is that day drawing near?

It may very well be that this is what is happening now—but it is not on the human scale.

One moment of the Lord probably means many years for us!

12 April 1967

*

Although there is a certain charm and poetry in the fact that there is no formal date for the creation of our Ashram, could it be said from the true occult point of view that the Ashram was born with the Mother’s arrival?

The Ashram was born in 1926, a few years after my return from Japan.

17 April 1967

*

The Lord told You: “One day thou wilt be my head but for the moment turn thy gaze towards the earth.”⁵

⁵ *Prayers and Meditations*, CWM vol. 1, p. 145.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

Sweet Mother, what does “thou wilt be my head” mean?

The head is the original conceiving Consciousness.

22 April 1967

*

One morning I saw a white light tinged with blue rising from below and gradually enveloping You, like the petals of a lotus. The light was solid and fluid at the same time. What does this signify, Sweet Mother?

It was probably an aspiration rising from the subconscious.

27 April 1967

*

When I want to be closer to You, I see that I must overcome my ego. But when I think of overcoming my ego, I see that I must be closer to You. How can I solve this problem?

The Grace is there to solve it.

1 May 1967

*

How can I be Your good child?

By being yourself, quite simply, very simply...

5 May 1967

*

When I am able to offer You money or some object, it brings great joy to me, and when some part of my being offers itself to You the joy I feel is even greater. But in spite of this experience, my whole being is not

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

offered to You. What stupidity! How can I change this?

One is made up of many different parts which have to be unified around the psychic being, if one is conscious of it, or at least around one's central aspiration. If this unification is not done, one carries this division within oneself.

To do this, each thought, each feeling, each sensation, each impulse, each reaction, as it manifests, must be presented in the consciousness to the central being or its aspiration. What is in accord with it is accepted; what is not in accord is refused, rejected or transformed.

It is a long endeavour which may take many years—but once it is done, the unification is achieved and the path becomes swift and easy.

10 May 1967

*

In silence I prayed to You to accept me, me as I am, with all my imperfections.

In silence and in Your mercy, You gave me Your acceptance. This acceptance, I later understood, requires that I aspire to be more and more pure and worthy of Your Grace.

I write this letter in order to verify my reception of Your response.

Certainly I have accepted you as you are, and this acceptance means that I will lead you to your divine goal in spite of all difficulties and obstacles.

Blessings

14 May 1967

*

How can I get rid of the habit of feeling that I own the material things that belong to me?

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

If you belong entirely and totally to the Divine, then all that belongs to you, all that forms part of your material being, belongs to the Divine.

16 May 1967

*

Sometimes I think that the Agni You have kindled in me is going to burn up all that separates me from You. What should I do to contribute to its fulfilment?

Each time that you discover in yourself something that denies or resists, throw it into the flame of Agni, which is the fire of aspiration.

19 May 1967

*

Is it possible to make my hands conscious so that they do nothing imperfect, incorrect or wrong? What is the way to do it, Divine Mother?

It is quite possible, by concentrating on the hands when they are doing something.

The hands of painters, sculptors, musicians (especially pianists) are usually very conscious and always are skilful. It is a question of training.

29 May 1967

*

I want to overcome a difficulty: it is that when I see faults or weaknesses in myself, something tries to justify them or to prevent me from attending to them.

This “something” is the insincerity of an ignorant self-esteem which has not yet understood that it is nobler and loftier to recognise one’s faults in order to correct them, than to conceal them in the hope that they will not be noticed.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

As for all psychological problems, here too sincerity, a total and uncompromising sincerity, is the true remedy.

1 June 1967

*

I want to offer my being to You like a beautiful rose. But alas! as soon as I make the gesture I see many thorns in it and I cannot complete the offering. The thorns must be removed, O Mother, they must be removed. Perhaps the offering itself is the way to do it.

Yes, little by little the thorns drop off. It is by constant renewal of the offering that they disappear.

Blessings

7 June 1967

*

Please tell me how I can get rid of the past, which clings so heavily.

To get rid of the past is something so difficult that it seems almost impossible.

But if you give yourself to the future, entirely and without reserve, and if this giving is constantly renewed, the past will fall away by itself and no longer encumber you.

14 June 1967

*

Although I am very far from the state in which I can always remain at Your feet, I pray that You lead me there.

The fastest way is to unite with your psychic being more and more, because your psychic being is very intimately near to me.

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Blessings

20 June 1967

*

One morning as I was reading Your book Prayers and Meditations, I wished to know which movement comes first, “to live in Thee” or “to live for Thee”. Before the mind could set to work to find the answer, the reply that came to me spontaneously was this: “The two states are complementary to each other.”

Yes, the two states are complementary, but that does not necessarily mean that they are simultaneous. Most often, “to live for Thee” comes first and, if the being is unified and sincere, “to live in Thee” soon follows.

But of course, for the first to be perfect, the second must be present.

24 June 1967

*

Since yesterday morning the lower vital has been raising its evil head and I am trying to reject its movements. I pray to You to enable me to act radically and without pity.

The direct struggle is sometimes difficult. But to let the impulse subside by concentrating all one's energies in a psychic aspiration is a very effective method.

1 July 1967

*

Your hands are open to give everything, but I can only receive a small part of it because I am not receptive enough.

This is the exact image of the state of the world which suffers

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

because it is not receptive when it could live in beatitude if it would open to the Divine Love.

But there is a remedy:
Sincere and constant aspiration.

6 July 1967

*

Your Grace has calmed the vital; the clouds are disappearing.

*I pray that the future may be a sunlit path.
Pranam and gratitude.*

Have faith. The Light is with you and will never leave you.

9 July 1967

*

I have begun to see that both the personal effort of the sadhak and its result depend on the Divine Grace.

About this, one could say humorously that we are all divine, but we are hardly even aware of it, and that in us which is unaware it is divine is what we call “ourselves”.

13 July 1967

*

A divine face with eyes emitting two rays of light—white rays, vertical and motionless. What does this signify, Sweet Mother?

When the beings or forces of the invisible worlds manifest themselves to the consciousness of an individual, they put on forms that are appropriate to his system of symbols—which makes it difficult to explain someone’s visions unless his system is known in detail.

However, according to the description, it could be a force

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

or an entity manifesting the light of Truth.

16 July 1967

*

To establish the reign of the Divine on earth, who is slower—man or the Divine Himself?

To man the Divine seems slow.

In the eyes of the Divine man is slow indeed!

But perhaps in these two cases, the slowness is not the same.

20 July 1967

*

Useless material thoughts have become troublesome, but they do not wait for my invitation or permission to enter—they simply come, they simply come. A strong sentinel has to be posted.

The sentinel is a conscious will for silence.

But for this to be completely effective, the silence must be totally motionless and alert, turned upward like a pure white sheet, to receive the light that comes from above.

23 July 1967

*

Since yesterday morning, spontaneously and sweetly, the following prayer has been rising up from my heart at times: “Let me melt in You.”

I hope You have already heard it.

The prayer is coming straight to me, not only in words but with the warmth of your consciousness.

27 July 1967

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

May I know whether it is true that after death a dead man very often returns in his daughter's child?

First the dead man must have a daughter in order to be reborn in her child.

It is not an absolute rule—far from it—but the case is quite frequent in India where the belief in frequent reincarnations is still quite common.

30 July 1967

*

*When I offer money to You, the “I” spoils the offering.
Let the “I” disappear, O Divine Mother, let the pure
and true consciousness be established in Your child.*

That he knows it is already very good. He is on the way to liberation.

1 August 1967

*

Each time I go to You to make Pranam, You do something in my consciousness and Your joy and sweetness bathe me entirely. I return, a few days pass, and soon the yearning to bow down before You again and be blessed by Your divine hands becomes a thirst, an aspiration.

When you feel like this, why not come in the afternoon about 3.30—I shall always have a minute to see you and bless you.

3 August 1967

*

I am infinitely grateful to You for Your reply. Indeed You are opening a new chapter in my life. If my whole being could surrender to You, ever more and more, what happiness!

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My blessings are with you.

4 August 1967

*

I asked myself, “How can one express the inexpressible?” The reply came, “By living it, by becoming it, by being it.” What does the Mother say?

That is correct.

7 August 1967

*

One thing escapes my understanding: how can You find time to do all that You do? Perhaps physical time does not exist for You!

The body is able to bear the pressure of time because it knows and feels quite concretely that it does not itself live and act, but only the Supreme Lord exists and He alone lives and acts.

This, moreover, is the secret of all endurance.

12 August 1967

*

Instead of struggling against my impurities, I would like to make them crumble like dust or burn them up in the flame of Agni.

That is good.

But the most powerful remedy is to open oneself more and more completely to the Divine Love, which is changed in our consciousness into love for the Divine; its very presence consumes all impurities.

19 August 1967

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Here is an amusing phrase from an anonymous author: “Thank God, I am an atheist.”

The phrase would be even more amusing if he had written:
“Thank God for making me an atheist.”

22 August 1967

*

From what I understand, You said that the psychic beings of the disciples of the Ashram all belong to the same family. In spite of this, there is often a lack of collaboration among us. Why is that, Mother?

If I did say this (probably not quite in those words), it could only refer to a universal family open to all differences and even all divergences.

But in any case, mutual misunderstanding and lack of collaboration can only come from the outer being, physical and vital, which is formed in this life and is not yet under the rule and influence of the psychic. As soon as one is united with one's psychic, all the conflicts due to clashing bad wills are no longer able to exist.

24 August 1967

*

(The Mother asked the disciple to formulate four prayers, so he wrote:)

The four prayers are formulated thus:

Let the psychic govern my whole being.

Let the divine purity fill me.

Let me belong solely and integrally to You.

Let me unite with the Divine.

Now it is Your turn, isn't it, O Divine Mother, to grant my prayers and make me succeed!

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It is settled, the prayers are granted. As for the speed of success, it depends on the sincerity of your aspiration; that is to say, *the entire being*, as a whole and in all its parts, must participate in it.

Blessings

26 August 1967

*

May I know how it is that of all the gods, it is Ganesh whose statue stands on Your table?

Because Ganesh is a friend who for twelve consecutive years gave me very concrete proofs of his friendship.

I will tell you the story some day when there is time.

29 August 1967

*

How can one use shadow to realise the Light?

Painters use shadow to bring out the light.

Shadow is the symbol of the inconscient. This is where men rest at night from the effort of the day in order to become conscious. When consciousness becomes all-powerful, shadow will no longer be necessary and it will disappear.

4 September 1967

*

To come down from Your room is to fall into another world, and to go out of the Ashram to other towns is to fall into yet another world.

How to build a bridge between the three?

You yourself, like all those who are conscious and consecrated, are the bridge.

17 September 1967

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

It is said that there are certain methods in the Tantras to open the chakras from below, whereas in the integral yoga the chakras open from above by the descent of the Mother's force.

What is the difference between the results of the opening of the chakras in these two systems?

In Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga, there are no such rigid rules and distinctions. Each one follows his own path and has his own experiences. Nevertheless, Sri Aurobindo has often said and written that his yoga begins where the others leave off.

In other words, yoga ordinarily consists in awakening the physical consciousness and making it rise gradually towards the Divine, whereas Sri Aurobindo has said that to do his yoga, one must already have found the Divine and united with Him. Then the consciousness descends through all the states of being down to the most material, bringing the Divine Force with it so that the Force can transform the whole being and finally divinise the physical body.

20 September 1967

*

In the message for the radio You substituted the word “union” for the word “unity”.⁶ May I know, Sweet Mother, why this change was made?

Because most people, when they hear the word “unity”, understand *uniformity*, and nothing can be further from the truth.

25 September 1967

*

⁶ Message for the inauguration of All India Radio, Pondicherry, 23 September 1967: “O India, land of light and spiritual knowledge! Wake up to your true mission in the world, show the way to union and harmony.” — *Words of the Mother I*, CWM vol. 13, p. 367.

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Does spontaneity come spontaneously or does one have to follow a discipline to obtain it?

Spontaneity in feelings and action comes from permanent contact with the psychic, which brings order into the thoughts and automatically controls the vital impulses.

30 September 1967

*

This afternoon I forgot one thing. The day before yesterday I spontaneously prayed to You to destroy all that is hostile in me, as Durga kills the Asuras.

Durga does not kill the Asuras; she reigns over them and makes it impossible for them to destroy.

In essence, all is the Supreme Lord and has to return to the Supreme Lord for an ultimate transformation.

Death is only an expedient—surrender is the victory.

11 October 1967

*

I await the day when my ignorant “I” will be changed by You into “That”.

“That” is at the very bottom of the “I”. Dig deep and you will find Him.

16 October 1967

*

You have taught me the importance of awakening the Divine Consciousness in the body, and now I pray to You to make my body aspire towards You.

The cells of the body thirst for the Divine Consciousness and when they are put in contact with It their aspiration becomes

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

very intense.

21 October 1967

*

It seems that my ambitions no longer exist. Now there is an aspiration—it is to be simply what You want.

That is the best condition for advancing swiftly on the path.

26 October 1967

*

One morning when I read the following words, “My soul is in prayer...and my body too; and my thought is silent in a mute ecstasy”,⁷ something entered into my very body. I hope that it remains and increases.

The work is being done all the time and one advances even when one does not know it. But now, for you, the progress is rapid.

6 November 1967

*

Two extremely rich men who claim to be very religious and virtuous, are not paying what they owe me according to their accounts. One of them refuses to speak to me about it and the other says, “Have trust in God, you will not lose your money.”

If the Mother could make these two men honest (even temporarily, long enough for them to settle this affair) ...

It is said that Christ healed the sick and even raised the dead. One day an idiot was brought to him to be cured. But Christ slipped away, saying that to make a dumb man intelligent is impossible.

⁷ The Mother, *Prayers and Meditations*, CWM vol. 1, p. 332.

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To make a dishonest man honest is an even more impossible miracle.

8 November 1967

*

Which is swifter for transformation: Divine Love or Mahakali's force?

Kali's force is necessary only for those who are not yet open to Divine Love. For one who is open to Divine Love, nothing more is needed.

11 November 1967

*

Before going to sleep I remember You and when I wake up I remember You. But during sleep I wander off—I move away from Your feet.

Let me be with you in your excursions into the vital world, and all will go well.

15 November 1967

*

The fall in my consciousness is being felt more often and is becoming more unpleasant, but I am unable to prevent it.

This perception is proof of a great progress in consciousness and the sign that you will soon find the remedy.

20 November 1967

*

Since the beginning of this week, I sometimes see a light around You, a white light, bluish and golden—rather there is a rain of this light!

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

This proves that you are open to Sri Aurobindo's presence.

25 November 1967

*

By Your Grace, my body is now collaborating to get rid of its laziness. That even the body has a will of its own is a new experience for me.

When the body is converted, it knows how to collaborate.

29 November 1967

*

Which came first in the manifestation, God or the Asura?

The oldest tradition says that the first four emanations of the Mahashakti—Consciousness, Love, Truth and Life—cut themselves off (separated themselves) from their Supreme Origin and became Unconsciousness, Suffering, Falsehood and Death.

Then a second emanation was made to repair the damage. They are the Gods.

Naturally, this is a way of speaking which corresponds to a Reality that is difficult to put into words.

2 December 1967

*

Transformation demands a very high degree of aspiration, surrender and receptivity, doesn't it?

Transformation demands a total and integral consecration. But isn't that the aspiration of every sincere sadhak?

Total means vertically in all the states of being, from the most material to the most subtle.

Integral means horizontally in all the different and often

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contradictory parts which make up the outer being (physical, vital and mental).

4 December 1967

*

When I contemplate Sri Aurobindo, sometimes Your image appears, and when I concentrate on You, sometimes Sri Aurobindo's image appears.

This phenomenon is quite *natural*.

6 December 1967

*

Within the heart a rose surrounded by red flames—what does it signify?

An intense aspiration full of love.

9 December 1967

*

I await the state in which my whole being will be a burning brazier of Agni.

It is coming, it is on the way. With a persistent will and constant remembrance, one can hasten its arrival considerably.

11 December 1967

*

Often I feel that the fragrance of the flowers given by the Mother is something extraordinary.

Flowers are very receptive and they are happy when they are loved.

15 December 1967

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

I have forgotten the Divine for so long in this life and in former lives. But a drop of Your Grace can enable me to make up for all the lost time.

Whatever the past may have been, it is not time that is needed to establish contact with the Divine, but sincerity of aspiration.

19 December 1967

*

Can one's aspiration for the Divine have the required intensity and sincerity without the tears and anguish that are mentioned in nearly all the old legends of the saints?

Tears and anguish indicate the presence of a weak and paltry nature which is still unable to receive the Divine in all his power and glory. Not only are they unnecessary, they are useless and an obstacle to realisation.

23 December 1967

*

You put into Your words something which enables us to see the Truth that words cannot convey. What is it that accompanies Your words?

Consciousness.

27 December 1967

*

Consciousness is just the problem when I translate the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother into Hindi. How to bring true consciousness into the translation?

(The Mother explained that in making a translation it is bad (mauvais) to pass directly from English into Hindi with one's consciousness at the same level, while

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it is good (bon), starting from the English, to rise up in one's consciousness to obtain the right inspiration, and then come down into Hindi. To illustrate this, she drew the following sketch:)



28 December 1967

*

Sometimes I see You in the sky, in the moon, in the sun. And in all these places I am there at Your feet. An audacious fantasy of Your child, who is so mediocre!

It is not a fantasy. It corresponds to something true.

Every human being feels himself to be mediocre as soon as he strives to become divine.

29 December 1967

*

I think that always, at every moment, someone or other is calling You, and You respond. Doesn't this disturb Your sleep or Your rest?

Day and night hundreds of calls are coming—but the Consciousness is always alert and it responds.

One is limited only materially by time and space.

3 January 1968

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

*How is it that ordinarily the richer one is (materially),
the more dishonest one is?*

It is because material wealth is controlled by the adverse forces—and because they have not yet been converted to the Divine Influence, though the work has begun.

That victory will form part of the triumph of the Truth.

Wealth should not be a personal property and should be at the disposal of the Divine for the welfare of all.

4 January 1968

*

When Mother says that wealth should not be a personal property, I understand that what must come is more a change of psychological attitude on the part of those who have money than any change in the law of property.

Undoubtedly.

Only psychological change can be a solution.

6 January 1968

*

The disciples of the Ashram have a sure and easy way to put their money at the disposal of the Divine: they offer it to the Mother. But how can others do it? Can it be said that each one should get rid of the sense of property and spend his money according to the Divine command within, from time to time?

I am convinced that if someone is advanced enough on the path to receive the knowledge that money is an impersonal force and should be used for the progress of the earth, this person will be developed enough inwardly to receive the knowledge of how

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best to make use of the money.

8 January 1968

*

*Four days ago, after midnight, I saw a rain of light in
Your room enveloping You. I saw it again on the suc-
ceeding nights. Is it possible for me to bathe in this light?*

The light is for all those who open themselves to it by sincere aspiration and self-giving.

I see nothing to prevent you from bathing in it.

13 January 1968

*

*One morning when I was reading these words of
Yours, “My body smiles at Thee with happiness as
before my soul smiled at Thee!”,⁸ I saw a window
opening upon a high and beautiful vista. But this
horizon is very far from me!*

It will come.

You must not forget how many years this body has lived. And now what it achieves is contagious, and it passes its experience on to others according to their receptivity.

16 January 1968

*

*Concern for my progress is giving way to an aspira-
tion: the aspiration to put myself in Your hands so
that You, O Divine Mother, may mould my being as
You wish!*

⁸ *Prayers and Meditations*, CWM vol. 1, p. 377.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

This is the best way and the quickest.
I accept the responsibility.

20 January 1968

*

A few days ago I wished to begin each day by making my Pranam to You. Since then, I wake up remembering You and I make my Pranam to You before anything else. It is Your Grace that has made this possible, and I hope that the Grace will hasten the constant remembrance.

Every day you will receive my response and my blessings for the day.

25 January 1968

*

The day before yesterday, as I was arranging my vase for You, I said to a flower, “Oh, you are going to Mother!” and it really smiled. The same thing happened again yesterday and today.

Well, that is very interesting! Was it a rose or a hibiscus?

27 January 1968

*

A hibiscus gave me this experience.

Yes, it is a very conscious flower—I have had many proofs of it.

27 January 1968

*

Is constant remembrance of the Divine the beginning of union?

A beginning of union comes even before constant remembrance.

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When the remembrance is constant, one often feels a Presence that imposes itself on the remembrance.

29 January 1968

*

One day I spoke to You about the laziness of my body and it began to diminish. I hope that Your Grace will now lead this very body to consecrate itself to You.

This is absolutely certain. Aspire with ardour (but without impatience) and it will happen soon.

2 February 1968

*

While speaking about the Transcendent Mother (and the upper petal of the Transformation flower), You said, “The Transcendent is both one and two (or dual) at the same time.” What does this mean?

Beyond the creation lies perfect Oneness, but potentially it contains duality since the Mahashakti will manifest for the needs of the creation.

5 February 1968

*

Last Monday You spoke to me about the Transcendent which is both one and two at the same time. Naturally, I shall wait for the true consciousness to come in order to have this knowledge. But yesterday I tried to note down what You said:

“The mind thinks about things in succession. But beyond and above, everything exists at the same time. The One is both one and two; the manifested and the unmanifested, everything exists at the same time. When It is objectified in the creation, in the manifestation, there is a succession: one, two...But

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

this is only a way of speaking. There is no succession, no beginning. Beyond, in perfect Oneness, everything exists at the same time, simultaneously. This cannot be understood, it must be experienced; one can have the experience of it.”

Will you please correct these lines?

They are correct.

9 February 1968

*

I see in my heart a large flower bud, all white, around which wisps of smoke are rising, like those of incense.

It is the symbol of your psychic being. And if the bud is that of a lotus, it means that your psychic being is aspiring to manifest the Divine Consciousness.

12 February 1968

*

As a trial we have written to the Government of India to register the Ashram as the copyright owner of one of Sri Aurobindo’s works. Now I am filling out the form for the Mother’s “Conversations”. The form asks for the author’s nationality. What nationality can I put? French?

Do not fill out the form for my book or books. I do not claim any rights of authorship and I refuse to answer the question they ask.

It is true that this body was born in Paris and that its soul has declared that it is Indian, but I belong to no nation in particular. And as these administrations cannot understand this, I refuse to deal with them.

14 February 1968

*

Is the earth the only planet on which silver exists?

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

Probably. It depends how dense the other planets are. The astronomers would perhaps be able to say.

16 February 1968

*

One evening as I was saying, “What You want, what You want, but make me realise the Divine”, a voice rose from my heart, “Only what You want, what You want.”

This is good—the true attitude and the most effective one.

19 February 1968

*

On this blessed day, O Divine Mother, I am before You, forehead on the ground, my arms around Your feet in the hope of living there always, constantly.

Your aspiration will be fulfilled.

21 February 1968

*

Now I can see the possibility of having my whole being ruled by You, by Your Love. Would Mother hasten its fulfilment?

All is going well—as fast as it can go—for the being is multiple and its different parts have a sort of periodicity in their action, and we have to wait for each part's turn to come, so that nothing is neglected.

7 March 1968

*

What is the difference between an emanation and a formation?

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

These words do not apply to the physical world as it is at present.

The explanation is only an approximation. One can say, however, that the emanation is made up of the very substance of the emanator, whereas the formation is made up of a substance external to the one who formed it.

To make a comparison, one could say that the emanation is like a child made from the substance of its mother, and the formation is like a living statue made out of a material external to the sculptor.

But of course this is only a very approximate explanation.

11 March 1968

*

In the supramental world, You are permanently there in a supramental body. Here we see You in the human body. What relation is there between these two bodies?

Very cordial, but not constant in a physical way...

19 March 1968

*

It seems to me that the very land of Auroville aspires. Is it true, Sweet Mother?

Yes, the land itself has a consciousness, even though this consciousness is not intellectualised and cannot express itself.

21 March 1968

*

The path is long, very long, almost interminable. But remaining at Your feet, I am not uneasy.

It is true that the path is very long, but for one who follows it with *sincerity*, it is *truly very interesting*, and at every step one

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

is rewarded for one's trouble.

23 March 1968

*

What relation is there between the wastage we, Your children, create and the shortage of money that has been raising its head in the Ashram for years?

The relation of cause and effect.

The cure lies in the sincere consecration of each and every one.

26 March 1968

*

Today You have shown me the basic incompatibility between human law and the Truth. But this is a problem that confronts me very often.

Politics and so-called justice are still, in humanity, what is most closed to the Truth. But their turn for conversion will also come, perhaps sooner than we think.

28 March 1968

*

I asked myself: "What do you want to be?"

The reply came like an aspiration: "Simply to be the Mother's faithful child."

This is very good.

The door is open to supreme realisations.

30 March 1968

*

Can one say that all waste reflects a waste of consciousness?

Waste of any kind is the result of unconsciousness.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Consciousness in its purity is perfect and infallible.

2 April 1968

*

The Upanishad says that when one sleeps, one reaches pure Being. Does this apply only to the Yogi or to everyone?

In theory, it applies to everyone. But the vast majority of human beings fall into unconsciousness, and if there is a contact with pure Being it is quite unconscious. Very few persons are conscious of this relation. It is usually the result of Yoga.

8 April 1968

*

I go to bed remembering You and by Your Grace I wake up remembering You. But my sleep continues to be altogether unconscious.

During sleep the inner beings become consciously active. When one wakes up, it is the waking being that is *not conscious* of the activities of the night.

16 April 1968

*

In the quotation chosen for tomorrow Sri Aurobindo speaks of the “Truth that seeks to descend upon us” and “is already there within us”.⁹ Please explain this paradox which, I can feel, is only apparent.

⁹ “In the spiritual order of things, the higher we project our view and our aspiration, the greater the Truth that seeks to descend upon us, because it is already there within us and calls for its release from the covering that conceals it in manifested Nature.” — *The Life Divine*, CWSA vol. 21, p. 284.

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It is not a paradox.

It is the same phenomenon as for the Divine who is at the centre of our being, etc. and at the same time is beyond the creation, the Divine towards whom the whole evolution is moving, but whom it could never reach if it did not carry him within itself.

One must go beyond notions of space and matter to be able to understand.

23 April 1968

*

Two days ago I prayed to You to give me a new birth and yesterday You sent me leaves with the same significance. May I take them as Your “Yes”?

Naturally. It is my answer to your prayer, which was heard.

25 April 1968

*

Yesterday, coming down from Your room I could not check my tears. There are bonds attached to me, or rather I am attached to them. Only Your Grace, O Divine Mother, can do what needs to be done.

You need not worry. When the hour of liberation comes, it will be done quite naturally—without tears.

6 May 1968

*

I wanted to offer You something nice, but I find only my weaknesses and imperfections.

That is the best offering, because it brings about a progress for the whole earth.

8 May 1968

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

When I thought of writing to You this morning about the night of bonds and attachments that have enveloped me for the last three weeks, I felt that all these things have actually been there for a long time and that now Your Grace has brought them to my notice so that the next step may be taken.

Mother, the night has already been very long for me. But it matters little, so long as I can continue to keep myself at Your feet.

According to my experience, one should not try to destroy or suppress. One should concentrate all one's effort on building up and strengthening the *true consciousness*, which will automatically do the work of unifying the being.

In this way, everything that has to be transformed will be transformed quite naturally, without clash or damage.

13 May 1968

*

How to hasten the day when my whole being will be able to say, “I am Yours, Yours alone”?

There are two actions which in practice merge into one.

- (1) Never forget the goal one wants to attain.
- (2) Never allow any part of the being or any of its movements to contradict one's aspiration.

This also makes it necessary to become conscious of one's nights, because the activities of the night often contradict the aspiration of the day and undo its work.

Vigilance, sincerity, continuity of effort, and the Grace will do the rest.

20 May 1968

*

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Even “good and innocent movements” are said to take on different colours in the light of the psychic flame.

The very notion of good and bad is completely changed.

One can say very simply that all that leads to the Divine is good, and all that leads away from the Divine is bad.

Many virtues lead away from the Divine by making men satisfied with what they are.

22 May 1968

*

Sri Aurobindo has written in Savitri:

*“Yes, there are happy ways near to God’s sun;
But few are they who tread the sunlit path;
Only the pure in soul can walk in light.”¹⁰
What a joy it would be to possess the required purity!*

When one is living among men with all their miseries, it is only the Grace that can bestow this state—even in those who by Tapasya have abolished their ego.

It is beyond all personal effort.

27 May 1968

*

What is the most effective way to overcome the ego?

The simplest and most effective way is to offer it to the Divine; the more sincere and radical this offering is, the faster the result will come.

28 May 1968

*

Now I can conceive that the Divine is all and everywhere, but I do not yet have the experience.

¹⁰ *Savitri*, CWSA vol. 34, p. 448.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Because He is not on the surface and the appearance of things is false.

But if you concentrate in the psychic, you will at once feel that He is there, everywhere, luminous, radiant, vibrant with strength and love, and that without Him nothing could exist.

30 May 1968

*

To remain turned upwards and to live in the true consciousness—the two seem complementary to each other.

Are they not two ways of saying the same thing?—certainly two ways of doing the same thing.

3 June 1968

*

*Who should be put on guard to sound the alert:
“Attention! Turn upwards”?*

It is what one usually calls conscience, but in fact it is the psychic being. And one can hear it only if one is very attentive, because it does not make any clamour.

5 June 1968

*

Your Presence makes itself felt in a concrete way, almost materially concrete. But this is still very rare for me.

It is good—be attentive and it will go on increasing.

10 June 1968

*

Is transparent sincerity a more effective, indispensable means, or is it a realisation in itself?

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

Without sincerity nothing can be done. With total sincerity everything is possible.

12 June 1968

*

What is the origin of man's love for his own ignorance?

It is unconsciousness.

Unconsciousness is the negation of all effort. Ignorance (that is, the acknowledgement that there is something to be known which we do not know) is the first effect of the divine influence on the inconscient.

15 June 1968

*

Sri Aurobindo speaks of Savitri's firmness of purpose in the following line:

*"Immutable like a fixed eternal star."¹¹
Can one say that this kind of determination is demanded of the sadhak who aspires for transformation?*

This is the great mystery of creation: immutable, yet eternally renewed.

17 June 1968

*

What must I do to tread the path without stumbling?

Fear nothing.

22 June 1968

*

Savitri says:

"Not only is there hope for godheads pure;

¹¹ *Savitri*, CWSA vol. 34, p. 606.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

*The violent and darkened deities
Leaped down from the one breast in rage to find
What the white gods had missed: they too are safe;
A mother's eyes are on them and her arms
Stretched out in love desire her rebel sons.”¹²
What had the white gods missed?*

The conversion of the Asuras.

24 June 1968

*

*Isn't the power of the Asuras as boundless as the
power of the Gods?*

The vibrations of evil are in truth less powerful than the vibrations of good.

26 June 1968

*

*Can one say that total sincerity and the abolition of
the ego are closely interdependent?*

Only the Supreme Lord is perfectly sincere.

And when the ego is abolished, only the Supreme Lord exists.

28 June 1968

*

I can see that in spiritual life, even to sit down is to fall back. But most often I sit down without knowing it!

This is so true that one could rightly say: even while sleeping one must advance.

¹² *Savitri*, CWSA vol. 34, p. 613.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

But there comes a time when the ascent becomes a perfect repose.

2 July 1968

*

Yesterday Mother said, “Even while sleeping one must advance.” But Her child is so poor that he has not yet succeeded in making his sleep conscious, and the night continues to be free to undo the work of the day.

Have you tried making a little prayer before going to sleep?

A prayer for the sleep to be an offering of the physical being to the Supreme Consciousness.

3 July 1968

*

Once Mother spoke to me about total sincerity. What does transparent sincerity mean?

Sincerity is compared to an atmosphere or a sheet of glass. If the one or the other is completely transparent, it lets light through without distorting it.

Similarly, a sincere consciousness lets divine vibrations through without distorting them.

8 July 1968

*

Can an individual achieve transformation even if the universe continues to be such as it is?

In the evolution, the individual is far ahead of the earth, but as long as he lives on earth there is a certain interdependence. But the condition of the earth is sure to become such that a supramental being will soon be able to live on it.

9 July 1968

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

I have not been able to make a total surrender and I do not feel happy, I feel an emptiness.

Patiently, tirelessly, the false movement, to whatever state of being it belongs, must be put before the Truth Consciousness for It to do the needful.

11 July 1968

*

What is the best attitude to have when I come to you?

To be happy!

25 July 1968

*

The Buddha said that Nirvana results in the cessation of rebirth. But isn't the Divine always free to send back into the manifestation the spark that extinguishes itself in Him?

Naturally, each time that one makes a rule one makes a mistake.

Besides, the Buddha himself, although he has not taken up another physical body, has returned to work in the earth-atmosphere.

26 July 1968

*

If the universe is one, shouldn't the liberation of one single person on earth have the power to liberate everyone?

Oneness means identity in origin; but in the manifestation each entity follows its own path of conscious return to the Oneness.

28 September 1968

*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

In 1953 Mother said: “Whatever the way one follows, whether it be the religious way, the philosophical way, the yogic way, the mystic way, no one has realised transformation.”¹³

Can one hope that the sadhaks have now made good progress towards this goal?

Now the conditions are such that every sincere effort must necessarily tend towards this goal.

30 September 1968

*

How can one collaborate in the transformation?

Things are now so arranged that as soon as one collaborates for the Divine Dawn in any form, one necessarily collaborates in the transformation.

7 October 1968

*

The Divine is the goal, the path and the one who treads the path. But isn’t a person who is not advancing towards the Divine also the Divine?

All are the Divine, but very few are those who know it and fewer still are those who consciously want to realise it. This explains the long duration and difficulty of the creation if its goal is that all and everything should once more become *consciously* divine.

14 October 1968

*

One would like to have the fundamental realisation that the Divine is all and everything.

¹³ *Questions and Answers 1953*, CWM vol. 5, p. 82.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

For that one must identify oneself with the Supreme Divine.

Once one is identified, when one turns towards the creation one sees and knows that the Divine alone exists both in the Essence and in the manifestation.

16 October 1968

*

Is immunity to the attack of adverse forces possible without transformation?

Immunity does not come automatically from transformation.

One has to cut off all connection with the manifested world in order to be immune.

But in any case, transformation gives the power of victory.

18 October 1968

*

Now my sleep is becoming more calm. I am able to keep a little more of my aspiration, a little more remembrance of You. Is this the beginning, no doubt very small, of the desired change for the nights?

Yes, it is a good beginning. In this way the nights will become more and more conscious.

20 October 1968

*

Is the Divine Love equal for all, even in the manifestation?

Yes, equal and immutable.

But the capacity to perceive and receive it and the habit of distorting it differ with each one.

22 October 1968

*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

“The ideal sadhaka should be able to say in the Biblical phrase, ‘My zeal for the Lord has eaten me up.’”¹⁴ Does this mean an intense, constant and integral aspiration?

Yes, it means that the entire being is absorbed in its consecration.

24 October 1968

*

Does the subconscious go on recording during sleep?

For most people, in their sleep, it is precisely what has been recorded in the subconscious during the day or previously which becomes active again and constitutes their dreams.

26 October 1968

*

Looking at the push towards transformation that Mother is giving me, and at my own banality and mediocrity, I recall this line in Savitri:

“All can be done if the god-touch is there.”¹⁵

As soon as one has contact with the Divine Consciousness, this mediocrity of the outer being becomes evident, but the promise in *Savitri* is true and it will be realised.

28 October 1968

*

Perhaps now Your Grace would like to help me to make the complete surrender of my whole being in love and joy.

¹⁴ Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, CWSA vol. 23, p. 58.

¹⁵ *Savitri*, CWSA vol. 33, p. 3.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Yes, the hour when this will be possible is near and you will have the joy of total consecration.

30 October 1968

*

*Aswapathy was very fortunate. For him,
“Each day was a spiritual romance,...
Each happening was a deep experience.”¹⁶*

This possibility is open to all whose aspiration is fervent.

1 November 1968

*

How can one keep what You give?

It does not go away, but enters the subconscious and continues to act.

To remain conscious of it, one must reduce the range of the subconscious in oneself and thus increase the consciousness.

3 November 1968

*

What should one do to reduce the range of the subconscious?

To grow in consciousness is the very aim of life on earth. It is through the experience of successive lives that one gradually reduces the range of the subconscious.

Through yoga and the effort to find the Divine in oneself and in life, one hastens the work considerably and it can be done in a few years.

5 November 1968

*

¹⁶ *Savitri*, CWSA vol. 33, pp. 30–31.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

*“A knowledge which became what it perceived,
Replaced the separated sense and heart
And drew all Nature into its embrace.”¹⁷*

Is Sri Aurobindo referring here to knowledge by identity?

Yes, it is a very accurate description.

7 November 1968

*

*“A greater Force than the earthly held his limbs,...
Unwound the triple cord of mind and freed
The heavenly wideness of a Godhead’s gaze.”¹⁸*

What does “the triple cord of mind” mean?

The cords symbolise the limitations of the mind; and there are three of them because there is a physical mind, a vital mind and a mental mind.

9 November 1968

*

*“The days were travellers on a destined road,
The nights companions of his musing spirit.”¹⁹*

*To carry on the sadhana night and day is now
becoming a necessity for me.*

Yes, there comes a time when nothing, absolutely nothing is outside the yoga and the Divine’s Presence is felt and found in all things and all circumstances.

11 November 1968

*

¹⁷ *Savitri*, CWSA vol. 33, p. 28.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 81–82.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

*When I feel an emptiness or uneasiness, often I find
that I had forgotten the Divine.*

This is precisely the sign of forgetting—or rather its consequence, which becomes more and more clear and precise as one progresses, until the time comes when one never forgets any more and the feeling of the Divine Presence is constant.

13 November 1968

*

*A last high world was seen where all worlds meet;
In its summit gleam where Night is not nor Sleep,
The light began of the Trinity supreme.”²⁰
Is the “Trinity supreme” Sachchidananda?*

Yes.

15 November 1968

*

*Through Krishna’s Grace, Arjuna realised the cosmic
Divine and Virat in the twinkling of an eye. What a
good Guru and what a good disciple!*

Speed is not necessarily a sign of superiority.

These “instantaneous” conversions are most often the result of many lives of preparation.

17 November 1968

*

*“Our body’s cells must hold the Immortal’s flame.”²¹
Is this the secret of the luminous body?*

²⁰ *Savitri*, CWSA vol. 33, p. 89

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

It is a poetic way of expressing the transformation which is going to take place and is more complicated than that.

19 November 1968

*

It seems to me, Mother, that when man does not accept the Divine, it is more out of ignorance than out of wickedness. Isn't it so?

It is undoubtedly out of ignorance and fear of what he doesn't know.

It is only the Asuras and a few great hostile beings who refuse and oppose the Divine even though they know who He is.

21 November 1968

*

*Your child Shyam Sundar must achieve the three “S”s:
Sincerity, Surrender and Spontaneity.*

Very good—we are going to work on it with such ardour that the result will be obtained in 6×6 days at the minimum or 3×3 months at the most.

Blessings

23 November 1968

*

It seems to me, Mother, that the flame that calls and the flame that responds are one and the same.

Essentially they are the same; but the plenitude of the response far exceeds the intensity of the call. The response always exceeds our receptivity by far.

25 November 1968

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Can one say, Mother, that perfect receptivity comes only with constant union with the Divine?

If we call “perfect receptivity” the receptivity that receives only the Divine Influence and no other, it is certain—and at the same time it is perfect purity.

This is what we must strive for.

27 November 1968

*

“None can reach heaven who has not passed through hell.”²²

But still, Mother, doesn’t the soul chosen by the Divine go through hell in a different way than others?

The quotation means that to reach the divine regions one must, while one is on earth, pass through the vital, which in some of its parts is a veritable hell. But those who have surrendered to the Divine and been adopted by Him are surrounded by the divine protection and for them the passage is not difficult.

29 November 1968

*

Yesterday, Mother, I had a slight perception that even the body can remember You.

Well, that is very good. It is a good beginning.

And the body’s remembrance is much more stable than the mind’s or the vital’s.

1 December 1968

*

“His failure is not failure whom God leads;”²³

²² *Savitri*, CWSA vol. 33, p. 227.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

Because it is part of the play?

It is the human mind that has the concept of success and failure. It is the human mind that wants one thing and does not want another. In the divine plan each thing has its place and importance. So it is not success that matters. What matters is to be a docile and, if possible, a *conscious* instrument of the Divine Will.

To be and to do what the Divine wants, this is the truly important thing.

3 December 1968

*

“The one original transcendent Shakti, the Mother stands above all the worlds and bears in her eternal consciousness the Supreme Divine.”²⁴

Similarly, can one say that the Supreme Divine carries the Mother in his eternal consciousness?

Beyond all question.

They are ONE in essence and manifestation.

5 December 1968

*

Cannot the ego consent to its own abolition?

The ego was created for the work of individualisation; when the work is achieved, it is not unusual for the ego itself to accept its own dissolution.

7 December 1968

*

The aspiration of this morning: Let me do nothing

²⁴ Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother with Letters on the Mother*, CWSA vol. 32, p. 14.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

to delay the manifestation for which Sri Aurobindo sacrificed his body.

Yes, his work is in the process of being accomplished inevitably; it is our own participation in it that we can make more and more perfect if we know how to avoid obstructing the Grace.

9 December 1968

*

The human pleasure of possessing is a perversion of what, Mother?

All pleasure is a perversion, by egoistic limitation, of the Ananda that is the purpose of the universal manifestation.

11 December 1968

*

“When we eat, we should be conscious that we are giving our food to that Presence in us....”²⁵ When I try to take this attitude, the food tastes better and the atmosphere becomes quieter.

The Presence is always there whatever we do, but out of ignorance, negligence or thoughtlessness we do not feel it. But each time that we are attentive and concentrated, we become aware of a wonderful transformation in all things.

13 December 1968

*

Without being able to feel Your Presence constantly, O Divine Mother, life is no longer joyous. But also something protects it from becoming sad.

²⁵ Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, CWSA vol. 23, p. 111.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

This is because the Presence is *constant* whether or not it is felt, and its protection is constant and effective even when it is not perceived.

15 December 1968

*

*To be conscious of the constant Presence, is memory
a good aid?*

Memory is a mental faculty and helps the mental consciousness. But feeling and sensation must also participate.

17 December 1968

*

When the Presence becomes concrete, does this indicate the participation of feeling and sensation?

To have the perception of the Presence, the participation of feeling is indispensable, and when sensation collaborates, then the perception becomes concrete and tangible.

19 December 1968

*

*“All things shall change in God’s transfiguring hour.”²⁶
Can man delay or hasten the coming of this hour?*

Neither the one nor the other in their apparent contradiction created by the separative consciousness, but something else that our words cannot express.

In the present state of human consciousness, it is good for it to think that aspiration and human effort can hasten the advent of the divine transformation, because effort and aspiration

²⁶ *Savitri*, CWSA vol. 33, p. 341.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

are needed for the transformation to take place.

21 December 1968

*

The Upanishad says: "When That is known, all is known." Is all known in its essential truth or also in detail?

In its essential truth, but one usually keeps the perception of the illusory appearance at the same time.

23 December 1968

*

It seems to me that to know things in detail, the ordinary instrumentation is necessary for the yogi too, but the yogi puts this knowledge to the test of the essential truth.

Yes, one can put it that way. But above all, it is the attitude towards the outward appearance that changes completely.

25 December 1968

*

In fact, Mother, what is the yogi's attitude towards the outward appearance?

The usefulness of seeing clearly instead of being blind.

The usefulness of no longer being deceived by outward appearances.

The usefulness of knowing the true purpose of life instead of living in ignorance and falsehood.

27 December 1968

*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

*Is the perception of the illusory appearance automatic
for the yogi?*

That probably depends on the yogi and his condition.

When one is united with the Supreme Consciousness and when the body is undergoing transformation, the body keeps its automatic perception of the outer world; but this perception is more complete than ordinary perception, as if it revealed something of its content.

29 December 1968

*

*Therefore, Mother, the transformation of the body is
necessary even to live in the Integral Knowledge!*

Certainly.

In Sri Aurobindo's yoga, the transformation of the body is indispensable in so far as it can be done. Because the aim of this yoga is not an escape from the physical consciousness but a divinisation of that consciousness.

31 December 1968

*

Mother has said, "In Sri Aurobindo's yoga, the transformation of the body is indispensable in so far as it can be done." Are there limits to the transformation of the body?

For the moment, yes. But in time, no. I am convinced that in two hundred years, for example, the physical body could be infinitely superior to what it is now—luminous, plastic, enduring, harmonious ...

And our effort today will have made it possible.

2 January 1969

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

With progress in the yoga of the body, will there be a change in the material environment?

A greater harmony will most certainly be manifested in the material world, just as the earth's appearance has greatly changed with the advent of the human species.

4 January 1969

*

In other words, Mother, it can be said that the transformation of the human body, the microcosm, will be useful to the transformation of the material world, the macrocosm.

Yes, it is an intellectual way of transcribing what is happening.

6 January 1969

*

I don't notice any progress towards seeing the Divine everywhere and in everything.

According to the experience of this body which is here called Mother, it is first necessary to realise union with the supreme and transcendent Divine, and then one can find this same Divine in everything, but covered with a more or less thick veil.

8 January 1969

*

A confession: I have not yet been able to receive from You the complete realisation of the Divine in myself.

Yes, I know this, and it does not surprise me either.

Your mind is strong and well organised; it is, so to speak, "the head of the house". It is very active and has a habit of

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

directing everything. But to have the realisation of the Inner Divine, the mind has to keep quiet and remain still—at least for a time.

It will come.

10 January 1969

*

I hope that some day my mind will open upwards and that, if necessary, Mother will make a hole in it.

No hole is necessary. All that is needed is a silent aspiration and a receptivity turned upwards.

12 January 1969

*

A few hours after writing my last letter I opened Prayers and Meditations and the first sentence I saw was this: “O Lord, deliver me from the mental influences which weigh upon me, so that, completely free, I may soar towards Thee.”²⁷

This is a very good response to your aspiration, and it shows you the process to follow.

14 January 1969

*

It seems to me, Mother, that if I can aspire to the Divine for the Divine Himself, the way could be shorter.

To aspire to the Divine for the Divine Himself, without any personal aim, is surely the best and shortest way—and the surest means of getting rid of the ego.

²⁷ The Mother, *Prayers and Meditations*, CWM vol. 1, p. 145.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Blessings

16 January 1969

*

*I have often seen Mother like a column of white light.
This month there are streaks of gold.*

In fact, since the first of January a new form of Conscious-ness²⁸ has manifested upon earth and one of its characteristics is a golden luminosity; no doubt it is this that you see.

18 January 1969

*

The day before yesterday, while waiting my turn to go to Mother, I saw a white avalanche sliding towards me, making me happy. Looking at it I discovered a dark spot. Can this dark spot be my ego?

The dark spot is obviously the sign of a lack of receptivity somewhere. But it is not necessarily a personal thing.

20 January 1969

*

I can feel that my mind is on the verge of losing its pride and complacency. Is it true, Mother?

Yes, it is true. I myself have found a significant change in its attitude, and feel that the conversion will not take long to come.

22 January 1969

*

²⁸ Soon afterwards the Mother named this Consciousness the superman consciousness (*la conscience du surhomme*) or simply the new consciousness.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

Can it be said, Mother, that the most cunning thing in this world is the ego?

When it comes to deceiving itself, the ego is certainly very clever, especially the mental ego, which always finds arguments to prove that it is right.

That is why a scrupulous and integral sincerity is known to be indispensable.

24 January 1969

*

My mind knows clearly that it has to become silent, but it continues its old habit. Evidently it is very dishonest.

It is not dishonesty, but rather weakness, for it must be very strong in order to overcome the old habit. True silence is a great power.

26 January 1969

*

This means, Mother, that in silence the mind will find its truth and receive what Mother wants to give it.

In silence the mind can open to the higher regions and receive the light of intuition and the superman consciousness, whose power is active in the terrestrial atmosphere. In silence the discernment develops that enables one to distinguish the true from the false.

28 January 1969

*

Can silence of mind help to make one's nights conscious?

Yes, certainly, because to remember the activities of the night, one has to keep one's head very still at the moment of waking and remain absolutely silent.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

If one begins to think, the memory of the dream disappears.

30 January 1969

*

*Is it not the mind that prevents me from surrendering
the responsibility for myself?*

It is not the mind in its capacity to understand and think. It is the ego (mental, vital and physical) that insists on keeping the responsibility for its life so that this life may conform to its egoistic tastes.

1 February 1969

*

*In work also, Mother, instead of following the mind,
I would like to be Your faithful and simple servitor.*

That is good.

To begin with, when you have a decision to make, instead of listening to the mental reasons for and against it, keep silent for a short time, concentrated in the depths of your heart, and wait for the indication that will come to you from there.

Persist in doing this even if you do not succeed immediately, and you will definitely receive a sure indication in one form or another. The precision increases with the persistence.

3 February 1969

*

*When Your Presence becomes concrete, O Divine
Mother, existence becomes completely different!*

This should become a constant fact, because the Presence is constant.

5 February 1969

*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

Doesn't irritation come from the ego, even when it is justified by the mind?

Most certainly. In fact the mind's justification is very far from being a guarantee of truth.

Irritation is always the sign of a lack of understanding and a narrowness of spirit, which are both incompatible with the presence of the Supreme Consciousness.

7 February 1969

*

Your Love, O Mother, does not diminish at all when I oppose You with all my obscurity. I have had clear experiences of it.

This is because it is not a personal love, but the divine love, which is constant, unvarying, above all circumstances and always at the height of its activity. The divine love is limitless and unwavering. In fact, in each one, it is limited only by the incapacity to receive it.

9 February 1969

*

Man often says that he is searching for the Divine but the Divine is hiding himself. As for me, I find that it is the Divine who is searching for me and I who am hiding myself.

Yes, this is *absolutely true*. Once one has opened oneself and found the Divine, one sees that He is always present, always active, marvellous in His mercy and solicitude, and that it was our own stupidity which prevented us from seeing it.

11 February 1969

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

The time I pass without the true consciousness no longer seems like a life to me.

Truly it is not a life, it is hardly even a semblance of life, and most often a false semblance. But this can be eliminated from the being and be replaced by the constant consciousness of the Presence.

13 February 1969

*

In 1917 Mother spoke of a dizzy rapidity on the way to transformation. Here I am, a big laggard in comparison. What can my destiny be?

Why do you worry about it? Isn't the Grace there to remedy all the delays?

The only thing needed is sincerity—and it is there.

15 February 1969

*

With remembrance of You, Mother, my aspiration becomes more upright and calm.

This is very good. I am here to help and make the task easier.
My blessings are always consciously with you.

17 February 1969

*

Instead of merely understanding Mother's words, I want to receive what they contain and what is behind them.

This is possible when the mind knows how to remain quiet, turning in an attentive silence towards the Higher Consciousness.

19 February 1969

*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

On this day of Grace, Mother, I wanted to offer You something of worth, but I found nothing. Perhaps only a pure Pranam.

No material thing can be more valuable than the consecration of a fervent soul—and I have received your offering with my blessings.

21 February 1969

*

In spite of the awareness of my imperfections, distant goals no longer discourage me.

For one who has faith, discouragement is impossible because he has the certitude of belonging to the Divine, and for him union with the Divine is inevitable.

23 February 1969

*

The Upanishad says: “He who knows that he is the Supreme Lord, he becomes That.” Do this knowledge and this becoming happen suddenly, or are they progressive?

Everything is possible.

But it rarely happens suddenly because this requires a long subconscious preparation, in other words a preparation without the participation of the conscious will.

A long conscious preparation, sometimes extending over several lives, is a more frequent rule.

25 February 1969

*

Of course, I would like to have realisation as soon as possible, but now I am going to leave all that in the Mother’s hands.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

This is undoubtedly the shortest way, because for me conscious union with the Divine is the only thing worth living for.

27 February 1969

*

I see the Mother's increasing care for me and I hope to be Her good child.

It is true that you are opening more and more to the Influence and this makes a prompt and good result possible.

In trusting surrender lies the certitude of victory.

1 March 1969

*

In the Bulletin Mother has spoken of a body without a mind and vital.²⁹ Does this mean that the body has its own means of living, something different from what is called the vital force or Prana?

It is a rather special case.

In all well-developed beings, the body has a mind and vital, more or less rudimentary, which are particular to it and can be fully developed.

In this case there is also, and above all, a fully developed psychic which governs the whole house and guides all its actions. In addition, there is the superman consciousness which has manifested since the beginning of this year; this consciousness serves as a mentor to the body, which is learning from it things that the mind itself did not know.

3 March 1969

*

²⁹ The Mother was speaking of herself.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

Has the lack of consecration of the Aurovilians and the wastage taking place there something to do with the fact that money is not coming for Auroville?

Certainly the attitude of most of them is not favourable to the wealth of Auroville and does not create an atmosphere attractive to money.

5 March 1969

*

Mother, the desire to do something good or new in Your service has now been replaced by an aspiration to be Your true servitor.

I feel that you are closer and closer, more and more open to the Influence, and I hope that soon you will be fully conscious of the Force that is penetrating and motivating you.

7 March 1969

*

Everyone criticises the Creator of the universe—He seems to be the most criticised of all beings. I hope that He takes it all with a smile.

The smile is constant. And it is a marvellous smile which has the power to change the worst catastrophes into bliss.

9 March 1969

*

It is becoming evident that the Divine is more concerned with the progress of the sadhak than the sadhak himself can be.

This is certain. Even a very ardent aspiration is but a reflection

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

of the triumphal march of the Divine—and this in Perfect Peace!

11 March 1969

*

*"All that transpires on earth and all beyond
Are parts of an illimitable plan
The One keeps in his heart and knows alone."³⁰*

*Does he who is united with the One know this
"plan"?*

To the extent necessary for its execution, yes, and to the extent of the need, but not all at once in its entirety.

13 March 1969

*

*Often I find that if I criticise some action of others, later
I do the same thing myself, and that with justification!*

Yes, and this is how one learns not to criticise. For most often the criticism is a lack of understanding or some narrowness, and if we want to be truly useful, it is He *alone* who can teach us what we must be and what we must do to grow closer to the Supreme Lord and ultimately to consciously unite with Him.

15 March 1969

*

*Isn't what man calls "chance" a play of possibilities of
which he is ignorant?*

"Chance" is merely a label attached to that which man does not understand. Everything is formed and set in motion by the Supreme Consciousness, which is not outside the creation but

³⁰ *Savitri*, CWSA vol. 33, p. 52.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

is the very Truth and substance of the creation.

Without the Supreme Consciousness nothing exists; in It is everything.

17 March 1969

*

Can the Yogi foresee chance? (Perhaps he is no longer concerned with it!)

For one who practises the integral Yoga, the capacity to foresee the immediate future is one of the capacities that can be acquired.

But this requires special attention, so *it all depends on what the Supreme Lord expects of him*. Because for the true sadhak, this is the only thing that matters.

19 March 1969

*

Is it the psychic being that knows, or can know, what the Supreme Lord expects of me?

Yes, the psychic being not only has the capacity to know but also to realise. The psychic being, far better than the mind and vital, understands the body and knows how to make it obey.

21 March 1969

*

There is a joy in knowing the future, there is also a joy in walking the virgin path, carefree, in the Mother's arms!

These two joys are not in the same domain. It is the mind that enjoys knowing the future; the psychic is at ease with the attitude of trusting surrender.

23 March 1969

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

It is not always easy to distinguish between inner indication, instinct and intuition.

Ordinarily, they are not perceived in the same part of the being.

Intuition is perceived when the mind is completely quiet and the brain is motionless, so to speak, like a blank page turned upwards.

Inner indication is usually perceived deep within, at the level of the solar plexus, and instinct surges up either from the navel region or at the level of the neck, which is in general the place of relation with others and the outer world.

However, to be able to make this distinction clearly, calmness and a great habitual tranquillity are needed.

25 March 1969

*

Now I can feel that Mother is with me during my sleep, although at that time I am unconscious of it.

It may be that during your sleep something in your being is conscious of my presence, but the memory of it is not transferred to the waking consciousness.

27 March 1969

*

Let me merge in You!

Yes—in the peace, the vastness, the silence and the harmony...
With my blessings

29 March 1969

*

Mother has said, "The remedy lies at the centre of the evil." Is this because the Divine is at the centre of everything?

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

Yes.

And if we know how to go always to the deep centre of every difficulty, we find there the supreme remedy.

31 March 1969

*

As soon as some demand or expectation enters into love, love disappears, doesn't it?

Divine love in its purity is sufficient unto itself and it is eternal. But as soon as it manifests upon earth, it is mixed with all the egoistic movements of the mind, vital and body. Thus it is veiled and distorted beyond all recognition. What men call love is a sad caricature of the essential love, the Divine Love.

2 April 1969

*

For the last few days, when I go to sleep, I often sense the presence of Sri Aurobindo and Mother at the head of the bed. For me it is an act of Grace.

I am always there and these days Sri Aurobindo is actively present. What is an effect of the Grace is that your consciousness has awakened to the fact of this presence.

4 April 1969

*

The recalcitrant parts in me oppose You with all their persistent obscurity, but undoubtedly I want to collaborate for Your victory.

There is a region of Consciousness where opposition no longer exists—every movement forms part of the great play and

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

collaborates for the supreme realisation.

6 April 1969

*

The more I lose myself, the more I find You.

But when you have lost yourself completely, you will find the true you, the one who lives eternally.

8 April 1969

*

In the case of profound things, true understanding often comes when I am not trying to understand.

It is always the mind that tries to understand—outer, superficial things it can understand and even explain, but profound things it does not understand; they belong to another realm, to a higher and purer light. It is only when the mind is silent that this consciousness awakens in us and understands.

10 April 1969

*

Is it preferable for me to continue to have fixed hours of meditation?

Fixed hours are usually recommended with the idea that the outer nature gets accustomed to them and thus offers less resistance.

But my experience has been different. It has been my experience that true concentration imposes itself at the right moment and that when one obeys this inner inspiration the contemplation, the concentration and even the meditation, which is exclusively a mental phenomenon, are of a very high quality and much less mechanical.

12 April 1969

*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

*From today I am giving up fixed hours of meditation.
I aspire to live more and more in the true
consciousness at Your feet.*

It is good.

Yesterday I asked this Consciousness what condition was needed to be able to receive it without deformation. It replied, “One must be able to stand in the Supreme Consciousness without casting a shadow.” This means the absence of ego.

14 April 1969

*

*Now I can see the play of my ego in reactions where
before I saw the ego of others.*

This is a great progress and makes it much easier to have the inner equality that is indispensable for the yoga.

16 April 1969

*

In the context of what happened on the first of January,³¹ the following lines of Savitri become more significant:

*“The superman shall wake in mortal man
And manifest the hidden demigod
Or grow into the God-Light and God-Force
Revealing the secret deity in the cave.”³²*

Yes, this is undoubtedly what is going to happen.

18 April 1969

*

³¹ The manifestation of the superman consciousness.

³² *Savitri*, CWSA vol. 34, p. 705.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Isn't disinterested self-giving basically a movement of Divine Love?

Yes, certainly, and it is also the best way to merge in the Divine and become identified with Him.

20 April 1969

*

Self-consecration and self-renunciation are two aspects of a single movement, aren't they?

They are indissolubly linked, but almost always the one precedes the other, which then follows as a logical consequence.

The movement attains its perfection when the separate self disappears, merged in the Supreme, and only the Divine Consciousness exists, animating innumerable bodies.

22 April 1969

*

Is my mind less noisy now?

Yes.

Your mind is capable of transformation.

First it must silently open upwards to receive the Light of the Supreme Consciousness.

Then, remaining peaceful and plastic, it has to let this Light penetrate all its intellectual activities and mould them according to the Truth.

I am counting on it being like this.

24 April 1969

*

For me, prayer is now more a means of opening myself than of making myself heard.

It is certain that the Supreme Lord knows better than we do

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

what we think, what we want and what we need. One tells it to Him not so that He knows it, but to offer oneself to Him as totally as one can.

26 April 1969

*

The length of the separation no longer disturbs me. Is it my indifference? I don't know.

It is not indifference. The certitude of fulfilment gives one the patience to wait the time necessary for its realisation.

It is in the peace of this certitude that things go fastest.

28 April 1969

*

What should be the sadhak's attitude towards his wasted past, to which, no doubt, most of the present moments are being added?

We cannot get rid of the ties binding us to the world of ignorance entirely and all at once.

But the Grace is there to comfort us, and we should have complete trust in its action. And if we turn constantly towards the Supreme Consciousness, being receptive to It alone, we are doing all that it is in our power to do.

30 April 1969

*

When I notice a drop in my consciousness, if I remain quiet, the little flame within appears and the normal condition quickly returns.

Yes, to remain quiet is in fact the best way to let the Consciousness do its work.

2 May 1969

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Instead of asking Your blessings for what seems good to me, I would like to be able to know Your will and obey it.

Yes, this is very good.

When one asks for something, it is the Grace that responds and grants it, and one progresses if one is grateful. But if one aspires without asking, it is the Supreme Consciousness that hears and at once responds with the most favourable conditions for the fastest integral progress.

4 May 1969

*

Let me be like a new-born child in the Mother's arms!

All individual consciousnesses are like babies in the infinite arms of the Supreme Consciousness. Only there is a great difference between those who know it and those who do not.

For to know it brings a marvellous joy which transforms one's whole existence with the sense of Liberation.

6 May 1969

*

It seems to me, Mother, that my nights are no longer negative.

Yes—a time comes when the night prepares the next day's progress or makes use of the progress of the day before.

8 May 1969

*

Mental conceptions of the Divine no longer satisfy me; I want to live in the Divine.

Yes, that is the only way to know Him.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

It is also the best way to definitively overcome one's ego.

10 May 1969

*

Aspiration without demand is becoming more and more interesting.

Little by little the cells of the physical body have a constant élan which may be translated like this:

“What You want, Lord, what You want.”

Without trying to know what this will be, without desire or preference of any kind, the body says in all sincerity:

“I will know what You want me to know.

“I will be what You want me to be.

“I will do what You want me to do...

in peace and light and joy.”

13 May 1969

*

Are conditions more favourable now for the Yoga of the body?

Since this new consciousness³³ has been at work upon earth, it is definitely helping the Yoga of the body in a powerful way. But even now it is not an easy thing and it demands that the body be neither over-delicate nor fearful, and of course that it be free of desires.

15 May 1969

*

What should be the first step in the Yoga of the body?

³³ The superman consciousness.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Perfect adherence to the Higher Will.

17 May 1969

*

Once aspiration is awakened in the body, will the body show the same persistence in it that we see in its physical movements?

In this respect the body is marvellous. As soon as the cells consciously aspire for union with the Divine, this aspiration becomes constant, and if this aspiration is expressed by a mantra, the cells spontaneously and constantly repeat the mantra as an invocation.

19 May 1969

*

Will the body in time receive its mantra spontaneously?

It is good if the mantra springs up spontaneously with the simplicity of a child's call—two or three words rhythmically repeated.

If it does not come spontaneously, the body can repeat the mantra that your mind has chosen.

21 May 1969

*

There is a very vague perception of a fantastic possibility: it is that one day the body may be able to feel itself physically one with all existence.

This is just the experience that this physical body (which is reading and writing here) is having more and more. And I find it interesting that you came to know something of it without my ever having told you anything about it.

23 May 1969

*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

I will be happy to say farewell to mental “wisdom”.

Persist in your aspiration and it will surely happen.

And the “wisdom” of the Supreme Consciousness is so much more marvellous!

25 May 1969

*

How happy I would be if the Mother would give me a new birth every morning!

If you mean by “new birth” an opening of the consciousness to the innumerable inner fields that are still unexplored, it is possible provided your thirst for progress is ardent and sustained. For this you must come to me in the morning in a state of aspiration, but passive and receptive and, if possible, without thought.

27 May 1969

*

Even when the aspiration is not formulated, the Mother’s reply is there.

Often what is expressed without words is more clear and precise than any spoken or written sentence.

29 May 1969

*

Contrary to current notions, the more ardent the aspiration, the more it brings its own calm.

It is in perfect mental immobility that the aspiration is most ardent, like a flame that rises straight up without a wisp of air to deflect it.

5 June 1969

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

*The golden light is becoming a splendid rain around
the Mother!*

It is the new Consciousness, ready to help all those who are ready to heed it.

7 June 1969

*

The reactions of my ego, which are constantly occurring, make a veil between me and the Truth.

This is inevitable and it ought to be counteracted by a continual movement of vigilance.

And the cure is brought about by the Grace.

9 June 1969

*

*God created this world of ignorance for His delight.
Why then disturb Him by yoga?*

You make of this God a rather personal and arbitrary figure—this is not the Truth.

But to continue in the same spirit, one can say more truly that God has created the world so that individuals may consciously return to Him. And then yoga becomes imperative.

11 June 1969

*

There are parts of my being for which surrender is becoming a thing of joy.

True surrender is profoundly happy and joyful because with it comes the sense of infinity and of luminous eternal peace.

13 June 1969

*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

Is it possible to merge in You (as Pavitra did on the last night of his life) and still continue to live?

No, it is not possible because it was the whole of his soul that entered.

But a part of the being, an emanation can do it, if the aspiration is sufficient.

15 June 1969

*

My obstinate ego deserves a crushing blow from the Mother.

The Grace does not punish, it heals.

17 June 1969

*

I want to learn to bear insults with a smile.

It is very easy when one is convinced that the Divine alone knows the Truth and that human opinions have no true value.

19 June 1969

*

Mother has granted me a place at Her feet—this is my great security.

Yes, it is true.

And sincerity in one's consecration is the greatest security of all.

21 June 1969

*

Perhaps the small “I” will be dissolved in the aspiration to be what You want.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Surely this is what will happen to it some day, and perhaps even without its knowing it.

Often this happens as a widening, a blossoming in the Light.

23 June 1969

*

To be what the Mother wants—isn't this to be transformed?

Undeniably.

For all, to prepare for this transformation.

For some, to begin the work of transformation.

For a very few, to hasten the process of transformation.

25 June 1969

*

The Mother's patience is so infinite that She can be accused of slowness!

And yet the work of transformation is going as fast as it can go; there are even a number of people who cannot follow it and are thrown off balance.

But man's notion of time is usually based on the length of his bodily existence, which is terribly short.

27 June 1969

*

One day, if it interests you, I will explain what the true role and place of money should be.

28 June 1969

*

Yes, Mother, please explain to me the true role and place of money.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

In a truer world, towards the realisation of which the creation is moving, money ought to be one of the terrestrial forces placed at the disposal of the Divine Consciousness for its work upon earth.

The first step towards this realisation is the abolition of the sense of ownership. No one is the possessor of the money in his hands, he is the user and distributor of that money. And this leads naturally to the next step: those who have the widest and truest vision and knowledge ought to become these distributors and users.

The methods for achieving this have to be worked out and put into practice according to the need and the possibilities.

29 June 1969

*

Isn't the sense of ownership an attribute of the ego?

The sense of ownership is of course an attitude that is natural to the ego; but in spite of his blindness, man does not have a sense of ownership about the air he breathes, the water of the river or the falling rain.

1 July 1969

*

Thoughts and personal will are preventing me from living spontaneously.

One day the Supreme Lord will take up the conscious guidance.

7 July 1969

*

I would like to do sadhana as a child of the Mother.

For me sadhana consists in loving the Divine more and more

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

integrally, more and more absolutely, with a love so total that it leads to identification.

9 July 1969

*

*My offerings to Mother are still not free from the sense
that it is I who am offering.*

Perhaps because in that way they give me more pleasure.

11 July 1969

*

What is the secret of Your constant, invariable smile?

Constant contact with the Supreme Lord.

13 July 1969

*

*If I could let the past drop off like an old robe, I could
be a new-born child.*

Try to concentrate your consciousness on the Divine Presence, which is a concrete fact, and the past will fade away by itself quite naturally.

15 July 1969

*

*Little by little the desire for realisation is changing
into an aspiration.*

That is very good! Now the advance can be very fast.

18 July 1969

*

*The golden Light is becoming more and more lovable
in spite of all my obscurity.*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

It comes to make us conscious of our absurdity and to cure us of it. It is natural, therefore, that its very presence makes us increasingly conscious of our absurdity and then only one step remains to cure us of it for good.

21 July 1969

*

Can we hope that the new consciousness which descended on the first of January will do in the field of Yoga what the astronauts are doing in the scientific field?

What the astronauts have just done on the moon is certainly a marvellous achievement of calculation, endurance and courage; but these are the realisations of a child compared to what the new Consciousness is in the process of accomplishing on earth, which will lead to the creation of the superman.

23 July 1969

*

Time presses but there is no anxiety.

When one has attained the consciousness of eternity, what would otherwise have taken many years can be achieved in a few moments.

25 July 1969

*

I am Your spoiled child.

You have capacity, aspiration and sincerity. With these three qualities success is sure, and if one adds to them patience and intensity, time is no longer important.

27 July 1969

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

The prayer “What You want” seems to solve problems better than specific prayers.

According to my experience, this is the prayer that provides the best attitude in every circumstance.

29 July 1969

*

Sometimes, Mother, the Light becomes physically visible.

This is a phenomenon that will probably occur more and more frequently.

31 July 1969

*

I am convinced that the Mother’s Light is more powerful than my obscurity.

Leaving aside personalities, we can say with certainty that the divine Light is definitely more powerful than human obscurity.

2 August 1969

*

Does Durga’s lion represent the Power of the Divine over the adverse forces?

It can be understood in that way.

But in the vital there is a lion, very much alive, who is very often near me and who several people have often seen. This is obviously not an animal though its form has an animal appearance symbolic of its royal strength.

4 August 1969

*

The pleasure of possessing now seems like dust in comparison with self-giving.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

The pleasure of possessing is something purely vital and physical; as the inner being develops and the consciousness widens, it is replaced by a sense of judicious use and becomes a clear vision of the true use of everything.

6 August 1969

*

I understand that the true use of things depends on the loss of the sense of ownership and on the growth of consciousness.

The sense of ownership belongs to the ego, and when the ego disappears the sense of ownership is replaced by the correct vision of the true use of each thing (money or object) and one has only to act according to what one sees.

8 August 1969

*

*When Mother is late for Her lunch I say to myself,
“The Divine likes to be late in all things!”*

Would it not be, rather, that for the Divine time does not exist, or at any rate does not have the same value that man gives to it?

12 August 1969

*

One day, enveloped by Your Presence, the ego can be dissolved—isn’t it so, Mother?

Yes, certainly.

I have also seen cases where it gets converted and transformed.

14 August 1969

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

I bow down before Sri Aurobindo and Mother in a single movement.

Yes, it is true that Sri Aurobindo is always present.

16 August 1969

*

Doesn't my ego deserve a frontal assault?

I don't have this feeling. Your ego strikes me as being mental, above all, with some rather fixed ideas. But with the growth of consciousness this will disappear.

18 August 1969

*

I hope that Mother has already cured people whose mind was more resistant than mine.

Do not worry—the resistance of your mind is not so great, and besides, the Grace of the Supreme Lord is infinite.

20 August 1969

*

Without the disappearance of the ego, my true life with You does not begin.

The best way to make it disappear is to widen it to the size of the universe. You can do this without violence, but with quiet persistence.

I am with you in your effort.

22 August 1969

*

The mind seems to recognise the necessity of yielding to the higher light.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

Yes, it is visible; there are good reasons to hope that its transforming conversion will not be long in coming.

24 August 1969

*

I am going to lose the desire to be useful to Mother.

You have only to replace this desire by the will to be useful and the clear consciousness of how to be most useful—because I need you for my work.

Blessings

26 August 1969

*

I depend on the Mother to mould me according to Her Will.

It is the Consciousness of the Supreme Lord that will do the work in every detail, forgetting nothing, until it is perfect.

28 August 1969

*

Now I feel the importance of being free from desire.

The agitation of the vibrations of desire disturbs one's receptivity and makes one unable to perceive the vibrations of the divine will, which can only be perceived in calm and silence.

30 August 1969

*

Won't the Unmanifest always be greater than the manifestation?

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

If one conceives of the manifestation as eternal, this is undeniable.

1 September 1969

*

Can the manifestation come to its dissolution, its Pralaya?

A very old tradition, more ancient than the Vedas, says that the present manifestation is the seventh, and that the six preceding ones were followed by six pralayas, but this one will be transformed perpetually, without returning to the Creator.

3 September 1969

*

Perhaps the old tradition had foreseen the supramentalisation in the seventh manifestation, with its eternal transformation.

It had foreseen not only the supramentalisation of Matter, but also the appearance of the new species that must succeed man and be immortal.

5 September 1969

*

The mental light no longer seems like a light in the presence of the sun.

If by “sun” you mean the supermind, it is indisputable.

But all physical lights, even the light of the sun, seem dim to an inner vision.

7 September 1969

*

The physical sun does not hide itself, but the supramental light, which is greater, can hide itself. It is a mystery for man.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

The physical eyes are not made to see the supramental light; that is why they cannot see it. But the human being whose inner senses are awakened can see the supramental light when he wants to—it never hides itself.

9 September 1969

*

What conditions must be fulfilled in order to see the supramental light?

To be in conscious contact with it.

The supramental vision develops quite naturally with the supramental consciousness.

11 September 1969

*

I hope it is the Grace that makes me want to go quickly.

The Grace always responds to a sincere aspiration and fosters its realisation, even when appearances are deceptive.

18 September 1969

*

On 11 January 1914 Mother wrote: “I know that a day will come when Thou wilt transform all those who come to us.”³⁴

I find an echo of this in what Mother said on 18 January 1969 about the descent of the new consciousness: “It was there (Mother looks in the region of the heart). It is curious, as though I was given the charge of putting it into contact with all those who come near me.”³⁵

³⁴ *Prayers and Meditations*, CWM vol. 1, p. 54.

³⁵ *Notes on the Way*, CWM vol. 11, p. 156.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Of course, I did not remember at all what I had written rather prophetically in 1914.

And my only reply is: The Lord's Grace is infinite.

20 September 1969

*

"As one mounts from peak to peak, there appears all that has still to be done." Perhaps the Rig-Veda speaks here of an endless progression?

The spiritual wisdom most certainly existed for a few in that era.

22 September 1969

*

In Last Poems Sri Aurobindo shows the relation between the Transcendent and the Cosmos:

*"My vast transcendence holds the cosmic whirl;
I am hid in it as in the sea a pearl."³⁶*
What an experience!

It is transcendent poetry.

24 September 1969

*

Is it the mind that has deprived man of the simplicity of flowers?

Undoubtedly, but the desires of the vital also have something to do with it.

26 September 1969

*

³⁶ *Collected Poems*, CWSA vol. 2, p. 601.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

When

*“The eyes of mortal body plunge their gaze
Into Eyes that look upon eternity”³⁷
one finds there his native land!*

In other words, the Divine origin.

It is true. You are becoming a poet in your expression.

28 September 1969

*

*What must I do for the Mother to take direct charge
of the sadhana?*

I have already taken direct charge of the sadhana, but if you want me to express it in words you have to ask me precise, practical questions, not mental and speculative ones.

30 September 1969

*

*I want to learn how to fully retain what Mother gives
me.*

The best way to receive, which allows one to keep what comes, is to surrender oneself passively. If you can make this movement when you are before me, things will go faster.

2 October 1969

*

*More and more I see the need for mental silence, but
it is a difficult thing for me.*

³⁷ *Savitri*, CWSA vol. 33, p. 71.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

You are not the only one to find it difficult. For more than four years I tried to obtain it, without full result; it is Sri Aurobindo who gave it to me definitively in half an hour in 1914. Persevere and you will get it.

4 October 1969

*

*If my mind becomes more sincere, will it collaborate
in achieving its silence?*

If it understands the immense advantage of silence, which enables it to receive inspiration from the higher regions, then it will collaborate with joy.

6 October 1969

*

*Towards the heights, always towards the heights—I
accept the call.*

That is good.

And the response is certain.

8 October 1969

*

*Oh, the sweetness of the possibility of remaining
always “on the Mother’s knees where the soul sees”.*

So be it.

This is the privilege of those who have made their surrender to the Divine and want to live according to the Truth.

10 October 1969

*

The Divine is knocking at the door, but I sleep.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

Receive Him in dream, and He will awaken you.

12 October 1969

*

I feel that it is in my passivity to the Mother that the true activity will begin.

The truth is, to know how to be passive towards the Divine Consciousness is the great secret of transformation.

14 October 1969

*

The more Mother frees me from my desires, the more simple life becomes.

Most certainly; it is desires that complicate existence and are the cause of most sufferings. One could even say that they are at the root of all dramas, or almost all of them.

16 October 1969

*

Opening at random the book The Mother, I found this sentence: “Let your sincerity and surrender be genuine and entire.”³⁸ I take this as a demand and at the same time a blessing.

It is good.

And the result is certain.

Blessings

18 October 1969

*

³⁸ Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother with Letters on the Mother*, CWSA vol. 32, p. 8.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Mental noise is no longer pleasing to me.

This is the time to make it quiet and enjoy the peace and joy of silence.

20 October 1969

*

The day before yesterday when Mother gave me the flower “Mental prayer”, I did not know its significance and felt that Mother was giving me receptivity!

This is very good. For in fact when the mind begins to pray in the true way, it quickly becomes more and more receptive.

22 October 1969

*

What is the right way to make a mental prayer?

Mental prayer is formulated in words, and when it receives its inspiration from above, the formulation becomes powerful and artistic by its beauty; at times it even has the power of an evocation.

24 October 1969

*

The mind is very active now, but with a difference—it is no longer satisfied with itself.

It is in the silence of complete identification with the Divine that true understanding is obtained.

26 October 1969

*

For all that I have to realise, O Divine Mother, Your Grace is my refuge.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

The Grace is with you and will lead you to your goal.
Blessings

28 October 1969

*

To be useful to Mother, I feel the need to be more open to Her.

When you came this morning, you said this to me in silence, and I replied to you that with this aspiration it is enough for you to remain attentive—then, in all circumstances, you will sense what the right thing to do is.

With a little practice this can become quite clear and precise.
Blessings

30 October 1969

*

It seems that I will bring this notebook to You less often and try to receive in silence and absorb what comes from Mother.

Yes, you must try to receive the solution to problems in silence. Then if the solution comes, you can write the problem and the answer, to know if it is correct; or if no answer has been received, the problem alone can be sent to see if I can solve it.

Blessings

1 November 1969

*

Mother told me once again that She will lead me to the heights beyond.

This is settled, isn't it?

The only indispensable thing is a constant aspiration.

Blessings

3 November 1969

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

The day before yesterday, Mother, when I was with You, I felt the presence of Ganesh behind me.

That is very good. Ganesh is an old friend who promised me long, long ago that he would supply the needs of the Ashram, and he kept his word for years (when Sri Aurobindo was physically here). It is a good sign that he came when you were here.

5 November 1969

*

Yesterday I had fever from noon until midnight. I had had a warning of it the day before yesterday, but I did not know how to prevent it.

If you had informed me when you knew that you were going to have the fever, perhaps it would not have come.

7 November 1969

*

For some time I have been feeling that Mother is going to open a new door, but that She is waiting for “something” from my side. Did Mother tell me in silence that this “something” is the progress that consists in silencing the mind?

In fact, when you sit before me and I put the Supreme Consciousness on you, often, and especially these last few days, I begin by recommending that you keep your mind as calm and silent as you can, because that is the best way to increase your receptivity and open yourself to the action of the Higher Force.

10 November 1969

*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

You have often granted me what I wanted, O Divine Mother. Now I pray that You grant me only what You want, what You want.

Contact, total and constant, with the Divine Consciousness. This is what I am working on for you.

12 November 1969

*

Was it the obstinacy of my mind that gave me the fever?

Obstinacy of the mind is undoubtedly at the root of it, but the immediate cause is a resistance of the body to the force of transformation which is at work at the moment.

18 November 1969

*

I am less interested in the outer cure of my cough than in benefiting inwardly by it.

It is obvious that if you discover the psychological reason for the cough—in other words, if you discover what in your physical or vital being resists the penetration of the Divine Force into your body—not only will you have benefited from the illness by making considerable progress, but also the body itself will begin the long work of transformation.

Blessings

20 November 1969

*

The vital has become complacent, it loves its own narrow formation, and I do not see any conscious aspiration in the body.

Patience is needed, it will come. The vital and the body are enveloped in protection and force, and even without being

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

conscious of it they are satisfied by the well-being this gives them.

23 November 1969

*

Yesterday during the Darshan, did Mother give me a red coat?

During the Darshan I give each one what he needs, and each receives according to his receptivity. A red coat may be the symbol of a physical protection, because I want your body to be strong and in good health.

25 November 1969

*

The Divine is at once so near and so far!

In fact He is constantly with us, but it is only when the cells of the body open to His influence and perceive His Presence that we begin to be truly conscious of Him and of His ceaseless action.

27 November 1969

*

*The alternations of light and darkness—what a play!
But there is no longer any anxiety.*

Alternations, contraries, oppositions have been the great means employed by Nature to awaken the unconscious to consciousness, and inertia to the movement of progress. When unconsciousness and inertia have disappeared, the alternations will no longer be necessary.

29 November 1969

*

Can the individual rise above the alternation of light

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

and darkness as long as universal unconsciousness and inertia still exist?

Not only can he rise above it, but even a part of his consciousness can remain there permanently. It is this that gives one the capacity to be in constant conscious contact with the Supreme.

1 December 1969

*

Let me not be unfaithful to the sacrifice made by Sri Aurobindo for the earth!

For his consciousness it was not a sacrifice.

The earth was not yet ready to derive the greatest benefit from his physical presence.

His help is always there, conscious and active. He has said that he will come back in the first supramental body.

5 December 1969

*

Very rarely am I able to see You in dreams.

If you “dream” in the vital or the mental, there is little chance that you will meet me there.

If your dreams are in the subtle physical, you might meet me there because often I work there at night.

7 December 1969

*

Is it possible to dream at will in the subtle physical in order to meet You there?

Everything is possible. It is only a matter of inner development and of the discipline needed to achieve it.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

The control of the night-time activities is very interesting and has very effective results for the integral development of the being, but it is a work that demands a great deal of patience and regularity. Sometimes years are needed to learn what happens during one's sleep; because to remain in good health one should not run the risk of disturbing one's sleep through an ill-timed activity.

For the moment I advise you only to do a little concentration before you sleep, with an aspiration to meet me at night.

We shall see what happens.

Blessings

9 December 1969

*

My lower nature, aided by my vital, prevents me from widening myself. And the ego smiles.

Let it smile.

The day of its defeat will surely come, and perhaps sooner than you think.

11 December 1969

*

The work I do has begun to leave me with two free hours, from 1.30 to 3.30. How to utilise them?

It is an excellent time for reading, meditating and gradually entering into a receptive silence which allows the Higher Consciousness to enter the body in order to transform it.

13 December 1969

*

I find that after the recent fever I sleep more; I don't like this.

Since the new Consciousness has been on earth, sleep seems to

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

have acquired a special utility by enabling it to work on the body. So you need not worry; it is the mind that does not like sleep.

But when the body learns to sleep consciously in an attitude of surrender to the Divine, much useful work can be done during sleep.

15 December 1969

*

Sometimes, Mother, even the body takes joy in the words, “Only You”.

This is good.

It does not surprise me, because I know that your body itself is progressing.

17 December 1969

*

Is the sleep of a Yogi dreamless?

They are no longer dreams. They are visions and activities in worlds that are invisible to the physical consciousness.

19 December 1969

*

Let my whole being become a straight line towards You, O Divine Mother!

On the way to integral transformation.

21 December 1969

*

I find that if I complain about the Divine I am always wrong.

Surely it would be better to try to understand rather than to

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

complain!

When something does not go well, it is always to show us where we have to make some progress.

23 December 1969

*

I see that he who criticises me is a good friend of my progress, but I see this only after having had an initial unpleasant reaction.

Provided that you see it and know how to profit by the lesson, that is all that is needed.

25 December 1969

*

When the mind is engaged in things that according to it are useless, it is pitiful.

There too, if it has the right attitude, it can learn and progress. When we have understood that all that comes to us in life comes from the Supreme Lord to teach us how to live, nothing is useless any more. Our attitude changes and is enlightened.

27 December 1969

*

The plans made by the mind are losing their charm, but that which should replace them is not yet there.

The indications of the Higher Consciousness do not come in advance, but as they are needed.

It is virtually at every moment that one knows what has to be done, and that is why those who have a mental habit of making plans far in advance find it very difficult to obey the Divine.

But it is only a question of habit and of inner attitude,

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which must be very peaceful and attentive.

29 December 1969

*

It is with gratitude to You, O Mother, that I say farewell to this year.

And I say, welcome to the new year which brings with it a new decade and an intensification of the working of the superman consciousness.

With my blessings for a Happy New Year.

31 December 1969

*

Does my sincerity have to increase for me to be fully transparent before You?

To tell the truth, the Supreme Lord makes me see in each person what He wants me to see, and He has not made me see insincerity in you. What is not yet very clear, no doubt, are the mental and vital habits; but they do not seem to me to be obstacles in the work of transformation.

Blessings

4 January 1970

*

In spite of my weak body I have always liked to go to the peaks of mountains. And now it is the peaks of consciousness that attract me.

The true strength is that of the Divine and it can make even a weak body strong. He alone should be the master of our being, its aim and its support.

6 January 1970

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

To my aspiration towards the heights You replied, “I am here.”

To open the door for you, to welcome you and to show you the way to the Supreme Lord.

With my blessings

8 January 1970

*

In accepting or not accepting an illness, which part of the being is it whose attitude decides the thing?

A great mental will that obstinately refuses to be ill is effective.

A vital power that adamantly rejects the illness is effective.

A consciousness of the cells that finds its support exclusively in the Divine Presence and refuses to receive any other influence is *much* more effective.

A total identification with the Supreme Consciousness, abolishing all division, is the sovereign remedy.

10 January 1970

*

Yesterday, Mother, while I was with You, I was not thinking of my health, but You said to me, “I wish you good health”, and I felt the presence of a tall person behind me.

Yesterday I saw behind you the Consciousness that wanted to enter into you and needs a strong body in order to manifest; that is why I insisted on the need for good health; and it is the Presence of the Consciousness concentrated on you that you took for a tall person.

This is good.

Blessings

12 January 1970

*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

*It seems to me that if I am more consecrated to You,
I will better be able to receive good health when it
comes.*

Yes, that is undeniable.

You will see in the next issue of the *Bulletin* that the best way to be healthy is to concentrate all our consciousness on the Divine, leaving to Him the responsibility of taking care of our body. Then we have only to be attentive to the orders that He gives us in all circumstances, and obey them scrupulously.

14 January 1970

*

*The little moment spent with You, O Divine Mother,
becomes a life in itself; it is going to become an eternal
moment.*

The eternal supreme Consciousness is always there, concretely present and active.

16 January 1970

*

I do not live in the true consciousness, so there are necessarily defects in my translation of The Life Divine into Hindi. I said this to Sri Aurobindo. I feel that He accepted the work with a smile of encouragement.

Work done sincerely is always accepted by Sri Aurobindo with a smile.

Thus He may have accepted several translations of his works into Hindi. That is why the problem of publication is difficult to solve. And as I am not competent in Hindi, it is impossible for me to solve it.

18 January 1970

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

The day before yesterday I began to do the exercises given to me by Dada to improve my health. This is as a collaboration with the Divine Will.

This is very good! Surely it will have a very good effect. You must also be careful about food.

20 January 1970

*

Will You please give me directions about food?

What you should eat depends on the general state of your health, on what is lacking in your body and on what it cannot tolerate. This only a doctor who is an expert on the subject can say.

The food should be very clean, very healthy and strengthening. Moral restrictions are inventions of the human mind and ought to be disregarded when necessary.

Food should be taken exclusively according to the needs of the body and not according to rules, conventions and desires.

22 January 1970

*

Mother, yesterday before You the body was able to aspire for a moment to have the Light, to become the Light.

This is good.

The body carries the light in each of its cells, and one day it will no longer hide it.

24 January 1970

*

I have a longing to hear Krishna's flute.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

Krishna's flute is the equivalent of the Supreme Lord's smile of love. To hear the flute or see the smile, one must live in the total peace of perfect and integral surrender.

26 January 1970

*

I find that I still have an attachment to money, direct or indirect.

It is the contagion of collective attachment. Money is a god that is universally worshipped upon earth and it is difficult to dethrone. When it becomes only an instrument of the divine work, the difficulty will disappear.

28 January 1970

*

Is it something in my vital, aided by mental wisdom, that keeps the taint of money?

The physical atmosphere is full of the suggestion and one cannot breathe without absorbing it; and the attachment in the vital comes from the collective conviction in the invincible power of money. This is the cause of almost all the difficulties.

30 January 1970

*

A month of what we were calling the new year has passed, and at what speed!

For one who moves fast, time passes quickly.

1 February 1970

*

I feel a growing need for the mind to learn to keep quiet.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Bravo to the mind for its decision—this is the indispensable starting-point of the work of integral transformation.

3 February 1970

*

I can see You, Sweet Mother, as the Transforming Flame.

What the Lord has decided shall come to be.

5 February 1970

*

You want to take away all my anxiety, but I am not letting it go!

There is only one solution—it is to leave all anxiety to the Supreme Lord and let *Him* do everything, everything, absolutely everything. Then all will be done as perfectly as possible. And we will live in peace and joy.

7 February 1970

*

One cannot breathe without absorbing what is in the terrestrial atmosphere. Mother, what is the solution?

To become more and more constantly conscious of the Divine Presence, which marvellously counterbalances all that may be absorbed in an automatic unconsciousness.

9 February 1970

*

Yesterday the body wanted to receive the Light and You said yes.

Certainly. Every morning I envelop it with light so that the light may always be around it, penetrating it whenever there is a

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

possibility of its being received.

11 February 1970

*

*The more I can draw near to You, O Divine Mother,
the more life becomes a true life.*

This very body is struggling to realise the true life.

13 February 1970

*

I can feel that the golden Light has become very active.

Yes, very active. It does not seem to want to tolerate insincerities or even imperfections. For those who receive it in the body, this is very perceptible.

But we should not complain—the work is going fast.

17 February 1970

*

Now that the Light does not want to tolerate imperfections, I can be full of hope—provided I collaborate.

Your collaboration is certain because the central will is awake, and even if there are resistances due to certain old habits, they are sure to yield.

19 February 1970

*

To be possessed by You, by You alone, O Divine Mother, this will be my great joy.

May the divine blessings be with you, my child, for an integral realisation.

21 February 1970

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

*Little by little the horizon is becoming clearer, wider
and more beautiful.*

As our consciousness awakens to the eternal Truth, our perception is transformed by it.

23 February 1970

*

According to certain traditions, 9 is a mystic-occult number. Is it true, Mother?

Physically, the number 9 is definitely associated with birth.

It has even been associated with the appearance on earth of the supramental world.

But more than this, I cannot say at the moment.

Mentally, an occult significance has been given to each number.

25 February 1970

*

Deliver me, O Divine Mother, from personal incapacity.

All that is united with the Supreme Lord, merged in Him, partakes of His Omnipotence.

The very cells of the body are having this experience.

But for the union to be integral and total, it is a long and slow labour.

27 February 1970

*

The last two days old things have risen up to veil and delay, but perhaps I can make this an opportunity to progress.

It is always an opportunity to progress. In fact the difficulties rise up precisely when the higher wisdom has seen that we have

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

become capable of overcoming them.

1 March 1970

*

*The future You have chosen for me is going to be
different from all my ideas!*

Ideas always see only one side of things, or at most several sides. The supramental consciousness has a total view of life which animates and guides the particular action that the body is destined to accomplish.

3 March 1970

*

*The Flame is visible even in the midst of the darkness
I shelter.*

The flame of aspiration is lit up within you—I see it always in the centre of your chest; and surely it will have the power to dissolve the darkness. It is a matter of patience and persistence.

5 March 1970

*

*Perhaps there is an intensity of aspiration after which
realisation will no longer be delayed.*

Certainly the intensity that comes from an absolute sincerity of aspiration can do in a moment what would otherwise take centuries. Certainly there are steps forward from which one never falls back.

7 March 1970

*

*The time passed without remembering You is losing
its savour.*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

When the cells of the body have participated in the experience, it will no longer be possible to forget it, because once they have become aware of the Presence within them, they never forget it.

9 March 1970

*

Can it be said that no realisation can be perfect without the participation of the cells of the body?

Most certainly, because in the divine plan for the earth, man upon earth must be succeeded by the supramental being, and all our effort must seek to prepare its coming.

11 March 1970

*

There is a descent of light from above like a stream; it is also welling up from below!

Yes, it is true.

The light rises up from the depths, just as it descends from the heights, and the two streams of light join around the earth to flood the human consciousness and prepare it for the new creation.

13 March 1970

*

Yesterday You told me, “Constant alertness. No relaxation.”

Yes, it is true.

The work of physical transformation has begun; but the work is immense and the years are short.

15 March 1970

*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

If I am faithful to You, the length of the way is not distressing.

If you are integrally faithful, in other words, if all the parts of your being are united in the same aspiration, then the length of the way diminishes considerably and each step forward becomes a happy discovery.

17 March 1970

*

I pray that the flame of aspiration may awaken in the parts of my being that are still recalcitrant.

Everything in life is organised to make us go as fast as possible. If our attention is wide awake, we can profit from all circumstances.

19 March 1970

*

“The more rapidly one goes individually, the more necessary it is to try to extend and strengthen the collective basis.”³⁹

Fortunately, all this is Mahashakti’s affair.

Now more and more, the whole world is working with the joy of being at the service of the Supreme Lord.

21 March 1970

*

Yesterday noon I felt an aspiration which was later formulated like this: An inner rhythm in harmony with the Divine Will.

This is very good.

³⁹ The Mother, *Questions and Answers 1956*, CWM vol. 8, p. 264.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Indeed, this is the source of true action.

23 March 1970

*

*At night there were tiring dreams, but I woke up
remembering You and I am fresh.*

The nights will be better if before going to sleep, while lying in bed, you offer your body to the Divine with this prayer:

“Lord, let me rest in You.”

25 March 1970

*

Mother, where is the identification?

Normally the identification is in the psychic being, which consciously forms around the Divine Presence.

But now with the descent of the new consciousness, the Divine Presence can be felt by the cells of the body where this Presence is at work for the transformation of Matter.

27 March 1970

*

*Whatever work comes from You I would like to take
as Your blessings.*

I know that you take it in this way. The only thing that makes me hesitate sometimes is that I don't want you to tire yourself. The work must be done harmoniously, not with any tension.

29 March 1970

*

*The eagerness for speed and result seems to create
tension in my work.*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

The best attitude for work is to make it an offering to the Divine, and for that, to do it as well as one can, leaving the result to the care of the Divine. Then all tension disappears.

And when one knows how to make the offering, the strength needed to carry out the work comes spontaneously, so one avoids getting fatigued.

31 March 1970

*

With Your help, Mother, I must succeed in making an offering of my work.

I am fully convinced that you will succeed. In a general way you already have the right attitude.

Blessings

2 April 1970

*

Without silence of mind it is really difficult to know the Divine Will.

It is almost impossible, because there is always the risk of taking one's own mental formation for the expression of the divine will.

A great intensity of aspiration can help to obtain this mental silence—an aspiration that is not formulated in words.

Blessings

4 April 1970

*

Will You please make me capable of receiving what You send me with Your answers.

The consciousness is working very energetically, and one allows it to work best in an attentive silence.

6 April 1970

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

The flame in the navel region is still smoky.

It is the old vital habits that believe they are indispensable for the equilibrium of the body. There is no need to force anything.

8 April 1970

*

I can feel that it is in silence that I should aspire for silence.

This is very good—it is a good beginning.

10 April 1970

*

Mother, the mind is making so much noise again, but I am not discouraged.

It is to give you the opportunity to control and purify its activity, because this too is indispensable.

12 April 1970

*

In an increasing love for You, my wrong movements have to offer themselves to You, O Divine Mother.

It is nothing but the memory of old habits that are exhausting themselves in their final expressions.

14 April 1970

*

Now I have a toothache. I regard this as the resistance of old habits.

I know by experience that one can stop a toothache in a few minutes if the *spot that is suffering* invokes the Divine Presence in a total surrender.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

But if you have not yet learned to do this in the body, not mentally, it is better to go to Dr. R who will treat you.

Blessings

18 April 1970

*

Before You, Mother, one can climb so high that even physical pain disappears, but...there is always a return.

A day will come when this change of consciousness can be made at will, and thus it can be much more lasting.

22 April 1970

*

I find that I am unworthy of You, O Divine Mother.

Be sincere in your aspiration and there is no unworthiness...

24 April 1970

*

How can one rise above struggle?

By identifying one's consciousness with the Divine Consciousness; then everything changes its appearance and values are not the same.

27 April 1970

*

I find that I am no longer trying to know what You want to make of me.

This is an excellent attitude, which proves that you are indeed becoming what I am expecting you to be.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Blessings

30 April 1970

*

You are with me always, but I am not aware of it.

I am subtler than the air, and even the air you cannot see.

There are infinitely more things we do not see than things we see.

2 May 1970

*

The joy of bowing down before You without desire.

It is the joy with which the Lord envelops those who are sincere.

Happy Birthday

4 May 1970

*

In spite of the difficulties I hope to remain upright on the path.

With a sincere aspiration the thing is certain.

6 May 1970

*

Perhaps the Lord created the world with a smile, and with a smile He looks at it.

Most certainly. And we too must learn to look at everything with a smile. But we have picked up very bad habits which we must now learn to lose.

9 May 1970

*

This morning the need for the cosmic consciousness is felt.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

The peace of totality.

11 May 1970

*

I am made of dust, but it is a dust that can change at Your contact.

The whole physical world is made of dust.

But this dust has this peculiarity, that upon contact with the Divine it changes into light.

13 May 1970

*

The incapacity of the mind is now very clear.

The mind is an instrument of study and analysis. But it is not capable of having knowledge because it acts in division.

15 May 1970

*

Among the darknesses I harbour, there are some that have begun to love the light.

That in you which is still in darkness is dark out of ignorance, not bad will; and this is a certitude of victory, even swift victory, for the illumination is taking place quickly.

17 May 1970

*

Does the sense of physical suffering no longer exist in the cosmic consciousness?

In the cosmic consciousness it certainly exists.

It is in the Supreme Divine Consciousness that it does not exist; that is to say, the nature of the sensation changes and opposites disappear, to be replaced by something that is

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

indefinable in our language.

20 May 1970

*

If my aspiration becomes constant, sincere and integral, things will be simple.

It already takes a great sincerity to perceive the instability of the aspiration.

22 May 1970

*

These last three days the idea has been coming that the Matrimandir in Auroville should be constructed soon.

Indeed it would be good, and it would change things in an unexpected way...But this does not seem to have been revealed to others.

24 May 1970

*

Isn't ordered intuition necessary to be Your true servitor?

Ordered intuition is certainly a very useful instrument for replacing the mind, which has proven itself incapable of correctly expressing the higher consciousness. But beyond intuition, there is a consciousness that reflects even better the Supreme Consciousness.

26 May 1970

*

There are darknesses that want to flee, there are others that want to be transformed!

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

Yes, there is a moment when the choice is between consenting or disappearing—then things go fast.

28 May 1970

*

For most problems there is now only one answer: self-giving.

When self-giving is truly and completely realised, there is no longer any problem; everything becomes very simple.

30 May 1970

*

It seems to me that an integral love is the first necessity for self-giving to be integral.

From the first contact with the Supreme Lord, one feels inundated and enveloped by a love so marvellous that the response is spontaneous and natural.

1 June 1970

*

The glimpses of Truth have to be expanded and become constant.

It is a sort of atmosphere of Truth in which one can take refuge as soon as one concentrates, until the time comes when one lives there constantly, even while maintaining a surface activity that no longer affects the consciousness.

3 June 1970

*

Isn't the Divine Will the only Truth to be followed in action?

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

All exists in and by the Divine Consciousness, and the place that each being and each thing occupies in the whole depends on the extent to which that being or thing is aware of the Supreme Consciousness and identified with It.

5 June 1970

*

For me, physical tamas is very obstinate, especially towards evening.

It may be fatigue, the need for conscious rest or for more sleep, or some element lacking in the diet. This is a subject worth studying.

7 June 1970

*

How to have a conscious rest?

The body relaxed lying in bed before sleeping, offering itself to the Divine, and conscious rest came spontaneously, without making an effort for it. So it is impossible for me to give a method, because none was used. The aspiration of the cells to surrender entirely to the Divine was the only conscious thing.

9 June 1970

*

Isn't the rest in Sachchidananda the only true rest for the sadhak?

In principle, yes, but I doubt whether many know how to have it.

12 June 1970

*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

I still do not find in myself the reversal of consciousness that is a “revolution of the basic equilibrium”, the indispensable starting-point for transformation.

There is no absolute rule. Contact with the inner Divinity can take place in an unexpected way. The important thing is to keep the aspiration.

16 June 1970

*

How can the sadhak, who has seen neither the goal nor the way, tell whether he is progressing or not?

When one acts, to make an offering of one's action.

When one rests or sleeps, to make an offering of one's body.

And always, at every moment, to make an offering of one's consciousness.

Is it not enough?

Why worry about the result? Is it not still the ego?

18 June 1970

*

Sometimes when I remember You, there is a thrill in the body.

It means that your body is sensitive to the supramental consciousness and that it can become more and more receptive.

20 June 1970

*

The aspiration straight to the Divine, without care for personal progress, is such a pure flame!

It is so comforting; it gives the strength to overcome all difficulties.

22 June 1970

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

*To see and feel the Lord everywhere and in everything,
isn't union with Him indispensable?*

Naturally it is essential and imperative; otherwise one risks becoming the plaything of all kinds of imaginations.

That is why it is preferable to concentrate first on union with the Divine. The rest follows after.

24 June 1970

*

Mother has spoken of a kind of radiation that goes out of the body and mixes with others. Is this radiation limited by physical distance?

The extent of the radiation differs with each person and depends on the power of consciousness contained in the cells.

For most people, it is a few centimetres. The radiation of Sri Aurobindo's body extended in a circle more than ten kilometres beyond the town.

26 June 1970

*

Perhaps it is easier for the body to aspire without being anxious about the response.

I have found that as soon as the cells of the body enter into contact with the Divine, they surrender very quickly and completely, and their surrender is very stable.

28 June 1970

*

It is said that in the recent earthquake in Peru, eighty thousand people perished. Is it possible that the souls of all those who died decided to leave their bodies at the same time?

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

In the majority of men, the psychic being is embryonic, not very developed, and does not make the decision.

It is only in a minority of human beings that the psychic being is fully conscious individually and makes individual decisions.

30 June 1970

*

Your Purity, O Mother Divine, Your Purity.

May He alone exist! ...

2 July 1970

*

When the Truth approaches, if the mind wants to understand it, the Truth departs.

The very attitude of the mind is contrary to the Truth—that is why it cannot understand it.

It is only in mental silence that one can know the Truth.

4 July 1970

*

The body too is now beginning to aspire for its reconstitution according to Your Will.

My blessings are with it so that this may be the occasion for a new strength to establish itself with the new consciousness.

6 July 1970

*

With Your help everything becomes possible and time no longer seems so important.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

You can be assured of my help; it does not depend on physical conditions.

8 July 1970

*

When meditation comes spontaneously, the body often relaxes and sleep becomes irresistible.

This is probably not an ordinary sleep. The body becomes capable of receiving the higher forces, which plunge it into a receptive rest. Consciousness will follow, and then the body will begin to be transformed.

10 July 1970

*

My vital ego continues to see the faults of others with pleasure.

When it understands that the faults of others increase its own work, the pleasure will disappear.

12 July 1970

*

Isn't prayer more effective than personal effort?

Each has its utility, but aspiration and prayer are undoubtedly more effective because of the trust they imply.

18 July 1970

*

Is the personal effort of one who is chosen by the Divine an easy action for the Divine Force?

For the Divine all is bliss; but this word must be given a meaning that is unknown to man.

20 July 1970

*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

*To obtain something from men one has to ask, but
from You one receives more if one does not ask!*

Because normally one is not aware of one's true need and often one asks for useless things. Whereas the divine consciousness always gives exactly what is needed for one's growth and ascent.

24 July 1970

*

*When the loss of the ego occurs, it is going to be a
great enrichment.*

It can be said that it is the fulfilment of the true being.

26 July 1970

*

*When one aspires for one's whole being to participate
in the yoga, has one begun the integral yoga?*

Yes, when the consciousness of the cells of the body perceives the presence and action of the Divine, one is on the right path for the integral yoga.

28 July 1970

*

*Mother told P that the protection of India lies in the
descent of the Force from above.*

So, Mother, it all comes back to yoga.

India is the custodian of yogic knowledge, but this knowledge had been veiled by materialism. Sri Aurobindo has awakened it; now it has only to be spread.

30 July 1970

*

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

*Can it be said that if one is now sincere, no errors of
the past are irreparable?*

Nothing is irreparable and even the consequences of past acts change as the being becomes more pure and sincere.

But one must never forget that for the divine consciousness the value of beings and things is quite different from what it is for the human consciousness.

1 August 1970

*

*He who is chosen by the Infinite cannot escape, but it
is true that he tries to escape. Why, Mother?*

Men are afraid of what they do not know, especially of what is far superior to them.

3 August 1970

*

*Instead of bothering about itself, the body wants to be
Your faithful servitor.*

This is very good. More and more it will have the chance. Already all its effort is given to the divine work.

5 August 1970

*

Purity of the vital has become a great necessity.

The vital is the fortress of the ego. The ego must abdicate. One will alone has value—that of the Supreme Lord.

5 October 1970

*

*Without mental silence I am no longer joyful on the
path.*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

If you have mental silence at will, it is already a great achievement and it should give you patience until the day when your whole life will pass in mental silence.

7 October 1970

*

*Your Victory, O Mother Divine, Your own Victory is
our only hope.*

The victory is certain. It is for us to prepare ourselves to see it and take part in it.

Blessings

9 October 1970

*

*Does the decrease of my impatience mean an increase
of faith?*

It is undoubtedly the first step towards an enlightened trust in the Divine Wisdom.

11 October 1970

*

*When the aspiration is strong and sincere, a change of
consciousness takes place. How to establish it?*

By letting the aspiration spring up more and more frequently.

15 October 1970

*

*Is it the mind in man that prevents him from uniting
with the cosmic rhythm?*

Very often it is the vital corrupted by adverse forces, and almost always it is the mind, which wants to replace the cosmic rhythm

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

by its own laws.

17 October 1970

*

Is there an intensity of aspiration that can bring realisation without delay?

Yes. But this very intensity is the sign that the being is ready for union with the Divine.

When this union is fully conscious, then the transformation begins.

19 October 1970

*

When the movement of self-offering to You is spontaneous, there is a distinct joy.

Yes, this is the joy that can become constant as the background supporting one's whole life.

21 October 1970

*

My ego has become very subtle.

It is hoping to hide itself, but it will not succeed.

23 October 1970

*

Does fatigue in work indicate a loss of contact with Your Force?

There are several kinds of fatigue. If it is bodily fatigue, it indicates the need to rest.

All the other kinds of fatigue come because you are taking in the forces at the personal source, which is necessarily limited,

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

and you are not connected with the Divine Force, which is necessarily unlimited.

25 October 1970

*

The mind is learning not to be disturbed by the things it does not like.

That is good. But there is a higher condition to attain. It is to be above like and dislike, understanding the deep law of each thing in order to put each thing in its true place, in one's consciousness and around oneself.

27 October 1970

*

Does consecration merely change one's attitude towards circumstances or does it change the circumstances themselves?

Consecration completely changes one's attitude and way of acting. This naturally has an influence on circumstances.

29 October 1970

*

Often preferences do not allow one to see clearly.

It is absolutely indispensable to establish a consciousness in which preferences no longer have any meaning and are replaced by a clear vision of the place of each movement and thing in the great universal play.

2 November 1970

*

I find a general lowering in myself these last few days.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

Perhaps you are tired. If it is not that, you must quickly react.

4 November 1970

*

I am trying to renew my self-offering to You.

Yes, it is not an offering that can be made once and for all—it has to be renewed constantly. Then all movements become filled with the Divine.

6 November 1970

*

The chains of Ignorance are truly strong.

Yes, so strong that only the Supreme Lord can dissolve them.
That is why, for one who has faith, all is possible.

8 November 1970

*

Sometimes the aspiration becomes a consecration.

It is always that in its essence and origin.

In fact it is a state that becomes permanent in the being and governs all its activities.

10 November 1970

*

To be at Your service—isn't this the only utility of the body?

If not the only one, at least the most effective.

12 November 1970

*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

When the clouds begin to disperse, one forgets the fatigue of the struggle.

There comes a time when the struggle is nothing but the victorious march of the Divine, and the effort becomes glorious.

14 November 1970

*

I hope that my whole being is going to become a flower that always turns towards You.

This is inevitable and it will become more and more conscious.

16 November 1970

*

India's condition is becoming worse and worse, at least in appearance.

The old financial power and the so-called communists are at odds. The time is coming soon for the true Consciousness to intervene and put a little order into this chaos.

18 November 1970

*

The mind is no longer proud of itself and it wants to have the light from above.

Let it remain silent, turned upwards in an attitude of receptivity, and the light will respond.

20 November 1970

*

Yesterday noon, when the mind turned upwards, Sri Aurobindo came with a smile.

New Correspondences of the Mother—II

This is very good and surely it will repeat itself.

22 November 1970

*

This morning the word “Realisation” is dominating.

It is certain; the whole thing is to prepare oneself for it.

24 November 1970

*

What is the right way to rest in order to restore one’s energy?

A comfortable physical support (sofa or easy chair), vital quietude, mental silence, and a general attitude in the whole being of passive offering to the Divine.

26 November 1970

*

At night there was a tide of useless thoughts, but the remembrance of You was there as a wave of protection.

My will is to give you the peace of silence.

28 November 1970

*

My hope lies in the certitude that the Mother’s Will will prevail over me.

You are right; in time we will triumph over all obstacles.

30 November 1970

*

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar

What I do one day is no longer satisfying the next.

This proves that the urge for progress is very strong. It becomes all-powerful when it is accompanied by the peace of eternity.

2 December 1970

Note on the Texts

This book consists of the Mother's correspondence with nine disciples living in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry. Seven of these correspondences are entirely or largely in English; two are entirely in French. The correspondences in French, and the French entries in the correspondences largely in English, appear here in English translation.

Series One—Amrita. Originally named Aravamudachari Ayengar, Amrita was one of the first Tamil disciples of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. His correspondence covers the period from 1919 to 1955. The basis of the correspondence are his reports to the Mother and her comments on them. Most of these reports and comments are in English, but a considerable number are in French and appear here in English translation. The correspondence is being published here for the first time.

What follows is background information about Amrita which should help the reader to understand and appreciate the correspondence.

Amrita began living in Sri Aurobindo's small community of disciples after finishing his schooling in 1919. When the Sri Aurobindo Ashram was formed in November 1926, the Mother appointed him as its general manager, a position he held for the rest of his life. In his capacity as manager, Amrita met with the Mother daily, but he also sent her various notebooks in which he reported his daily activities and indicated any problems. The Mother read these notebooks and sometimes made written comments in their margins and empty spaces. Amrita's reports and the Mother's comments on them form the basis of his correspondence.

New Correspondences of the Mother

In every respect this is a “work” correspondence; there is very little spiritual instruction or guidance. Rather, the correspondence shows how the Mother guided an earnest young disciple in helping to run the Ashram.

As the Ashram manager, Amrita had a large range of responsibilities. Among them were: the maintenance of the Ashram dairy and the purchase of additional milk; the safekeeping of money for Ashram members and visitors; the accommodation of visitors; the rental and purchase of houses for the Ashram; arrangement for the repair of newly acquired properties; maintenance of the accounts of paid workers (wages, absences, leaves, bonuses, etc.); the settlement of disputes involving paid workers; the recruitment of new paid workers; the placement of orders with local merchants; the handling of parcels at the railway station; the purchase of stamps and the collection of letters and money orders at the town’s two post offices, French and British; and the payment of New Year tips to postal workers, railway clerks and others. In general Amrita was the Mother’s principal liaison in dealing with government officials, homeowners, landowners, lawyers and the town’s notary; he regularly represented her in negotiations with local officials and members of the town. In executing his myriad activities, Amrita routinely consulted the Mother and did her bidding.

Series Two—Amal Kiran. Originally named K. D. Sethna, Amal Kiran lived in the Ashram for two long periods: from 1927 to 1938 and from 1954 to 2011. His correspondence covers both periods (as well as the fifteen years in Mumbai between periods). During the first period, Amal was head of the Furniture Service and had a number of personal and family problems; his exchanges of this period reflect these concerns. During the second period, his primary work was editing the monthly review *Mother India*; much of his correspondence during this period is related to his work as editor.

Most of the Mother’s important replies to Amal have already been published, but they have always appeared here and

Note on the Texts

there by subject, never together. A large number first appeared over the years in issues of *Mother India*. A smaller number first came out in 1980 in Amal's book, *Our Light and Delight*. All these replies were then published in 1980, in *Words of the Mother I–III*, Volumes 13–15 of the Collected Works of the Mother, but in those volumes they were arranged by subject.

The present book comprises all the entries mentioned above and many more. Prepared from Amal's manuscripts, it includes a number of personal letters about his family and friends never published before. It also includes the *Mother India* texts sent by Amal to the Mother for approval of publication. All these texts, presented in chronological order, chronicle Amal's written exchanges with the Mother over several decades. What emerges is a sense of the relationship between the Mother and her bold, spirited, intelligent disciple. The correspondence is in English, with a very few exceptions. It is presented here for the first time in this form.

Series Three—Sanjiban. Sanjiban Biswas joined the Ashram in 1933 at the age of twenty. His correspondence with the Mother began in that year and continued for the next eight years. Many of their exchanges deal with the Mother's guidance to Sanjiban as an aspiring artist.

Most of the material presented here was first published in issues of the quarterly journal *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education* between August 1996 and February 1998. The present complete correspondence, which contains additional entries, has been prepared from Sanjiban's manuscripts. The correspondence is in English.

Series Four—Kirankumari. Kirankumari Kothari joined the Ashram in 1935 at the age of eighteen. The Mother placed her in charge of the cleaning and repair of stoves and water-filters. She regularly informed the Mother of her work by writing reports in notebooks. These reports and the Mother's comments on them form the basis of this correspondence. It covers the years

New Correspondences of the Mother

between 1938 and 1942. The correspondence is in English and is being published here for the first time.

Series Five—Jagannath. Jagannath Vedalankar joined the Ashram in 1945. The Mother asked him to work in the newly founded Ashram Press. His correspondence with her deals mainly with his press work between 1946 and 1950, but also with his efforts to help his brother around 1947 at the time of the partition of India and Pakistan. Most of the Mother’s replies were first published in 1995 in the book *Beautiful Vignettes of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother*, pp. 147–57. The present correspondence, prepared from Jagannath’s manuscripts, includes the entries in *Vignettes* along with some additional ones. The correspondence is in English.

Series Six—Debou. Debkumar Bhattacharya, known as Debou, joined the Ashram in 1943. After completing his studies in the Ashram school in 1951, he became a teacher there. Later, in the mid 1960s, he became a homeopath and practised for many years.

Debou’s correspondence has been prepared from his manuscripts. Almost all the entries are in French and appear here in translation. The correspondence is being published here for the first time.

Series Seven—Madanlal. Madanlal Himatsingka joined the Ashram in 1959. A successful businessman, he initially advised the Ashram in financial matters. Interested in the publication of the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, he founded the All India Press in 1969. His correspondence deals with his press work, his personal affairs and his sadhana.

A selection of letters from Madanlal’s correspondence was published in the April 2008 issue of the quarterly *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*. Then in 2016, on the occasion of Madanlal’s centenary, a book on his life was published—*The Joy of Offering*. It contained extensive

Note on the Texts

selections from his correspondence with the Mother as well as biographical information and tributes. The present correspondence contains most of the selections in that book. The correspondence is in English.

Series Eight—Gautam. Gautam Chawalla joined the Ashram in 1952. His correspondence covers the period from 1953 to 1967. Gautam worked at first on an Ashram farm, as well as in the Ashram main building, assisting the Mother in various tasks; these activities are reflected in his correspondence. All but a few of the entries are in French and appear here in translation. Prepared from Gautam's manuscripts, the correspondence is being published here for the first time.

Series Nine—Shyam Sundar. Shyam Sundar Jhunjhunwalla joined the Ashram in 1965. In 1971 the Mother appointed him as her secretary for Auroville affairs, a position he held for about a decade. He also edited the monthly journal *Sri Aurobindo's Action* and wrote or compiled a number of books. His correspondence deals mainly with his sadhana and the conditions of spiritual life.

Shyam Sundar corresponded with the Mother in French from 1967 to 1970. The original French was first published in 1986 in a book titled *En route: Correspondance de la Mère avec Shyam Sundar*. An English translation of it by Shyam Sundar came out in 1987, entitled *En route: On the Path (The Mother's Correspondence with Shyam Sundar)*. The text in the present book is a lightly revised translation of the text of *On the Path*.

Mother's Agenda

1951-1960

volume 1



Mother's Agenda

I

1951-1960

Translated from French

Institut de Recherches Evolutives

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*This Agenda... is
my gift to
those who love me*

Mother

Come towards the future.

1893 (age 15)

In each thing, in each atom, is the Divine Presence. Man's mission is to make it manifest.

1910

The obstacle is bound up with the very reason of the work to be accomplished: such is the present state of physical matter's imperfection. Thus whatever the possible degree of the perfection, the consciousness, the knowledge of our deepest being, the very fact of its incarnation in a physical body creates obstacles to the purity of its manifestation; however, the aim of its incarnation is victory over these obstacles, the transformation of matter.

May 21, 1912

The conditions in which men live upon earth are the result of their state of consciousness. To want to change the conditions without changing the consciousness is a vain chimera.

Mother

INTRODUCTION

*When we have passed beyond humanity,
then we shall be the Man.*

Sri Aurobindo

This AGENDA ... One day, another species among men will pore over this fabulous document as over the tumultuous drama that must have surrounded the birth of the first man among the hostile hordes of a great, delirious Paleozoic. A first man is the dangerous contradiction of a certain simian logic, a threat to the established order that so genteelly ran about amid the high, indefeasible ferns – and to begin with, it does not even know that it is a man. It wonders, indeed, what it is. Even to itself it is strange, distressing. It does not even know how to climb trees any longer in its usual way – and it is terribly disturbing for all those who still climb trees in the old, millennial way. Perhaps it is even a heresy. Unless it is some cerebral disorder? A first man in his little clearing had to have a great deal of courage. Even this little clearing was no longer so sure. A first man is a perpetual question. What am I, then, in the midst of all that? And where is my law? What is the law? And what if there were no more laws? ... It is terrifying. Mathematics – out of order. Astronomy and biology, too, are beginning to respond to mysterious influences. A tiny point huddled in the center of the world's great clearing. But what is all this, what if I were 'mad'? And then, claws all around, a lot of claws against this uncommon creature. A first man ... is very much alone. He is quite unbearable for the pre-human 'reason.' And the surrounding tribes growled like red monkies in the twilight of Guiana.

One day, we were like this first man in the great, stridulant night of the Oyapock. Our heart was beating with the rediscovery of a very ancient mystery – suddenly, it was absolutely new to be a man amidst the diorite cascades and the pretty red and black coral snakes slithering beneath the leaves. It was even more extraordinary to be a man than our old confirmed tribes, with their infallible equations and imprescriptible biologies, could ever have dreamed. It was an absolutely uncertain 'quantum' that delightfully eluded whatever one thought of it, including perhaps what even the scholars thought of it. It flowed otherwise, it felt otherwise. It lived in a kind of flawless continuity with the sap of the giant balata trees, the cry of the macaws and the scintillating water of a little fountain. It 'understood' in a very different way. To understand was to be in everything. Just a quiver, and one was in the skin of a little iguana in distress. The skin of the world was very vast. To be a man after rediscovering a million years was mysteriously like being something still other than man, a strange, unfinished possibility that could also be all kinds of other things. It was not in the dictionary, it was fluid and boundless – it had become a man through habit, but in truth, it was formidably virgin, as if all the old laws belonged to laggard barbarians. Then other moons began whirring through the skies to the cry of macaws at sunset, another rhythm was born that was strangely in tune with the rhythm of all, making one single flow of the world, and there we went, lightly, as if the body had never had any weight other than that of our human thought; and the stars were so near, even the giant airplanes roaring overhead seemed vain artifices beneath smiling galaxies. A man was the overwhelming Possible. He was even the great discoverer of the Possible. Never had this precarious invention had any other aim through millions of species than to discover that which surpassed his own species, perhaps the means to change his species – a light and lawless species. After rediscovering a million years in the great, rhythmic night, a man was still something to be invented. It was the invention of himself, where all was not yet said and done.

And then, and then ... a singular air, an incurable lightness, was beginning to fill his lungs. And what if we were a fable? And what are the means?

And what if this lightness itself were the means?

A great and solemn good riddance to all our barbarous solemnities.

Thus had we mused in the heart of our ancient forest while we were still hesitating between unlikely flakes of gold and a civilization that seemed to us quite toxic and obsolete, however mathematical. But other mathematics were flowing through our veins, an equation as yet unformed between this mammoth world and a little point replete with a light air and immense forebodings.

It was at this point that we met Mother, at this intersection of the anthropoid rediscovered and the ‘something’ that had set in motion this unfinished invention momentarily ensnared in a gilded machine. For nothing was finished, and nothing had been invented, really, that would instill peace and wideness in this heart of no species at all.

And what if man were not yet invented? What if he were not yet his own species?

A little white silhouette, twelve thousand miles away, solitary and frail amidst a spiritual horde which had once and for all decided that the meditating and miraculous yogi was the apogee of the species, was searching for the means, for the reality of this man who for a moment believes himself sovereign of the heavens or sovereign of a machine, but who is quite probably something completely different than his spiritual or material glories. Another, a lighter air was throbbing in that breast, unburdened of its heavens and of its prehistoric machines. Another Epic was beginning. Would Matter and Spirit meet, then, in a third PHYSIOLOGICAL position that would perhaps be at last the position of Man rediscovered, the something that had for so long fought and suffered in quest of becoming its own species? She was the great Possible at the beginning of man. Mother is our fable come true. ‘All is possible’ was her first open sesame.

Yes, She was in the midst of a spiritual ‘horde,’ for the pioneer of a new species must always fight against the best of the old: the best is the obstacle, the snare that traps us in its old golden mire. As for the worst, we know that it is the worst. But then we come to realize that the best is only the pretty muzzle of our worst, the same old beast defending itself, with all its claws out, with its sanctity or its electronic gadgets. Mother was there for something else.

‘Something else’ is ominous, perilous, disrupting – it is quite unbearable for all those who resemble the old beast. The story of the Pondicherry ‘Ashram’ is the story of an old clan ferociously clinging to its ‘spiritual’ privileges, as others clung to the muscles that had made them kings among the great apes. It is armed with all the piousness and all the reasonableness that had made logical man so ‘infallible’ among his less cerebral brothers. The spiritual brain is probably the worst obstacle to the new species, as were the muscles of the old orangutan for this fragile stranger who no longer climbed so well in the trees and sat, pensive, at the center of a little, uncertain clearing. There is nothing more pious than the old species. There is nothing more legal. Mother was searching for the path of the new species as much against all the virtues of the old as against all its vices or laws. For, in truth, ‘Something Else’ ... is something else.

We landed there, one day in February 1954, having emerged from our Guianese forest and a certain number of dead-end periplus; we had knocked upon all the doors of the old world before reaching that point of absolute impossibility where it was truly necessary to embark into something else or once and for all put a bullet through the brain of this slightly superior ape. The first thing that struck us was this exotic Notre Dame with its burning incense sticks, its effigies and its prostrations in immaculate white: a Church. We nearly jumped into the first train out that very evening, bound straight for the Himalayas, or the devil. But we remained near Mother for nineteen years. What was it, then, that could have held us there? We had not left Guiana to become a little saint in white or to enter some new religion. ‘I did not come upon earth to found an ashram; that would have been a poor aim indeed,’ She wrote in 1934. What did all this mean, then, this ‘Ashram’ that was already registered as the owner of a great spiritual business, and this fragile, little silhouette at the center of all these zealous worshippers? In truth, there is no better way to smother someone than to worship him: he chokes beneath the weight of worship, which moreover gives the worshipper claim to ownership. ‘Why do you want to worship?’ She exclaimed. ‘You have but to become! It is the laziness to become that makes one worship.’ She wanted so much to make them

become this ‘something else,’ but it was far easier to worship and quiescently remain what one was. She spoke to deaf ears. She was very alone in this ‘ashram.’ Little by little, the disciples fill up the place, then they say: it is ours. It is ‘the Ashram.’ We are ‘the disciples.’ In Pondicherry as in Rome as in Mecca. ‘I do not want a religion! An end to religions!’ She exclaimed. She struggled and fought in their midst – was She therefore to leave this Earth like one more saint or yogi, buried beneath haloes, the ‘continuatrice’ of a great spiritual lineage? She was seventy-six years old when we landed there, a knife in our belt and a ready curse on our lips.

She adored defiance and did not detest irreverence.

No, She was not the ‘Mother of the Pondicherry Ashram.’ Then who was She? ... We discovered Her step by step, as one discovers a forest, or rather as one fights with it, machete in hand – and then it melts, one loves, so sublime does it become. Mother grew beneath our skin like an adventure of life and death. For seven years we fought with Her. It was fascinating, detestable, powerful and sweet; we felt like screaming and biting, fleeing and always coming back: ‘Ah! You won’t catch me! If you think I came here to worship you, you’re wrong!’ And She laughed. She always laughed. We had our bellyful of adventure at last: if you go astray in the forest, you get delightfully lost yet still with the same old skin on your back, whereas here, there is nothing left to get lost in! It is no longer just a matter of getting lost – you have to CHANGE your skin. Or die. Yes, change species. Or become one more nauseating little worshipper – which was not on our program. ‘We are the enemy of our own conception of the Divine,’ She told us one day with her mischievous little smile. The whole time – or for seven years, in any event – we fought with our conception of God and the ‘spiritual life’: it was all so comfortable, for we had a supreme ‘symbol’ of it right there. She let us do as we pleased, She even opened up all kinds of little heavens in us, along with a few hells, since they go together. She even opened the door in us to a certain ‘liberation,’ which in the end was as soporific as eternity – but there was nowhere to get out: it WAS eternity. We were trapped on all sides. There was nothing left but these 4m² of skin, the last refuge, that which we wanted to flee by way of above or below, by way of Guiana or the Himalayas. She was waiting for us just there, at the end of our spiritual or not so spiritual pirouettes. Matter was her concern. It took us seven years to understand that She was beginning there, ‘where the other yogas leave off,’ as Sri Aurobindo had already said twenty-five years earlier. It was necessary to have covered all the paths of the Spirit and all those of Matter, or in any case a large number geographically, before discovering, or even simply understanding, that ‘something else’ was really Something Else. It was not an improved Spirit nor even an improved Matter, but ... it could be called ‘nothing,’ so contrary was it to all we know. For the caterpillar, a butterfly is nothing, it is not even visible and has nothing in common with caterpillar heavens nor even caterpillar matter. So there we were, trapped in an impossible adventure. One does not return from there: one must cross the bridge to the other side. Then one day in that seventh year, while we still believed in liberations and the collected Upanishads, highlighted with a few glorious visions to relieve the commonplace (which remained appallingly commonplace), while we were still considering ‘the Mother of the Ashram’ rather like some spiritual super-director (endowed, albeit, with a disarming yet ever so provocative smile, as though She were making fun of us, then loving us in secret), She told us, ‘I have the feeling that ALL we have lived, ALL we have known, ALL we have done is a perfect illusion ... When I had the spiritual experience that material life is an illusion, personally I found that so marvelously beautiful and happy that it was one of the most beautiful experiences of my life, but now it is the entire spiritual structure as we have lived it that is becoming an illusion! – Not the same illusion, but an illusion far worse. And I am no baby: I have been here for forty-seven years now!’ Yes, She was eighty-three years old then. And that day, we ceased being ‘the enemy of our own conception of the Divine,’ for this entire Divine was shattered to pieces – and we met Mother, at last. This mystery we call Mother, for She never ceased being a mystery right to her ninety-fifth year, and to this day still, challenges us from the other side of a wall of invisibility and keeps us floundering fully in the mystery – with a smile. She always smiles. But the mystery is not solved.

Perhaps this AGENDA is really an endeavor to solve the mystery in the company of a certain

number of fraternal iconoclasts.

Where, then, was ‘the Mother of the Ashram’ in all this? What is even ‘the Ashram,’ if not a spiritual museum of the resistances to Something Else. They were always – and still today – reciting their catechism beneath a little flag: they are the owners of the new truth. But the new truth is laughing in their faces and leaving them high and dry at the edge of their little stagnant pond. They are under the illusion that Mother and Sri Aurobindo, twenty-seven or four years after their respective departures, could keep on repeating themselves – but then they would not be Mother and Sri Aurobindo! They would be fossils. The truth is always on the move. It is with those who dare, who have courage, and above all the courage to shatter all the effigies, to de-mystify, and to go TRULY to the conquest of the new. The ‘new’ is painful, discouraging, it resembles nothing we know! We cannot hoist the flag of an unconquered country – but this is what is so marvelous: it does not yet exist. We must MAKE IT EXIST. The adventure has not been carved out: it is to be carved out. Truth is not entrapped and fossilized, ‘spiritualized’: it is to be discovered. We are in a nothing that we must force to become a something. We are in the adventure of the new species. A new species is obviously contradictory to the old species and to the little flags of the already-known. It has nothing in common with the spiritual summits of the old world, nor even with its abysses – which might be delightfully tempting for those who have had enough of the summits, but everything is the same, in black or white, it is fraternal above and below. SOMETHING ELSE is needed.

‘Are you conscious of your cells?’ She asked us a short time after the little operation of spiritual demolition She had undergone. ‘No? Well, become conscious of your cells, and you will see that it gives TERRESTRIAL results.’ To become conscious of one’s cells? ... It was a far more radical operation than crossing the Maroni with a machete in hand, for after all, trees and lianas can be cut, but what cannot be so easily uncovered are the grandfather and the grandmother and the whole atavistic pack, not to mention the animal and plant and mineral layers that form a teeming humus over this single pure little cell beneath its millennial genetic program. The grandfathers and grandmothers grow back again like crabgrass, along with all the old habits of being hungry, afraid, falling ill, fearing the worst, hoping for the best, which is still the best of an old mortal habit. All this is not uprooted nor entrapped as easily as celestial ‘liberations,’ which leave the teeming humus in peace and the body to its usual decomposition. She had come to hew a path through all that. She was the Ancient One of evolution who had come to make a new cleft in the old, tedious habit of being a man. She did not like tedious repetitions, She was the adventuress par excellence – the adventuress of the earth. She was wrenching out for man the great Possible that was already beating there, in his primeval clearing, which he believed he had momentarily trapped with a few machines. She was uprooting a new Matter, free, free from the habit of inexorably being a man who repeats himself ad infinitum with a few improvements in the way of organ transplants or monetary exchanges. In fact, She was there to discover what would happen after materialism and after spiritualism, these prodigal twin brothers. Because Materialism is dying in the West for the same reason that Spiritualism is dying in the East: it is the hour of the new species. Man needs to awaken, not only from his demons but also from his gods. A new Matter, yes, like a new Spirit, yes, because we still know neither one nor the other. It is the hour when Science, like Spirituality, at the end of their roads, must discover what Matter TRULY is, for it is really there that a Spirit as yet unknown to us is to be found. It is a time when all the ‘isms’ of the old species are dying: ‘The age of Capitalism and business is drawing to its close. But the age of Communism too will pass ... ‘It is the hour of a pure little cell THAT WILL HAVE TERRESTRIAL REPERCUSSIONS, infinitely more radical than all our political and scientific or spiritualistic panaceas.

This fabulous discovery is the whole story of the AGENDA. What is the passage? How is the path to the new species hewed open? ... Then suddenly, there, on the other side of this old millennial habit – a habit, nothing more than a habit! – of being like a man endowed with time and space and disease: an entire geometry, perfectly implacable and ‘scientific’ and medical; on the other side ... none of that at all! An illusion, a fantastic medical and scientific and genetic illusion:

death does not exist, time does not exist, disease does not exist, nor do ‘scar’ and ‘far’ – another way of being IN A BODY. For so many millions of years we have lived in a habit and put our own thoughts of the world and of Matter into equations. No more laws! Matter is FREE. It can create a little lizard, a chipmunk or a parrot – but it has created enough parrots. Now it is SOMETHING ELSE ... if we want it.

Mother is the story of the free Earth. Free from its spiritual and scientific parrots. Free from its little ashrams as well – for there is nothing more persistent than those particular parrots.

Day after day, for seventeen years, She sat with us to tell us of her impossible odyssey. Ah, how well we now understand why She needed such an ‘outlaw’ and an incorrigible heretic like us to comprehend a little bit of her impossible odyssey into ‘nothing.’ And how well we now understand her infinite patience with us, despite all our revolts, which ultimately were only the revolts of the old species against itself. The final revolt. ‘It is not a revolt against the British government which any one can easily do. It is, in fact, a revolt against the whole universal Nature!’ Sri Aurobindo had proclaimed fifty years earlier. She listened to our grievances, we went away and we returned. We wanted no more of it and we wanted still more. It was infernal and sublime, impossible and the sole possibility in this old, asphyxiating world. It was the only place one could go to in this barbed-wired, mechanized world, where Cincinnati is just as crowded and polluted as Hong Kong. The new species is the last free place in the general Prison. It is the last hope for the earth. How we listened to her little faltering voice that seemed to return from afar, afar, after having crossed spaces and seas of the mind to let its little drops of pure, crystalline words fall upon us, words that make you see. We listened to the future, we touched the other thing. It was incomprehensible and yet filled with another comprehension. It eluded us on all sides, and yet it was dazzlingly obvious. The ‘other species’ was really radically other, and yet it was vibrating within, absolutely recognizable, as if it were THAT we had been seeking from age to age, THAT we had been invoking through all our illuminations, one after another, in Thebes as in Eleusis as everywhere we have toiled and grieved in the skin of a man. It was for THAT we were here, for that supreme Possible in the skin of a man at last. And then her voice grew more and more frail, her breath began gasping as though She had to traverse greater and greater distances to meet us. She was so alone to beat against the walls of the old prison. Many claws were out all around. Oh, we would so quickly have cut ourself free from all this fiasco to fly away with Her into the world’s future. She was so tiny, stooped over, as if crushed beneath the ‘spiritual’ burden that all the old surrounding species kept heaping upon her. They didn’t believe, no. For them, She was ninety-five years old + so many days. Can someone become a new species all alone? They even grumbled at Her: they had had enough of this unbearable Ray that was bringing their sordid affairs into the daylight. The Ashram was slowly closing over Her. The old world wanted to make a new, golden little Church, nice and quiet. No, no one wanted TO BECOME. To worship was so much easier. And then they bury you, solemnly, and the matter is settled – the case is closed: now, no one need bother any more except to print some photographic haloes for the pilgrims to this brisk little business. But they are mistaken. The real business will take place without them, the new species will fly up in their faces – it is already flying in the face of the earth, despite all its isms in black and white; it is exploding through all the pores of this battered old earth, which has had enough of shams – whether illusory little heavens or barbarous little machines. It is the hour of the REAL Earth. It is the hour of the REAL man. We are all going there – if only we could know the path a little ...

This AGENDA is not even a path: it is a light little vibration that seizes you at any turning – and then, there it is, you are IN IT. ‘Another world in the world,’ She said. One has to catch the light little vibration, one has to flow with it, in a nothing that is like the only something in the midst of this great debacle. At the beginning of things, when still nothing was FIXED, when there was not yet this habit of the pelican or the kangaroo or the chimpanzee or the XXth century biologist, there was a little pulsation that beat and beat – a delightful dizziness, a joy in the world’s great adventure; a little never-imprisoned spark that has kept on beating from species to species, but as if it were always eluding us, as if it were always over there, over there – as if it were something to become,

something to be played forever as the one great game of the world; a who-knows-what that left this sprig of a pensive man in the middle of a clearing; a little ‘something’ that beats, beats, that keeps on breathing beneath every skin that has ever been put on it – like our deepest breath, our lightest air, our air of nothing – and it keeps on going, it keeps on going. We must catch the light little breath, the little pulsation of nothing. Then suddenly, on the threshold of our clearing of concrete, our head starts spinning incurably, our eyes blink into something else, and all is different, and all seems surcharged with meaning and with life, as though we had never lived until that very minute. Then we have caught the tail of the Great Possible, we are upon the wayless way, radically in the new, and we flow with the little lizard, the pelican, the big man, we flow everywhere in a world that has lost its old separating skin and its little baggage of habits. We begin seeing otherwise, feeling otherwise. We have opened the gate into an inconceivable clearing. Just a light little vibration that carries you away. Then we begin to understand how it CAN CHANGE, what the mechanism is – a light little mechanism and so miraculous that it looks like nothing. We begin feeling the wonder of a pure little cell, and that a sparkling of joy would be enough to turn the world inside out. We were living in a little thinking fishbowl, we were dying in an old, bottled habit. And then suddenly, all is different. The Earth is free! Who wants freedom?

It begins in a cell.

A pure little cell.

Mother is the joy of freedom.

Joyous Agenda!

SATPREM

*Nandanam
Deer House
August 19, 1977*

Topographical Note

From the time of Sri Aurobindo's departure (1950) until 1957, we have only a few notes and fragments or rare statements noted from memory. These are the only landmarks of this period, along with Mother's *Questions and Answers* from her talks at the Ashram Playground. A few of these conversations have been reproduced here insofar as they mark stages of the Supramental Action.

From 1957, Mother received us twice a week in the office of Pavitra, the most senior of the French disciples, on the second floor of the main Ashram building, on some pretext of work or other. She listened to our queries, spoke to us at length of yoga, occultism, her past experiences in Algeria and in France or of her current experiences; and gradually, She opened the mind of the rebellious and materialistic Westerner that we were and made us understand the laws of the worlds, the play of forces, the working of past lives – especially this latter, which was an important factor in the difficulties with which we were struggling at that time and which periodically made us abscond. Mother would be seated in this rather medieval-looking chair with its high, carved back, her feet on a little tabouret, while we sat on the floor, on a slightly faded carpet, conquered and seduced, revolted and never satisfied – but nevertheless, very interested. Treasures, never noted down, were lost until, with the cunning of the Sioux, we succeeded in making Mother consent to the presence of a tape recorder. But even then, and for a long time thereafter, She carefully made us erase or delete in our notes all that concerned Her rather too personally – sometimes we disobeyed Her.

But finally we were able to convince Her of the value inherent in keeping a chronicle of the route.

It was only in 1958 that we began having the first tape-recorded conversations, which, properly speaking, constitute Mother's *Agenda*. But even then, many of these conversations were lost or only partly noted down. Or else we considered that our own words should not figure in these notes and we carefully omitted all our questions – which was absurd. At that time, no one – neither Mother, nor ourself – knew that this was 'the Agenda' and that we were out to explore the 'Great Passage.' Only gradually did we become aware of the true nature of these meetings. Furthermore, we were constantly on the road, so much so that there are sizable gaps in the text. In fact, for seven years, Mother was patiently preparing the instrument that would be able to traverse the adventure without breaking along the way.

From 1960, the *Agenda* took its final shape arid grew for thirteen years, until May 1973, filling thirteen volumes in all (some six thousand pages), with a change of setting in March 1962 at the time of the Great Turning in Mother's yoga when She permanently retired to her room upstairs, as had Sri Aurobindo in 1926. The interviews then took place high up in this large room carpeted in golden wool, like a ship's stateroom, amidst the rustling of the Copper Pod tree and the cawing of crows. Mother would sit in a low rosewood chair, her face turned towards Sri Aurobindo's tomb, as though She were wearing down the distance separating that world from our own. Her voice had become like that of a child, one could hear her laughter. She always laughed, this Mother. And then her long silences. Until the day the disciples closed her door on us. It was May 19, 1973. We did not want to believe it. She was alone, just as we were suddenly alone. Slowly, painfully, we had to discover the why of this rupture. We understood nothing of the jealousies of the old species, we did not yet realize that they were becoming the 'owners' of Mother – of the Ashram, of Auroville, of Sri Aurobindo, of everything – and that the new world was going to be denatured into a new Church. There and then, they made us understand why She had pulled us from our forest, one day, and chosen as her confidant an incurable rebel.

1951-1957. Notes and Fragments

February 1951

(Note written by hand two months after Sri Aurobindo's departure)

The lack of the earth's receptivity and the behavior of Sri Aurobindo's disciples¹ are largely responsible for what happened to his body. But one thing is certain: the great misfortune that has just beset us in no way affects the truth of his teaching. All he said is perfectly true and remains so. Time and the course of events will make this abundantly clear.



Undated 1951

(This note, originally written in English, was meant for the officials who had wanted to present Mother with the Nobel Peace Prize proposed for Sri Aurobindo in 1951)

I am only realizing what He has conceived.

I am only the protagonist and the continuator of His work.



March 14, 1952

Since the beginning of the earth wherever and whenever there was the possibility of manifesting a ray of consciousness, I was there.²

¹In an 'official' version, Mother had omitted 'and the behavior of Sri Aurobindo's disciples.'

²Original English. In another version, Mother wrote, 'a ray of the Consciousness.'



August 2, 1952

Only when it is no longer necessary for my body to resemble the bodies of men in order to make them progress will it be free to be supramentalized.³

* * *

Only when men shall depend exclusively upon the Divine and upon nothing else will the incarnate god no longer need to die for them.⁴



Undated 195(?)

(Concerning a letter from the Government of India)

I had an intense experience.

I saw, felt, perceived that despite all appearances to the contrary, the world is on the way towards the true, towards the day when governmental powers will belong to those who have the true power, the power of Truth.⁵



³Note written by Mother in French.

⁴Note written by Mother in French.

⁵Note written by Mother in French.

April 1954

(A few experiences of the body consciousness⁶)

With the same accuracy, one can say that all is divine or that nothing is divine. Everything depends upon the angle from which one looks at the problem.

Likewise, it can be said that the divine is a perpetual becoming and yet also, that it is immutable for all eternity.

To deny or affirm God's existence is equally true, but each is only partially true. It is by rising above both affirmation and negation that one may draw nearer the truth.

It can further be said that whatever happens in the world is the result of divine will, but also that this will has to be expressed and manifested in a world that contradicts or deforms it; these are two attitudes having, respectively, the practical effect of either submitting with peace and joy to whatever happens or, on the contrary, ceaselessly fighting for the triumph of what should be. To live the truth one must know how to rise above both attitudes and combine them.

* * *

Keep your own conviction if it helps you to build your life; but know that it is only one conviction and that the others are as good and true as yours.

* * *

Tolerance is full of a sense of superiority; it should be replaced by total understanding.

* * *

Because truth is not linear, but global, and not successive, but simultaneous, it can therefore not be expressed in words: it must be lived.

* * *

To acquire a total and perfect awareness of the world as it is in all its details, one must first have no more personal reactions in regard to any of these details, nor even any spiritual preference as to what they ought to be. In other words, a total acceptance with a perfect neutrality and indifference is the indispensable condition for a knowledge through integral identification. If one detail, no matter how small, escapes this neutrality, this detail also escapes identification. The absence of personal reactions, whatever their end, even the most exalted, is thus a basic necessity for total knowledge.

So we could say, paradoxically, that we can only know a thing when we are not interested in it, or rather, more precisely, when we are not personally concerned with it.

* * *

Whenever a god has donned a body, it was always with the intention of transforming the earth and creating a new world. Yet until now, he always had to give up his body without being able to complete his work; and it has always been said that the earth was not ready, that mankind did not fulfill the conditions necessary for the work to be accomplished.

⁶The following texts were written by Mother in French.

But it is the very imperfection of the incarnate god that makes the perfection of those about him indispensable. If the god incarnate realized the perfection needed for the progress to be made, this progress would not be conditioned by the state of the surrounding matter. However, interdependence is doubtlessly absolute in this world of utmost objectification, and a certain degree of perfection in the general manifestation is indispensable before a higher degree of perfection can be realized in the divine, incarnate being. It is the need for a certain perfection in the environment that drives human beings to progress; it is the insufficiency of this progress, whatever it may be, that impels the divine being to intensify his effort for progress in his own body. Thus both movements for progress are simultaneous and complementary.



August 1954

(Further experiences of the body consciousness⁷)

When we look back upon our lives, we almost always feel that in some circumstance or other we could have done better, even though at each minute the action was dictated by the inner truth this is because the universe is in perpetual motion, and what was perfectly true at one time is only partly so today. Or, to express it more precisely, the action necessary at the time it was carried out is no longer so at the present time, and another action might more fruitfully take its place.

* * *

When we speak of transformation, the meaning of the word is still vague to us. It gives us the impression of something that is going to happen which will set everything right. The idea more or less boils down to this: if we have difficulties, the difficulties will vanish; those who are ill will be cured of their illness; if the body has infirmities or incapacities, the infirmities or incapacities will fade away, and so forth ... But as I have said, it is very vague, it is only an impression. Now, what is quite remarkable about the body consciousness is that it is unable to know a thing with precision and in all its details except when it is just about to be realized. Thus, when the process of transformation becomes clear, when we are able to know by what sequence of movements and changes the total transformation will take place, in what order, by which path, as it were, which things will come first, which will follow – when everything is known, in all its details, it will be a sure indication that the hour of realization is near, for each time you perceive a detail accurately, it means that you are ready to carry it out.

In the meantime, one can have an overall view. For example, it is quite certain that under the influence of the supramental light, the transformation of the body consciousness will take place first then will come a progress in the mastery and control of all the movements and workings of all the body's organs; afterwards this mastery will gradually change into a kind of radical modification of the movement and then of the constitution of the organ itself. All this is certain, although rather vague to our perception. But what will finally take place – once the various organs are replaced by

⁷The following texts were written by Mother in French.

centers of concentration of forces, each with a different quality and nature and each acting according to its own special mode – is still a mere conception, and the body does not understand very well, for it is still very far from the realization, and the body can really understand only when it is on the point of being able to do.

* * *

The supramentalized body will be sexless since the need for animal procreation will no longer exist.

* * *

It is only in its outward form, in its most superficial appearance – as illusory for the latest discoveries of today's science as for the experience of spirituality in former ages – that the body is not divine.

Supreme Reality, Supramental Truth, this body is all-vibrant with intense gratitude. You have given it, one by one, all the experiences that can lead it most infallibly towards You. It has reached a state where the identification with You is not only the sole thing desirable, but also the sole thing possible and natural.

How to describe these experiences that are at extreme opposite ends? At one end, I can say, 'Lord, to be truly near, truly worthy of You, must one not drink the cup of humiliation to the dregs, yet not feel humiliated? The contempt of men renders one truly free and ready to belong to You alone.'

At the other end, I would say, 'Lord, to be truly near, truly worthy of You, must one not be transported to the summits of human appreciation, yet not feel glorified? It is when men call one Divine that one feels best his own inadequacy and the need to be truly and totally identified with You.'

The two experiences are simultaneous, one does not negate the other; on the contrary, they seem to complement each other and become intenser thereby. In this intensity, the aspiration grows tremendously; and in response, Your presence becomes evident in the cells, giving the body the appearance of a multicolored kaleidoscope whose myriad luminous particles in constant motion are sovereignly reorganized by an invisible, all-powerful Hand.



August 25, 1954⁸

(Mother reads to the disciples an excerpt from Sri Aurobindo's THE MOTHER, in which he describes the different aspects of the Creative Power – what is India is called the 'Shakti,' or the 'Mother' – which have presided over universal evolution.)

'... There are other great Personalities of the Divine Mother, but they were more difficult to bring

⁸The following text is an extract from a 'Wednesday Class,' when every Wednesday Mother would answer questions raised by the disciples and children at the Ashram Playground.

down and have not stood out in front with so much prominence in the evolution of the earth-spirit. There are among them Presences indispensable for the supramental realization, – most of all one who is her Personality of that mysterious and powerful ecstasy and Ananda⁹ which flows from a supreme divine Love, the Ananda that alone can heal the gulf between the highest heights of the supramental spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter, the Ananda that holds the key of a wonderful divines' Life and even now supports from its secracies the work of all the other Powers of the universe.'

Sri Aurobindo, The Mother

(A disciple:) Sweet Mother, what is this Personality and when will It manifest?

My answer is ready.

I knew you would ask me this question because it is indeed the most interesting thing in the whole passage – so my answer is ready, along with my answer to another question. But first let me read you this one. You asked, ‘What is this Personality and when will She come?’ Here is my answer (*Mother reads*):

‘She has come, bringing with Her a splendor of power and love, an intensity of divine joy heretofore unknown to the Earth. The physical atmosphere has been completely changed by her descent, permeated with new and marvelous possibilities.

But if She is ever to reside and act here, She has to find at least a minimal receptivity, at least *one* human being with the required vital and physical qualities, a kind of super-Parsifal gifted with an innate and integral purity, yet possessing at the same time a body strong enough and poised enough to bear unwaveringly the intensity of the Ananda She brings.

Thus far, She has not found what is needed. Men remain obstinately men and do not want to or are unable to become supermen. All they can receive and express is a love at their own dimension: a human love – whereas the supreme bliss of divine Ananda eludes their perception.

At times, finding the world unready to receive Her, She contemplates withdrawing. But how cruel a loss this would be!

It is true that *at present*, her presence is more rhetorical than factual, since so far She has had no chance to manifest. Yet even so, She is a powerful instrument in the Work, for of all the Mother’s aspects, She holds the greatest power to transform the body. Indeed, those cells which can vibrate at the touch of the divine Joy, receive it and bear it, are cells reborn, on their way to becoming immortal.

But the vibrations of divine Bliss and those of pleasure cannot cohabit in the same vital and physical house. We must therefore TOTALLY renounce *all* feelings of pleasure to be ready to receive the divine Ananda. But rare are those who can renounce pleasure without thereby renouncing all active participation in life or sinking into a stern asceticism. And among those who realize that the transformation is to be wrought in active life, some pretend that pleasure is a form of Ananda gone more or less astray and legitimize their search for self-satisfaction, thereby creating a virtually insuperable obstacle to their own transformation.’

Now, if there is anything else you wish to ask me ... Anyone may ask, anyone – anyone who has something to say – not just the students.

Mother, even if we have not previously succeeded, can't we still try?

What? (*the disciple repeats his question*) Oh! You can always try!

⁹Ananda: Divine Joy.

The world is recreated from minute to minute. If you knew how – I mean if you could change your nature – you could recreate a new world this very minute!

I didn't say She HAD gone. I said She was CONTEMPLATING it ... at times, now and then.

But Mother, if She came down, She must have seen a possibility!

She came down because there WAS a possibility – because things had reached such a stage that it was her hour to come down. But in truth, She came down because ... because I thought it was possible for her to succeed.

Possibilities are still there – only they have to materialize.

This is borne out by the fact that her descent took place at a given moment and for two or three weeks the atmosphere – not only of the Ashram but of the Earth – was so highly charged with such a power of such an intense divine Bliss creating so marvelous a force that things difficult to do before could be done almost instantly.

There were repercussions the world over. But I don't believe that a single one of you noticed it ... you cannot even tell me when it happened, can you?

When did it happen?

I don't know dates. I don't know, I never remember dates. I can only tell you this ... that it happened before Sri Aurobindo left his body, that he was told about it beforehand and that he ... well, he acknowledged the fact.

But there was a formidable battle with the Inconscient, for when I saw that the level of receptivity was not what it should have been, I blamed the Inconscient ... and tried to wage the battle there.

I don't say it was ineffectual, but between the result obtained and the result hoped for, there was a considerable difference. But as I said, you who are all so near, so steeped in this atmosphere ... who among you noticed anything? – You simply went on with your little lives as usual.

I think it was in 1946, Mother, because you told us so many things at that time.

Right.

(A child:) Sweet Mother, now that She has come, what should we do?

You don't know?

(silence)

Try to change your consciousness.

(silence)

Now you may ask me the questions you wanted to ask ... That's all?

Mother, there is not even one single man?

I don't know.

Mother, you are wasting your time with all these Ashram people.

Oh! ... But you see, from an occult standpoint, it is a selection. From an external standpoint you could say that there are people in the world who are far superior to you (and I would not disagree!), but from an occult standpoint, it is a selection. There are ... It can be said that without a doubt the

majority of young people here have come because it was promised them that they would be present at the Hour of Realization – but they just don't remember it! (*Mother laughs*) I have already said several times that when you come down on earth, you fall on your head, which leaves you a little dazed! (*laughter*) It's a pity, but after all, you don't have to remain dazed all your lives, do you? You should go deep within yourselves and there find the immortal consciousness – then you can see very well, you can very clearly remember the circumstances in which you ... you aspired to be here for the Hour of the Work's realization.

But actually, to tell you the truth, I think your lives are so easy that you don't exert yourselves very much! How many among you have truly an INTENSE need to find their psychic beings? To find out truly who they are? To find out what their roles are, why they are here? ... You just let yourselves drift. You even complain when things aren't easy enough! You just take things as they come. And sometimes, should an aspiration arise in you and you encounter some difficulty in yourself, you say, 'Oh, Mother is there! She'll take care of it for me!' And you think about something else.

Mother, previously things were very strict in the Ashram, but not now. Why?

Yes, I have always said that it changed when we had to take the very little children. How can you envision an ascetic life with little sprouts no bigger than that? It's impossible! But that's the little surprise package the war left on our doorstep. When it was found that Pondicherry was the safest place on earth, naturally people came wheeling in here with all their baby carriages filled and asked us if we could shelter them, so we couldn't very well turn them away, could we?! That's how it happened, and in no other way ... But, in the beginning, the first condition for coming here was that you would have nothing more to do with your family! If a man was married, then he had to completely overlook the fact that he had a wife and children – completely sever all ties, have nothing further to do with them. And if ever a wife asked to come just because her husband happened to be here, we told her, 'You have no business coming here!'

In the beginning, it was very, very strict – for a long time.

The first condition was: 'Nothing more to do with your family ...' Well, we are a long way from that! But I repeat that it only happened because of the war and not because we stopped seeing the need to cut all family ties; on the contrary, this is an indispensable condition because as long as you hang on to all these cords which bind you to ordinary life, which make you a slave to the ordinary life, how can you possibly belong to the Divine alone? What childishness! It is simply not possible. If you have ever taken the trouble to read over the early ashram rules, you would find that even friendships were considered dangerous and undesirable ... We made every effort to create an atmosphere in which only ONE thing counted: *the Life Divine*.

But as I said, bit by bit ... things changed. However, this had one advantage: we were too much outside of life. So there were a number of problems which had never arisen but which would have suddenly surged up the moment we wanted a complete manifestation. We took on all these problems a little prematurely, but it gave us the opportunity to solve them. In this way we learned many things and surmounted many difficulties, only it complicated things considerably. And in the present situation, given such a large number of elements who haven't even the slightest idea why they're here (!) ... well, it demands a far greater effort on the disciples' part than before.

Before, when there were ... we started with 35 or 36 people – but even when it got up to 150, even with 150 – it was as if ... they were all nestled in a cocoon in my consciousness: they were so near to me that I could constantly guide ALL their inner or outer movements. Day and night, at each moment, everything was totally under my control. And naturally, I think they made a great deal of progress at that time: it is a fact that I was CONSTANTLY doing the *sadhana*¹⁰ for them. But then, with this baby boom ... The *sadhana* can't be done for little sprouts who are 3 or 4 or 5 years old!

¹⁰*Sadhana*: yogic discipline or effort.

It's out of the question. The only thing I can do is wrap them in the Consciousness and try to see that they grow up in the best of all possible conditions. However, the one advantage to all this is that instead of there being such a COMPLETE and PASSIVE dependence on the disciples' part, each one has to make his own little effort. Truly, that's excellent.

I don't know to whom I was mentioning this today (I think it was for a Birthday¹¹) ... No, I don't know now. It was to someone who told me he was 18 years old. I said that between the ages of 18 and 20, I had attained a constant and conscious union with the Divine Presence and that I had done this ALL ALONE, without ANYONE'S help, not even books. When a little later I chanced upon Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga*, it really seemed so wonderful to me that someone could explain something to me! And it helped me realize in only a few months what would have otherwise taken years.

I met a man (I was perhaps 20 or 21 at the time), an Indian who had come to Europe and who told me of the *Gita*. There was a French translation of it (a rather poor one, I must say) which he advised me to read, and then he gave me the key (HIS key, it was his key). He said, 'Read the *Gita* ...' (this translation of the *Gita* which really wasn't worth much but it was the only one available at the time – in those days I wouldn't have understood anything in other languages; and besides, the English translations were just as bad and ... well, Sri Aurobindo hadn't done his yet!). He said, 'Read the *Gita* knowing that Krishna is the symbol of the immanent God, the God within.' That was all. 'Read it with THAT knowledge – with the knowledge that Krishna represents the immanent God, the God within you.' Well, within a month, the whole thing was done!

So some of you people have been here since the time you were toddlers – everything has been explained to you, the whole thing has been served to you on a silver platter (not only with words, but through psychic aid and in every possible way), you have been put on the path of this inner discovery ... and then you just go on drifting along: 'When it comes, it will come.' – If you even spare it that much thought!

So that's how it is.

But I'm not at all discouraged, I just find it rather laughable. Only there are other far more serious things; for example, when you try to deceive yourselves – that is not so pretty. One should not mix up cats and kings. You should call a cat a cat and a king a king – and human instinct, human instinct – and not speak about things divine when they are utterly human, nor pretend to have supramental experiences when you are living in a blatantly ordinary consciousness.

If you look at yourselves straight in the face and you see what you are, then if by chance you should resolve to ... But what really astounds me is that you don't even seem to feel an intense NEED to do this! 'But how can we know?' Because you DO know, you have been told over and over again, it has been drummed into your heads. You KNOW that you have a divine consciousness within you. And yet you can go on sleeping night after night, playing day after day, doing your lessons *ad infinitum* and still not be ... not have a BURNING desire and will to come into contact with yourselves! – With yourselves, yes, the you just there, inside (*motion towards the center of the chest*) ... Really, it's beyond me!

As soon as I found out – and no one told me, I found out through an experience – as soon as I found out that there was a discovery to be made within myself, well, it became THE MOST IMPORTANT thing in the world. It took precedence over everything else!

And when, as I told you, I chanced upon a book or an individual that could give me just a little clue and tell me, 'Here. If you do such and such, you will find your path' – well I charged into it like a cyclone ... and nothing could have stopped me.

And how many years have you all been here, half-asleep? Naturally, you're happy to think about it now and then – especially when I speak to you about it or sometimes when you read. But THAT –

¹¹Mother received each disciple individually on his birthday.

that fire, that will which plows through all barriers, that concentration which can triumph over EVERYTHING ...

Now who was it that asked me what you should do?

(The child:) Me!

Well, that's what you have to do, my child. I have just told you.

(silence)

Mother, what was the other thing you wrote?

I thought someone might ask me, 'Why doesn't She¹² stay for your sake? Since She came here because you called Her, then why doesn't She stay for your sake?'

But no one asked me that.

Tell us, Mother – we really want to know, Sweet Mother!

For Her, this body is but one instrument among so many others in an eternity of ages to come, and for Her its only importance is that attributed to it by the Earth and mankind – the extent to which it can be used as a channel to further Her manifestation. If I find myself surrounded by people who are incapable of receiving Her, then for Her, I am quite useless.

It is very clear. So it is not I who can make Her stay. And I certainly cannot ask Her to stay for egotistical reasons. Moreover, all these Aspects, all these Personalities manifest constantly – but they never manifest for personal reason. Not one of them has ever thought of helping my body – besides, I don't ask them to because that is not their purpose. But it is more than obvious that if the people around me were receptive, She could permanently manifest since they could receive Her – and this would help my body enormously because all these vibrations would run through it. But She never gets even a chance to manifest – not a single one. She only meets people ... who don't even feel Her when She's there! They don't even notice Her, they're not even aware of her presence. So how can She manifest in these conditions? I'm not going to ask Her, 'Please come and change my body.' We don't have that kind of relationship! Furthermore, the body itself wouldn't agree. It never thinks of itself, it never pays attention to itself, and besides, it is only through the work that it can be transformed.

Yes, certainly ... had there been any receptivity when She came down and had She been able to manifest with the power with which She came ... But I can tell you one thing: even before Her coming, when, with Sri Aurobindo, I had begun going down (for the Yoga) from the mental plane to the vital plane, when we brought our yoga down from the mental plane into the vital plane, in less than a month (I was forty years old at the time – I didn't seem very old, I looked less than forty, but I was forty anyway), after no more than a month of this yoga, I looked exactly like an 18 year old! And someone who knew me and had stayed with me in Japan¹³ came here, and when he saw me, he could scarcely believe his eyes! He said, 'But my god, is it you?' I said, 'Of course!'

Only when we went down from the vital plane into the physical plane, all this went away – because on the physical plane, the work is much harder and we had so much to do, so many things to change.

12The Mother of Ananda, or the Creative Power's aspect of Joy.

13W.W. Pearson, a friend of Rabindranath Tagore, who had come from Tagore's Ashram in 1923; Mother had met him with Tagore in 1916 in Japan.

But if a force like Hers could manifest and be received here, it would have INESTIMABLE results! ...

Well, I am only telling you all this because I thought someone might ask me about it, but otherwise ... I don't have that kind of relationship with Her. You see, if you consider this body, this poor body, it is very innocent: it in no way tries to draw attention to itself nor to attract forces nor to do anything at all except its work – as best it can. And that's how it stands: its importance is proportionate to its usefulness ... and to the significance the world attributes to it – since its action is for the world.

But in and of itself, it is only one body among countless others. That's all.

(To the disciple handling the microphone:) It's over now.

(Mother gets up to go, but while leaving, She says to the children around her:) If you had made just one little decision to try to feel your psychic being, my time would not have been wasted.



March 26, 1955

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, March 26, 1955

Mother, once more I come to ask you for Mahakali's¹⁴ intervention. After a period when everything seemed much better, I again awake to impossible mornings when I live badly, very badly, far from you, incapable of calling you and, what's more, of feeling your Presence or your help.

I don't know what mud is stirring about in me, but everything is obscured, and I cannot dissociate myself from these vital waves.

Mother, without Mahakali's grace, I shall never be able to get out of this mechanical round, to shatter these old formations, ever the same, which keep coming back. Mother, I beg of you, help me to BREAK this shell in which I am suffocating. Deliver me from myself, deliver me *in spite of myself*. Alone, I am helpless; sometimes I cannot even call you! May your force come and burn all my impurities, shatter my resistances.

Signed: Bernard¹⁵



April 4, 1955

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, April 4, 1955

Mother, for more than a year now I have been near you and nothing, no really significant inner experience, no sign has come that allows me to feel I have progressed or merely to show me that I am on the right path. I cannot even say I am happy.

I am not so absurdly pretentious as to blame the divine, nor yourself – and I remain quite convinced that all this is my own fault. Undoubtedly I have not known how to surrender totally in some part of myself, or I do not aspire enough or know how to 'open' myself as needed. Also, I should rely entirely upon the divine to take care of my progress and not be concerned about the absence of experiences. I have therefore asked myself why I am so far away from the true attitude, the genuine opening, and I see two main reasons: on the one hand, the difficulties inherent in my

14Mahakali: the eternal Mother in her warrior aspect, She who severs the heads of the demons.

15Such was our old, meaningless name (except for its Germanic root: 'hard bear') until a certain March 3, 1957, when Mother named us Sat-prem ('the one who loves truly').

own nature, and on the other, the outer conditions of this sadhana. These conditions do not seem to be conducive to helping me overcome the difficulties in my own nature.

I feel that I am turning in circles and taking one step backward for each one forward. Furthermore, instead of helping me draw nearer to the divine consciousness, my work in the Ashram (the very fact of working – for to change work, even if I felt like it, would not change the overall situation), diverts me from this divine consciousness, or at least keeps me in a superficial consciousness from which I am unable to ‘unglue’ myself as long as I am busy writing letters, doing translations, corrections or classes.¹⁶ I know it’s my own fault, that I ‘should’ know how to be detached from my work and do it by relying upon a deeper consciousness, but what can be done? Unless I receive the grace, I cannot ‘remember’ the essential thing as long as the outer part of my being is active.

When I am not immediately engrossed in work, I have to confront a thousand little temptations and daily difficulties that come from my contact with other beings and a life that does indeed remain in life. Here, even more, there is the feeling of an impossible struggle, and all these ‘little’ difficulties seem to gnaw away at me; scarcely has one hole been filled when another opens up, or the same one reappears, and there is never any real victory – one has constantly to begin everything again. Finally, it seems to me that I really live *only one hour a day*, during the evening ‘distribution’ at the playground.¹⁷ It is scarcely a life and scarcely a sadhana!

Consequently, I understand much better now why in the traditional yogas one ‘settled’ all these difficulties once and for all by escaping from the world, without bothering to transform a life that seems so untransformable.

I am not now going to renounce Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga, Mother, for my whole life is based upon it, but I believe I should employ other means – which is why I am writing you this letter.

By continuing this daily little ant-like struggle and by having to confront the same desires, the same ‘distractions’ every day, it seems to me I am wasting my energy in vain. Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga, which is meant to include life, is so difficult that one should come to it only after having already established the solid base of a concrete divine realization. That is why I want to ask you if I should not ‘withdraw’ for a certain time, to Almora,¹⁸ for example, to Brewster’s place,¹⁹ to live in solitude, silence, meditation, far away from people, work and temptations, until a beginning of Light and Realization is concretized in me. Once this solid base is acquired, it would be easier for me to resume my work and the struggle here for the true transformation of the outer being. But to want to transform this outer being without having fully illumined the inner being seems to me to be *putting the cart before the horse*, or at least condemning myself to a pitiless and endless battle in which the best of my forces are fruitlessly consumed.

In all sincerity, I must say that when I was at Brewster’s place in Almora, I felt very near to that state in which the Light must surge forth. I quite understand the imperfection of this process, which involves fleeing from difficulties, but this would only be a stage, a strategic ‘retreat,’ as it were.

Mother, this is not a vital desire seeking to divert me from the sadhana, for my life has no other meaning than to seek the divine, but it seems to be the only solution that could bring about some

16For a long time, Satprem took care of the correspondence with the outside, along with Pavitra not to mention editing the Ashram *Bulletin* as well as Mother’s writings and talks translating Sri Aurobindo’s works Unto French, and conducting classes at the Ashram’s ‘International Centre of Education.’

17Every evening at the Playground, the disciples passed before Mother one by one to receive symbolically some food.

18In the Himalayas.

19An American artist, an old friend of D.H. Lawrence, and Satprem’s friend.

progress and get me out of this *lukewarm slump* in which I have been living day after day. I cannot be satisfied living merely one hour a day, when I see you.

I know that you do not like to write, Mother, but couldn't you say in a few words if you approve of my project or what I should do? In spite of all my rebellions and discouragements and resistances, I am your child. O Mother, help me!

Signed: Bernard

(Mother's reply)

My dear child,

No doubt it would be better to go to Almora for a while – not for too long, I hope, for it is needless to say how much the work will be disrupted by this departure ...

(Another handwritten version)

4.7.55

My dear child,

You may go to Almora if you think it will help you break this shell of the outer consciousness, so obstinately impenetrable.

Perhaps being far away from the Ashram for a while will help you feel the special atmosphere that exists here and that cannot be found anywhere else to the same extent.

In any event, my blessings will always be with you to help you find, at long last, this inner Presence which alone gives joy and stability.

Signed: Mother



June 9, 1955

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, June 9, 1955

Mother, I cannot say that it is a nostalgia for the outside world that is drawing me backwards nor some attachment to a 'personal' form of life, nor even some vital desire seeking its own satisfaction. That old world no longer attracts me, and I do not see at all what I would do there. Yet something is standing in my way.

If only I could see a distinct 'error' blocking my path which I could clearly attack ... But I feel that I am *not responsible*, that it is not my personal fault if I remain without aspiration, stagnating. I

feel like a battlefield of contending forces that are beyond me and against which I can do NOTHING. Oh Mother, it is not an excuse for a lack of will, or at least I don't think so – I profoundly feel like a helpless toy, totally helpless.

If the divine force, if your grace, does not intervene to shatter this obscure resistance that is drawing me downwards in spite of myself, I don't know what will become of me ... Mother, I am not blackmailing you, I am only expressing my helplessness, my anguish.

During the day, I live more or less calmly in my little morass, but as evening and the moment to meet you draw near, then the forces pinning me to the ground begin raging beneath your pressure, and I feel at times an unbearable tearing that burns and constricts in my throat like tears that cannot be shed. Afterwards, Truth regains possession of me – but the following day it all begins again.

Mother, it is an impossible, absurd, unlivable life. I feel as though I have no hand in this cruel little game. Oh Mother, why doesn't your grace trust that deep part in me which knows so well that you are the Truth? Deliver me from these evil forces since, profoundly, it is you and you alone I want. Give me the aspiration and strength I do not have. If you do not do this Yoga for me, I feel I shall never have the strength to go on.

There is something that must be SHATTERED: can it not be done once and for all without lingering on indefinitely? Mother, I am your child.

Signed: Bernard

Mother, this letter is a *prayer*.

(Mother's reply)

June 11, 1955

My dear child,

Your case is not unique; there are others (and among the best and the most faithful) who are likewise a veritable battlefield for the forces opposing the advent of the truth. They feel powerless in this battle, sorrowful witnesses, victims without the strength to fight, for this is taking place in that part of the physical consciousness where the supramental forces are not yet fully active, although I am confident they soon will be. Meanwhile, the only remedy is to endure, to go through this suffering and to await patiently the hour of liberation.

While reading your prayer, I too prayed that it be heard.

With my blessings.

Signed: Mother



September 3, 1955

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, September 3, 1955

Mother, it seems that for weeks I have been knocking against myself at every turn, as though I were in a prison, and I cannot get out of it. Mother, I need your Space, your Light, to get out of this walled-in night that is suffocating me.

No matter where I concentrate, in my heart, above my head, between my eyes, I bang everywhere into an unyielding wall; I no longer know which way to turn, what I must do, say, pray in order to be freed from all this at last. Mother, I know that I am not making all the effort I should, but help me to make this effort, I implore your grace. I need so much to find at last this solid rock upon which to lean, this space of light where finally I may seek refuge. Mother, open the psychic being in me, open me to your sole Light which I need so much. Without your grace, I can only turn in circles, hopelessly. O Mother, may I live in you.

*Your child,
Signed: Bernard*



September 15, 1955

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, September 15, 1955

Mother ... suddenly everything seems to have crystallized – all the little revolts, the little tensions, the ill will and petty vital demands – forming a single block of open, determined resistance. I have become conscious that from the beginning of my sadhana, the mind has led the game – with the psychic behind – and has ‘held me in leash,’ helped muzzle all contrary movements, but at no time, or only rarely, has the vital submitted or opened to the higher influence. The rare times when the vital participated, I felt a great progress. But now, I find myself in front of this solid mass that says ‘No’ and is not at all convinced of what the mind has been imposing upon it for almost two years now.

Mother, I am sufficiently awakened not to rebel against your Light and to understand that the vital is but one part of my being, but I have come to the conclusion that the only way of ‘convincing’ this vital is not to force or stifle it, but to let it go through its own experience so it may understand by itself that it cannot be satisfied in this way. I feel the need to leave the Ashram for a while to see how I can get along away from here – and to realize, no doubt, that one can really breathe only here.

I have friends in Bangalore whom I would like to join for two or three weeks, perhaps more, perhaps less, however long it may take to confront this vital with its own freedom. I need a vital activity, to move, to sail, for example, to have friends ... etc. The need I am feeling is exactly that

which I sought to satisfy in the past through my long boat journeys along the coast of Brittany. It is a kind of thirst for space and movement.

Otherwise, Mother, there is this block before me that is obscuring all the rest and *taking away my taste* for everything. I would like to leave, Mother, but not in revolt; may it be an experience to go through that receives your approval. I would not like to be cut off from you by your displeasure or your condemnation, for this would seem to me terrible and leave me no other recourse but to plunge into the worst excesses in order to forget.

Mother, I would like you to forgive me, to understand me and, above all, not to deprive me of your Love. I would like you to tell me if I may leave for a few weeks and how you *feel* about it. It seems to me that I am profoundly your child, in spite of all this??

Signed: Bernard



October 19, 1955²⁰

The three images of total self-giving to the Divine:

1. To prostrate oneself at His feet in a surrender of all pride, with a perfect HUMILITY.
2. To unfold one's being before Him, to open entirely one's body from head to toe, as one opens a book, spreading open one's centers so as to make all their movements visible in a total SINCERITY that allows nothing to remain hidden.
3. To nestle in His arms, to melt in Him in a tender and absolute CONFIDENCE.

These movements may be accompanied by three formulas, or any one of them, depending upon the case:

1. May Your Will be done and not mine.
2. As You will, as You will ...
3. I am Yours for eternity.

Generally, when these movements are made in the right way, they are followed by a perfect identification, a dissolution of the ego, bringing about a sublime felicity.



²⁰Note written by Mother in French.

October (?) 1955

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry

Mother, after seeing you, I received a letter from my Bangalore friends. They have just bought an old Mogul residence and gardens in Hyderabad that used to belong to the Nizam ... They suggest that their new property would be an enchanting setting for writing the book I have felt like writing for years but never wrote because I was always on the move. Anyway, they have made it clear that should I have qualms about staying with them too long, it would be easy for them to find me some lucrative work that would not be too time consuming – which would allow me to write or do whatever I wish – with their friend the Maharajah of Jaipur, or even in Hyderabad.

All this tends to kindle something in me and ignites many temptations that correspond to very diverse, and not very satisfied, elements within me.

To complete the picture – for I don't know what inspiration compels me to expose all this to you in such detail – I must tell you that these friends are opium users and that opium has played an important role in my life and continues to exert a strong attraction over me, the attraction of oblivion.

So that's the situation. All this is in conflict within me and all the more so since it is happening now, in my present state of mind that you know so well.

It seems unlikely that I would know how to resist ... and yet nothing in me is sure, since I am impelled to write you in the hope of who knows what miracle that might show me my way and convince my whole being.

Mother, I would like at the same time to be your child and to leave!! All this is tearing me apart. Where is the solution to such an impossibility?

I am scarcely worthy of being your child.

But that's how it is.

Signed: Bernard



October 1955

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Bangalore

Sweet Mother, during the three days since I left the Ashram, I have never ceased feeling your Presence deep within me like the one thing essential, the only thing solid in the midst of all these hazy appearances. As I entered more and more into this outer world, I seemed to be entering a world without depth, without consistency, where all sorts of things and beings were fluttering like a very thin veil in the wind; and as I entered into this wavering world, you seemed to grow within me with an irrefutable self-evidence, like the only real thing, my only reason to be in this world – without you, everything withers away and loses its Meaning.

Mother, never before have I felt with such force how much you are part of me, nor how much I belong to you, irreversibly. And this I felt not only in my mind or even in my heart, but physically. Moreover, during the several weeks when I went through this latest ‘crisis’ in the Ashram, it seemed to me, sweet Mother, that a physical link was being built between you and me. Am I wrong? At times, I had the feeling that you were no longer merely ‘Mother’ in Spirit, but rather my Mother, as if you had really brought me into the world physically and there was nothing foreign anymore in our relationship. My words are awkward, but you will know how to see the Truth behind them, even if this Truth is still obscure to me.

I believed I had committed a spiritual ‘error’ by leaving the Ashram. But now it seems to me that this experience was necessary, for it put me glaringly in the presence of my life’s Meaning and its profound Reality. In a way, I needed to ‘objectify’ my presence in the Ashram, to see it from the outside. Not that I believe these to be good or even bad reasons to mentally justify this flight, but I see no other reason for this departure. And I find myself here without any need to satisfy the least desire, as if all these worldly ‘pleasures’ no longer awaken anything at all in me. Your grace is there, surely. The only experience I have had is smoking opium. Before, I found it very refined and calming, but this time I found only stomach cramps and a joyless vapidit. It is strange, but I feel that nothing has a hold on me any longer and the only people who seem to be really *living* are those in the Ashram. The others, on the contrary, are only pretending and are all completely outside of life, however paradoxical that might appear.

Sweet Mother, my experience is over. Will you allow me to return to the Ashram towards the middle of next week? There is no more struggle or conflict in me, it is my entire being, right down to the physical, that needs you, that wants to return and aspires to serve you – joyfully, peacefully. And not only do I aspire to serve you, but also to *fight* against these dark, ignorant and deceptive forces so as to be worthy of your Light, the true Light of my being. I see no other meaning for my life, for all life.

Mother, I know now what the word ‘consecration’ means. I want to consecrate myself wholly to your work, with my heart, my mind, my body and my soul. I belong to you irrevocably, unreservedly. I know that nothing else exists in the world that is worthy of being lived, except you. This crisis has helped me to see into myself clearly, and I believe I have gained something from it. Or am I deluding myself?

Finally, I would like to tell you how grateful I am, for I seem to feel your hand everywhere, your infinite understanding leading me towards your Light, through all the meanderings of my nature, making use of it and transforming it, uplifting it little by little in each of its elements and in the minutes” details. Thank you, Mother, for letting me find you – and forgive this terrible child who has been rebelling against the force of transformation, no doubt so as better to find you again.

I feel myself so much your child in every fiber of my being. Yes, your child.

Signed: Bernard

(Mother’s reply)

October 21, 1955

My dear little one, yes, you may return immediately. I will be happy to see you again.

You are right, the experience was necessary and it was fruitful.

Your good letter ... just what I was expecting from you, for what you write is true; I too feel you so very close to me, bound by an indestructible link, as if I had formed you, not only spiritually, but materially as well.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

*With all my tenderness,
Signed: Mother*



January (?) 1956

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry

Mother, I invoke the Presence of Mahakali to break all my RESISTANCES, my INERTIA, my discouragement. Rather painful shocks than this tepidness! Or else, why am I here?

O Mother, may the PRESENCE of Mahakali be with me, may She force my whole being towards the Truth, the Light. Burn me, Mother, if I do not know how to love you!

Signed: Bernard



Undated 1956

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry

All artistic creation is born of a question, a conflict, a discord with oneself, mankind or the cosmos. What painter, what poet, what writer has not wrenched from this conflict the best of his art, from Michelangelo to Goya, from Van Gogh to Rodin, from Villon to Rimbaud, Baudelaire or Dostoevski? And the work of art – the painting, novel or poem – is a harmony torn from this disharmony, a conquest over some chaos, a response to a question posed by man – a metamorphosis.

Artistic creation relies upon that which is most unique in man, most singular with respect to others, and it is through this singular uniqueness that the artist achieves his metamorphosis, his re-creation of the world; it is through this that he seeks to commune with others, himself and the world.

Now, Yoga seeks to eliminate conflict, problems or questions. Man has to forget all this, to cease being a question.

So when an answer has been given to every question, what place remains for the work of art? When all is metamorphosized through Transcendence, what place remains for artistic metamorphosis? When all is supreme harmony, can this harmony be expressed otherwise than through silence, a smile, a radiance or ‘inspired’ poetry – of which Sri Aurobindo is the *sole* example; even so, his poetry is not drawn from the human level, it surpasses the human, it issues from *elsewhere*.

Must artistic creation cease being human, then; must it cease relying upon the human? – which

would then mean having to reject so many undeniably great painters, poets or writers? Must one wait to be open to the supramental planes of consciousness before being able to reconcile (assuming such reconciliation is possible) yoga and artistic creation? And, until then, smother all that sustains the creative elan, i.e. the individual, the conflict, that part of oneself which every creator feels to be the purest human part? Must one extinguish in oneself this play of light and shadow from which art derives its highest accents?

Signed: Bernard



January (?) 1956

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry

Mother, I need to unburden myself of all that is wringing my heart, and if the Divine exists somewhere, it is to him that I would like to express my profound disgust. For all this is profoundly scandalous, absurd and revolting. I know that the external world is absurd and that men live in it vainly; but the world of the Ashram is no less absurd, no less vain. ‘Someone’ is making fun of us, ‘someone’ is deceiving us – for if truly there is some witness to this tragi-comedy and if this whole world is his ‘game,’ it is a cruel game and he is a cheater, for he has all the cards in his hand and he pretends to make us play a game in which we are inevitably the losers – a game we cannot play, for we are helpless miserable, without strength, without light.

All our efforts are vain and sadly ridiculous. At each instant we must begin everything anew, one step seems to lead us forward another to draw us back. We desperately turn in circles and sometimes, in our dizziness, we believe we glimpse lights, but these are only the little, dancing lights of our own fatigue, our own weakness. There is no victory, there are only moments of respite. Meditation brings calm and peace, of course, but so does sleep. We are all seeking release, in love, in opium, in action, in war or in power – or in Yoga; but one means is just as vain as the other. There is no real solution, there are only more or less effective ways of forgetting for an hour, or a day, that we are men alone and helpless.

It is quite possible, even quite probable, that in another hour or another day, I may feel quite the contrary of what I now write. But the person I am tomorrow does not *negate* he who I am today, it only makes him more absurd, more unbearably absurd. The one who I am right now, for an hour perhaps, needs to cry out his disgust with this nameless farce. We are puppets, fools, and I am ready to admit that everything is just a state of consciousness – but it is still a fool’s state of consciousness. Tomorrow’s puppet who might ask for grace from the divine, and believe in him, will still be a puppet, a pacified and resigned puppet – but a marionette no less absurd playing a game no less absurd. I understand those who go about planting dynamite everywhere; if they seek death, it is because they desperately wanted to live but found it impossible to live. One cannot live, one can only flee this intolerable existence in one way or another. Mother, it is impossible for a man

to look at himself straight in the face in a completely lucid way for more than five minutes – IF HE DID, HE WOULD KILL HIMSELF ... SO I wonder if the divine – if he exists – has ever known the suffering of mankind. If he exists, why doesn't he give men the *strength* to break out of this 'Magic Circle' in which they keep turning like prisoners in a cell. Twelve years ago, when I was twenty, I was turning in circles in a prison cell in Bordeaux,²¹ awaiting some execution or other – but I am still this same prisoner. If I have advanced during these twelve years, it is in despair, in misery. All this is outrageous, scandalous, should the divine exist.

Leave the Ashram? – But the rest of the world is just as absurd. It is man who is absurd, and god – if he exists – is a pure disgrace. Mother, I am SCANDALIZED, and I feel within me the rebellion and despair of all men who surely have not deserved all this.

Signed: Bernard



Undated 1956

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry

Sweet Mother, with all the sincerity of which I am capable, I am putting before you an important problem (important to me) so that you may help me resolve it. I feel that I am coming to a decisive turning point, but something is preventing me from going any further.

All my past is weighing down on me, not because of any attachments, for I regret NOTHING of my past and my only hope is what lies before me. Yet I have not entirely undergone all this like a marionette, it even seems to me that 'I' have created it, composed it like a book – for the last fifteen years, from the time of the concentration camps, I have consciously multiplied my experiences and have passed through a whole range of rebellions and situations in order to gather the basic material for a book. As it happens, this formulation of 'my' book gradually merged with the search for my real Self. Now I know what I was seeking, but this book has grown with me, it is there like a powerful formation weighing down on me, and it weighs on me all the more now, for since my contact with Sri Aurobindo all my past experiences seem charged with meaning and symbolism. I find your hand in it everywhere, and I can now connect all the apparent coincidences and sift out an extraordinary necessity that has led me here; all this makes a dense, living, vibrant book that weighs on me. I need to cast it all out, to free myself, to write this book.

Not only do I need to *liquidate* this past, but also to *renew* my choice, to strengthen my presence here – and I feel this book as a commitment, it will help me set my route in a decisive way. It is a test.

²¹Satprem was arrested by the Gestapo in Bordeaux in 1943 for resisting the German occupation. He was later sent to Buchenwald and Mauthausen.

There is another consideration as well – though if I am deluding myself, please enlighten me. I feel that if this book is successful, it could be useful to others and serve Sri Aurobindo's work. For I have had the opportunity to live concretely, the hard way, many of the questions that others ask themselves. Thus all my past experiences appear to be a living demonstration of a teaching to which Sri Aurobindo is the key. What has already been said abstractly or philosophically, I can say in the form of a living and moving novel. I think that I feel in me the power to express these things.

Sweet Mother, perhaps I am deceiving myself, but I am writing you explicitly so that you may enlighten me. I am not telling you all these things for you to approve of my need to write, but for you to tell me what is *your will*. I do not want to be 'a writer,' but your child, your instrument. Only, there is something in me that has to be liquidated.

The problem poses itself *practically*, for I would need a rather long period of uninterrupted work to be rid of all this. Yet I have carried this book in me for so long that it is ready in every detail – I could finish it in six months. Here, I am too occupied with other things to finish it quickly. Furthermore, I feel the need to redefine my presence here from an outside perspective. I thought of going to Brewster's lodge in the Himalayas. There, I could continue some of the work I have been doing with Pavitra. It seems to me that I would come back freed and refortified in my purpose for being here.

Sweet Mother, am I deluding myself? What is your will? It is your will that I want, not my desire, and I am sure you will give me the strength to follow your directives, *whatever they be*. Enlighten me.

I am your child, gratefully.

Signed: Bernard

P.S. Can this book serve You?



Undated 1956

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry

Sweet Mother, here is what has been happening in me almost every evening: I am literally like a bundle of compressed force that somehow can neither explode nor settle down and dissolve. The heaviness in my chest is such that I breathe with difficulty, as though all the blood in my body were converging there, oppressing me. In my head, the pressure at times is so intense that I dare not even close my eyes or concentrate further, for I feel it could crack. My entire being is so tense and filled with force that it seems it could break *physically*.

Is this perhaps a dangerous state? Or else is it normal? I would like to know whether this feeling that it could physically crack is a good sign or a bad one. If it is a bad sign, what can be done?

There is certainly some resistance in me, something that fundamentally says ‘No,’ and I am mentally trying to remain calm, unrebellious, but deep down it resists. I am not at all in search of ‘powers,’ but is this negative condition enough to avert accidents? Could you enlighten me? What can I do against this deep-rooted resistance?

*Your child,
Signed: Bernard*

P.S. I sleep more and more poorly.



February 29, 1956²²

FIRST SUPRAMENTAL MANIFESTATION

(During the common meditation on Wednesday the 29th February 1956)

This evening the Divine Presence, concrete and material, was there present amongst you. I had a form of living gold, bigger than the universe, and I was facing a huge and massive golden door which separated the world from the Divine.

As I looked at the door, I knew and willed, in a single movement of consciousness, that THE TIME HAS COME’, and lifting with both hands a mighty golden hammer I struck one blow, one single blow²³ on the door and the door was shattered to pieces.

Then the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness rushed down upon earth in an uninterrupted flow.



22The following text was given by Mother in both French and English.

23Later added by Mother

March 19, 1956²⁴

AGENDA OF THE SUPRAMENTAL ACTION ON EARTH

On March 19 during the translation class
the inner voice said:
'Hold yourself straight' and the body sat up and held itself absolutely straight
during the entire class.



March 20, 1956²⁵

(Upon awakening)

The control over the movements of the vertebrae, lost a long time ago (which resulted in a kind of insensitivity and incapacity to move them at will) has returned to a great extent: the consciousness is once again able to express itself and the back can straighten up very visibly.

* * *

(The same day on the balcony²⁶)

Almost a total straightening, along with a very clear perception of the new force and power in the cells of the body.

24Note written by Mother in French At this period, Mother's back was already bent. This straightening of her back seems to be the first physiological effect of the 'Supramental Manifestation' of February 29, which is perhaps the reason why Mother noted down the experience under the name 'Agenda of the Supramental Action on Earth.' It was the first time Mother gave a title to what would become this fabulous document of 13 volumes. The experience took place during a 'translation class' when, twice a week, Mother would translate the works of Sri Aurobindo into French before a group of disciples.

25Note written by Mother in French.

26Mother appeared on her balcony daily at about 6 a.m. to give a few moments of meditation to her disciples before the beginning of the day's work.



March 21, 1956²⁷

The age of Capitalism and business is drawing to a close.

But the age of Communism, too, will pass. For Communism as it is preached is not constructive, it is a weapon to combat plutocracy. But when the battle is over and the armies are disbanded for want of employment, then Communism, having no more utility, will be transformed into something else that will express a higher truth.

We know this truth, and we are working for it so that it may reign upon earth.



Undated 1956

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry

Sweet Mother, for many long months I have been struggling with myself in a painful conflict, and at times I have even felt certain dangers. Finally, I went within myself, into the calm, and it seemed to me that I would do well to go away for a while.

I had thought I could free myself from this conflict by writing a book. But in fact, it is not the mind that needs to be freed, or at least not only that, it is the vital that needs to WEAR ITSELF OUT.

I believe I have a clear mental perception of the goal to be attained, and I no longer doubt the spiritual meaning of my life, but this kind of mental maturity is coming into conflict with a vital that is too 'young' and has not yet worn itself out enough on the open road. Here, this vital force has become even more concentrated and is unable to free itself. It is undoubtedly a question of time, of aging. Thus all my energy, especially during the past year, has been spent 'negatively,' as it were – in an effort not to leave. This struggle seems to have eliminated all positive effort, even the very meaning of my presence here.

This vital force is no longer seeking a sexual fulfillment nor success in a world it no longer believes in, but it needs to 'move,' to come out. Perhaps things would be better if I went to breathe

²⁷Note written by Mother in French.

a bit in the Himalayas? I don't want to do anything without your accord, and were I to leave, it would be after the 15th of August.

Sweet Mother, I am writing you all this calmly, without rebellion; but during these past months, the acuteness of the conflict has become so great that at times I feel myself in danger. I am putting all this before you so that you may tell me what is right.

Sweet Mother, I want to remain your child in spite of these difficulties. Forgive me for taking up your time and for being so poorly surrendered.

Signed: Bernard



April 4, 1956

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, April 4, 1956

Mother, two months ago I had a clear mental perception of what was asked of me: to spend the rest of my life here. This is the source of my difficulties and of the inner hell I have been living through ever since. Each time I try to emerge, there is this image that rises up in me: your-whole-life – and this casts me into a violent conflict. When I came here, I thought of staying for two or three years; for me the Ashram was a means of realization, not an end.

I understand now that as long as my whole being has not ACCEPTED that it must finish its life here, there is no way out nor any 'recovery' possible. Through my mental force alone, this acceptance is impossible; I have been turning infernally in circles these past two months, and the mind is in league with the vital. Therefore, a force greater than mine must help me accept that my way is here. I need you, Mother, for without you I am lost. I need you to tell me that the Truth of my being is indeed here and that I am truly ready to follow this path. Mother, I beseech you, help me to see the truth of my being, give me some sign that my way is here and not elsewhere. I beg of you, Mother, help me to know.

I also had a very clear sensation that you were abandoning me, that you had no further interest in me and I could just as well do as I pleased. Perhaps you cannot forgive some of my inner rebellions which have been so very violent? Am I totally *guilty*? Is it true that you are abandoning me?

I am broken and battered in the depths of my being as I was in my flesh in the concentration camps. Will the divine grace take pity on me? Can you, do you want to help me? Alone I can do nothing. I am in an absolute solitude, even beyond all rebellion, at my very end.

Yet I love you in spite of all that I am.

Signed: Bernard

(Mother's reply)

My child, I have not abandoned you, and I am ready to forget, to efface all revolt.

My help is *always* with you.

Signed: Mother



April 20, 1956

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, April 20, 1956

Sweet Mother,

The difficulties of the past weeks have taught me that as soon as one strays from the true consciousness, in however trifling a way, anything may happen, any excess, any aberration, any imbalance – and I have felt very dangerous things prowling about me. Mother, you told me in regard to Patrick²⁸ that the law of the manifestation was a law of freedom, even the freedom to choose wrongly. This evening, it has been my very deep perception that this freedom is virtually always a freedom to choose wrongly. I harbor a great fear of losing the true consciousness once again. I have become aware of how fragile everything in me is and that very little would be enough to carry me away.

Therefore, Sweet Mother, I come to ask a great grace of you, from the depths of my heart: take my freedom into your hands. Prevent me from falling back, far away from you. I place this freedom in your hands. Keep me safe, Mother, protect me. Grant me the grace of watching over me and of taking me in your hands completely, like a child whose steps are unsure. I no longer want this Freedom. It is you I want, the Truth of my being. Mother, as a grace, I implore you to free me from my freedom to choose wrongly.

I am your child and I love you.

Signed: Bernard

(Mother's reply)

4.2 1.56

My dear child,

Agreed – with all my heart I accept the gift you give me of your freedom to choose wrongly ...

28A friend of Satprem's who died insane in a Japanese hospital in India

And it is with all my heart, too, that I shall always help you make the choice that leads straight to the goal – that is, towards your real self.

With all my affection and my blessings.

Signed: Mother



April 23, 1956

Mother takes a passage from Prayers and Meditations of September 23, 1914:

The Lord hast willed, and Thou cost execute;
A new Light shall break upon the earth.
A new world shall be born.

And the things that were promised shall be fulfilled.

and rewrites it as follows in her own hand:

29	February	—	29	March	Lord,
Thou	hast	willed,	and	I	execute:
A	new	light	breaks	upon	the
A	new	world		is	earth, born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.²⁹



April 24, 1956³⁰

The manifestation of the Supramental upon earth is no more a promise but a living fact, a reality.

It is at work here, and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognize it.

²⁹Original English.

³⁰Original English.



Undated 1956

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry

Sweet Mother, I feel intensely, almost painfully, how much all my relationships with the outer world are FALSE, obscure, ignorant. As soon as I am away from the heart of my being, all my actions are approximations, all my contacts with other beings are turbid, my work itself becomes tainted with a thousand doubtful little motives. Mother, I know with a blinding certitude – even if this certitude is only mental – that the only solution is to come into contact with my true being. I know that by finding my true being I shall find the right action, the right relationships with the outside, and truth, knowledge, joy. I know this now in a profound way, and nothing can ever turn me away from it again. Every evening, this Truth comes physically to embrace me. And yet every morning, I have half-forgotten, and I spend nearly the whole day on the surface of my being.

O Mother, when shall my truth of the evening become my truth of the day?

Something HAS to explode in me and take possession of my entire being. It is not my force that can achieve this, but yours. Mother, I beseech you to open in me the doors of my true being. I no longer want this false relationship with the outside, this life of approximation. I want to be *your* instrument, not the instrument of this ignorant and suffering ego. Mother, I ask only for the true, the Light, that which is my real self. I have had enough, enough of this surface self that invades virtually all my days.

May your Will be done.

Your child who desperately needs you,

Signed: Bernard

P.S. What is the obstacle?



Undated 1956

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry

Sweet Mother, I feel it is good to tell you what happened within me yesterday evening during the distribution, if only to express my infinite gratitude.

First of all, I began by feeling, perceiving in an absolutely obvious way, that it is you and you alone who has been doing my yoga, that you have been doing everything for me and that you have been there forever, guiding each one of my steps. I felt luminously that without you I would never have been able to go forward a single step and that, basically, all my efforts have served only to teach me the futility of my efforts, as it were, and to lead me to this point of helplessness where I must totally surrender myself into the hands of a greater Force – into your hands. And I felt so absolutely that you would do EVERYTHING for me if only I relied upon you totally. It was like a liberation, like a weight that you lifted from my heart. No longer was it a question of trying to cling inwardly, of pushing and pulling until I was stiff and aching within; it was enough to let you act.

Then I felt a dual movement enter into me, almost a physical movement that followed the rhythm of my breathing, as though every time I breathed in, I was receiving something, and every time I breathed out, I was offering myself. And this dual movement of receiving and offering seemed to grow within me, as though it were the very movement of the world, the breathing of the world that receives and gives itself. And I perceived that, at a certain moment, this rhythm could stop, the circle close again, the two breaths join in a luminous immobility. Then vaguely, I discerned – as though from far away, behind a veil – a kind of pure, brilliant white light, and saw that it was you at the heart of the world. And then I felt how marvelous it was to be able to give myself. I seemed to have grasped the secret of duality, for the joy of offering, for the joy of love. Then I felt that I was beginning to mentalize things. In a way, I was afraid of recording too well what was happening, and I held myself out to you in silence and in love, for it seemed to me that the experience could be an obstacle, a stopping place, whereas one must always go farther. Then it seemed that you were there – I did not see you exactly, but I felt, I felt that you were smiling at me as from behind a veil. The distribution ended all too soon, and then I had a class. But even this morning, a kind of joyous confidence in my heart remains with me, and the need to express my infinite gratitude, my love. I belong to you, Mother, with my body, my life, my mind.

I want only what you want.

Everything is grace.

*Your child,
Signed: Bernard*

P.S. When things of this sort happen, should one bother you by writing about them, or simply be content with an inner gratitude?

(Mother's reply)

It does not bother me at all, and you did well to write. Your experience is excellent, and I was very happy to read it – it shines like a light upon a new horizon.

With you, always.

Signed: Mother



May 2, 1956

(Extract from the Wednesday class)

Sweet Mother, you said, 'The Supramental has come down on earth.' What does this mean, exactly? You also said, 'The things that were promised are fulfilled.' What are these things?

Oh, really! How ignorant! It has been promised for such a very long time, it has been said for such a very long time – not only here in the Ashram, but ever since the beginning of the earth. There have been all kinds of predictions, by all kinds of prophets. It has been said, 'There will be a new heaven and a new earth, a new race shall be born, the world shall be transformed ...' Prophets have spoken of this in every tradition.

You said, 'They are fulfilled.'

Yes. Then?

Where is the new race?

The new race? Wait for something like ... a few thousand years or so, and you will see it!

When the mind came down upon earth, something like a million years went by between the manifestation of the mind in the earth atmosphere and the appearance of the first man. But it will go faster this time because man is waiting for something, he has a vague idea: he is awaiting in some way or another the advent of the superman. Whereas the apes were certainly not awaiting the birth of man, they never thought of it – for the excellent reason that they probably don't think very much! But man has thought about it and is waiting, so it will go faster. But faster probably still means thousands of years. We shall speak of this again in a few thousand years!

(silence)

Those who are ready within, who are open and in touch with the higher forces, those who have had a more or less direct personal contact with the Supramental Light and Consciousness, are capable of feeling the difference in the earth atmosphere.

But for this ... only like can know like. Only the Supramental Consciousness in an individual can perceive the Supramental acting in the earth atmosphere. Those who, for whatever reason, have developed this perception can see it. But those who are not even remotely conscious of their inner beings, who would be quite at a loss to say what their souls look like, are certainly not ready to perceive the difference in the earth atmosphere. They still have quite a way to go for that. Because, for those whose consciousness is more or less exclusively centered in the outer being – mental, vital and physical – things need to have an absurd or unexpected appearance to be noticeable. And then they call it a miracle.

But we do not call a miracle the constant miracle of the forces that intervene to change circumstances and human natures and which have very far-reaching consequences, for we see only the appearance, and this appearance seems quite natural. But in truth, if you were to reflect upon the

least thing that happens, you would be forced to acknowledge that it is miraculous.

It is simply because you do not reflect upon it and assume things to be as they are, what they are, unquestioningly; otherwise you would have quite a number of opportunities everyday to say to yourself, ‘But look! That is absolutely amazing! How did it happen?’

Quite simply, the habit of a purely superficial way of seeing.

Sweet Mother, what should be our attitude towards this New Consciousness?

That depends upon what you want to do with it.

If you want to look at it as an object of curiosity, then you have only to look at it, to try to understand.

If you want it to change you, you must open yourself and strive to progress.

Will we benefit collectively or individually from this new manifestation?

Why are you asking this question?

Because a lot of people have come here, and they are asking, ‘How are we going to benefit from it?’

Oh!

And why should they benefit from it? What entitles them to benefit from it? Simply because they took the train to come here?

I knew some people who came here a long time ago, something like (Oh, I don’t recall anymore, but quite a long time ago!), certainly more than twenty years ago; the first time someone died in the Ashram, they expressed a considerable dissatisfaction: ‘But I came here because I thought this yoga would make me immortal! If you can still die, then why did I come here?’

Well, it’s the same thing. People take the train to come here – there were about a hundred and fifty more people than usual³¹ – simply because they want to ‘benefit.’ But this may be exactly why they have not benefited from it! Because This [the supramental consciousness] has not come to make people benefit in any way whatsoever!

They ask if their inner difficulties will be easier to overcome.

I would repeat the same thing. What reason and what right have they to ask that things be easier? What have they done on their side? Why should it be easier? To satisfy people’s laziness and sloth – or what?

Because when something new comes, we always have the idea of benefiting from it.

No! Not only in the case of something new: in every case, there is always this idea of benefiting. However, that is the best way to get nothing.

Who are you trying to fool? The Divine? ... That is hardly possible.

It’s the same with those who ask for an interview. I tell them, ‘Look, you have come in large numbers, and if each one asks me for an interview, how could I possibly find enough minutes in so few days to see everyone? While you’re here, I wouldn’t have even a single minute.’ Then they retort, ‘Oh, I have taken so MUCH trouble, I have come from so FAR away, I have come from way

³¹Mother is referring to the *darshan* of April 24, 1956. Four times a year, for ‘darshan,’ visitors increasingly poured into the Ashram to pass one by one before Mother (and formerly, Sri Aurobindo) to receive her look.

in the North, I have travelled for so many hours – and I have no right to an interview?’ I reply, ‘I’m sorry, but you are not the only one in that situation.’

And that’s how it is – swapping, bargaining. We are not a commercial enterprise, we have made it clear that we are not doing business.

The number of disciples is increasing now day by day. What does this indicate?

But inevitably – it will increase more and more! Which is why I cannot do what I used to do when there were one hundred and fifty people in the Ashram. If they had just a little bit of common sense, they would understand that I cannot have the same relationship with people now (just imagine, 1,800 people these last days!), so I cannot have the same relationship with 1,845 people (exactly, I believe) as with thirty or even a hundred. That seems an easy enough logic to understand.

But they want everything to remain as it was and, as you say, to be the first to ‘benefit.’

Mother, when the mind came down into the earth atmosphere, the ape did not make any effort to convert himself into a man, did he? It was Nature that supplied the effort. But in our case ...

But it’s not man who is going to convert himself into a superman!

No?

Just try a little! (*laughter*) You see, it is something else that is going to do the work.

So we are ...

Only – yes, there is an ‘only,’ I don’t want to be so cruel: NOW MAN CAN COLLABORATE. That is, he can lend himself to the process, with good will, with aspiration, and help to his utmost. Which is why I said it will go faster. I hope it will go MUCH faster. But even if it does go much faster, it will still take some time!

(silence)

Look. If all of you who have heard of this, not once but perhaps hundreds of times, who have spoken of it yourselves, thought about it, hoped for it, wanted it (there are some people who have come here only for this, to receive the Supramental Force and to be transformed into supermen, this has been their goal ...) then how is it that you were ALL such strangers to this Force that when it came, you did not even feel it?!

Can you solve that problem for me? If you find the solution to this problem, you will have the solution to the difficulty.

I am not speaking of people from outside who have never thought about it, who have never felt concerned and who do not even know that there may be something like the Supermind to receive, in fact. I am speaking of people who have built their lives upon this aspiration (and I don’t doubt their sincerity for a minute), who have worked – some of them for thirty years, some for thirty-five, others somewhat less – all the while saying, ‘When the supermind comes ... When the supermind comes ...’ That was their refrain: ‘When the supermind comes ...’ Consequently, they were really in the best possible frame of mind, one could not have dreamt of a better predisposition. How is it, then, that their inner preparation was so ... let’s just say ‘incomplete,’ that they did not feel the Vibration immediately, as soon as it came, through a shock of identity?

Individually, each one’s goal was to make himself ready, to enter into a more or less intimate individual relationship with this Force, so as to help the process; or else, if he could not help, at least be ready to recognize and be open to the Force when it would manifest. Then instead of being an alien element in a world in which your OWN inner capacity remains unmanifest, you suddenly

become THAT, you enter directly, fully, into the very atmosphere: the Force is there, all around you, permeating you.

If you had had a little inner contact, you would have recognized it immediately, don't you think so?

Well, in any event, that was the case for those who had a little inner contact; they recognized it, they felt it, and they said, 'Ah, there it is! It has come!' But how is it that so many hundreds of people – not to mention the handful of those who really wanted only that, thought only of that, had staked their whole lives on that – how is it that they felt nothing? What can this mean?

It is well known that only like knows like. It is an obvious fact.

There was indeed a possibility to enter into contact with the Thing individually – this was even what Sri Aurobindo had described as being the necessary procedure: a certain number of people would enter into contact with this Force through their inner effort and their aspiration. We had called it the ascent towards the Supermind. And IF and when they had touched the Supermind through an inner ascent (that is, by freeing themselves from the material consciousness), they should have recognized it SPONTANEOUSLY as soon as it came. But a preliminary contact was indispensable – if you have never touched it, how can you recognize it?

That's how the universal movement works (I read this to you a few days ago): through their inner effort and inner progress, certain individuals, who are the pioneers, the forerunners, enter into communication with the new Force which is to manifest, and they receive it in themselves. And because a number of calls like this surge forth, the thing becomes possible, and the era, the time, the moment for the manifestation comes. This is how it happened – and the Manifestation took place.

But then, all those who were ready should have recognized it.

I hasten to tell you that some did recognize it, but they were so few ... But as for those who ask these questions, who even took the trouble to come here, who took the train to gulp this down as you gulp down a soft drink, how can they possibly feel anything whatsoever if they have not prepared themselves at all? Yet they are already speaking of profiting: 'We want to benefit from it ... '

After all, if they have even a tiny bit of sincerity (not too much, it's tiring!), a tiny bit of sincerity, it is quite possible (I am joking), it is quite possible that they might get a few good kicks to make them go faster! It is possible. In fact, I think that's what will happen.

But really, this attitude ... this rather overly commercial attitude, is usually not very profitable. If you have difficulties and you sincerely aspire, it is likely that the difficulties will diminish. Let us hope so.

(*Turning to the disciple*) So you may tell them this: be sincere and you will be helped.

Mother, very recently a text has been circulating which says, 'What has just now happened, with this Victory, is not a descent but a manifestation. And it is no longer merely an individual event: the Supermind has sprung forth into the universal play.'

Yes, yes, yes! I indeed said all that. I acknowledge it. And so?

It is said, 'The supramental principle is at work ... '

But I have just explained the whole thing to you! (*Mother laughs*) It's incredible!

What I call a 'descent' is this: first of all, the consciousness climbs in ascent, then you catch the Thing up above and redescend with it. This is an INDIVIDUAL event.

When this individual event has taken place sufficiently to allow a more general possibility to emerge, it is no longer a 'descent' but a 'manifestation.'

What I call a ‘descent’ is the individual movement in an individual consciousness. But when a new world is manifesting in an old world – as when similarly the mind spread over the earth – I call it a manifestation.

You may call it whatever you like, it makes no difference to me, but we must understand each other.

What I call a ‘descent’ takes place in the individual consciousness. In the same way, we speak of ‘ascent’ (there is no ascent really, there is no high or low, no direction: it’s all a manner of speaking) – we speak of ‘ascent’ when we feel ourselves rising up towards something, and we call it a ‘descent’ when, after having caught this thing, we bring it down into ourselves.

But when the doors are opened and the flood pours in, it can no longer be called a ‘descent’: it is a Force that spreads everywhere. Understood? ... Ah!

I don’t care what words you use. I do not essentially insist upon my words, but I explain them to you, and it’s better to agree on words beforehand, for otherwise there’s no end to explanations.

But now, you may reply to those people who are asking these insidious questions that the best way to receive anything whatsoever is not to pull, but to give. If they want to give themselves to the new life, well, the new life will enter into them.

But if they want to pull the new life into themselves, they will close the door with their egoism. That’s all.



July 29, 1956³²

O Thou who art always there – present in all I do, all I am – not for repose do I aspire, but for THY INTEGRAL VICTORY.



August 10, 1956³³

32Note written by Mother in French.

33Note written by Mother in English.

My Lord, through me thou hast challenged the world and all the adverse forces have risen in protest.³⁴

But Thy Grace is winning the victory.



September 12, 1956³⁵

(During the Wednesday class)

... A supramental entity had entirely possessed me.

Something a little taller than myself: its feet extended below my feet and its head went a little beyond my head.

... A solid block with a rectangular base – a *rectangle with a square* base – one single piece.

... A light, not like the golden light of the Supermind: rather a kind of phosphorescence. I felt that had it been night, it would have been *physically* visible.

... And it was denser than my physical body: the physical body seemed to me almost unreal – as though crumbly – like sand running through your fingers.

... I would have been incapable of speaking, words seemed so petty, narrow, ignorant.

... I saw (how shall I put it?) the successive preparations which took place, in certain *anterior* beings, in order to achieve this.

... It felt as if I had several heads.

... The experience of February 29 was of a general nature; but this one was intended for me.

... An experience I had never had.

... I begin to see what the supramental body will be.

... I had had a somewhat similar experience at the time of the union of *the supreme creative principle* with the physical consciousness. But that was a subtle experience, while this was material – in the body.

... I did not *have* the experience, I did not look at it: I WAS it.

... And it radiated from me: myriads of little sparks that were penetrating everybody – I saw them enter *into each one of those present*.

³⁴In fact, following the ‘Supramental Manifestation’ of February 29, 1956, all of Mother’s physical difficulties increased, as though all the obscurities in the physical consciousness were surging forth beneath the pressure of the new light. The same observation applies to the disciples who were around Mother and undoubtedly to the world as a whole. A strange ‘mysterious acceleration’ was beginning to take hold of the world.

³⁵This text was noted down by a disciple from memory. On the original manuscript submitted for her approval, Mother wrote, ‘This account is quite correct,’ and She signed the text. Words added or corrected by Mother are in italics.

... One more step.



September 14, 1956

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Hyderabad, September 14, 1956

Sweet Mother,

Scarcely has a moment gone by since I left that I have not thought of you, but I wanted to wait for things to be clear and settled in me before writing, for you obviously have other things to do than listen to platonic declarations.

My friends keep telling me that I am not ready and that, like R,³⁶ whom they knew, I should go and spend some time in society. They say that my idea of going to the Himalayas is absurd, and they advise me to return to Brazil for a few years to stay with W ... W is an elderly American millionaire – the only ‘good’ rich man I know – who wanted to make me an heir, as it were, to his financial affairs and who treats me rather like a son. He was quite disappointed when I came back to India. My friends tell me that if I have to go through a period in the outside world, the best way to do it is to remain near someone who is fond of me, while at the same time ensuring a material independence for the future.

These questions of money do not interest me. In fact, nothing interests me except this something I feel within me. The only question for me is to know whether I am truly ready for the Yoga, or if my failings are not the sign of some immaturity. Mother, you alone can tell me what is right.

I feel a bit lost, cut off from you. The idea of going to the Himalayas is absurd and I am abandoning it. My friends tell me that I may remain with them as long as I wish, but this is hardly a solution; I don’t even feel like writing a book any longer – nothing seems to appeal to me except the trees in this garden and the music that fills a large part of my days. There is no solution other than the Ashram or Brazil. You alone can tell me what to do.

I KNOW that ultimately my place is near you, but is that my place at present, after all these failings? Spontaneously, it is you I want, you alone who represent the light and all that is real in this world; I can love no one but you nor be interested in anything but this thing within me, but will it not all begin again once I have returned to the Ashram? You alone know the stage I am at, what is good for me, what is possible.

Sweet Mother, may I still ask for your Love, your help? For without your help, nothing is possible, and without your love, nothing has any meaning.

I feel that I am your child in spite of all my contradictions and failings. I love you.

Signed: Bernard

36A former disciple who left the Ashram, and subsequently committed suicide.

(Mother's reply)

9.19.56

My dear child,

For my part, there has been no 'cut' and I have not been severe ... My feelings cannot change, for they are based upon something other than outer circumstances.

But perhaps you have felt this way because you had left your work in the Ashram for an entirely personal, that is, necessarily egoistical reason, and egoism always isolates one from the great current of universal forces. That is why, too, you no longer clearly perceive my love and my help which nevertheless are always with you.

You asked me what I see and whether your difficulties will not reappear upon your return to the Ashram. It may well be. If you return as you still are at present, it may be that after a very short period it will all begin again. That is why I am going to propose something to you – but to accept it you will have to be heroic and very determined in your consecration to my work.

This possibility appeared to me while reading what you wrote about your sojourn in Brazil with W, the only 'good' rich man you have known. Here is my proposal, which I express to you quite plainly, spontaneously, as it presented itself to me.

Just now, the work is being delayed, curtailed, limited, almost endangered for want of money.

That which you would not do for yourself personally, would you not do it for the divine cause?

Go to Brazil, to this 'good' rich man, make him understand the importance of our work, the extent to which his fortune would be used to the utmost for the good of all and for the earth's salvation were he to put it, even partially, at the disposal of our action. Win this victory over the power of money, and by so doing you will be freed from all your personal difficulties. Then you can return here with no apprehension, and you will be ready for the transformation.

Reflect upon this, take your time, tell me very frankly how you feel about it and whether it appears to you, as it does to me, to be a door opening onto a path that will bring you back, free and strong at last to me.

All my affection is with you, and my blessings never leave you.

Signed: Mother



October 7, 1956

I cried towards the Light and Thou gayest me knowledge.

Z asked me, 'Why didn't you stop it?'³⁷ I replied, 'Probably because I am not omnipotent!' Then

³⁷Mother is referring to a strike by the salaried workers of the Ashram, one of the numerous internal and external difficulties constantly assailing Her.

he insisted: 'No, that's not it. I make no distinction between your will and the divine will ... and I know that you don't either. So why didn't you stop it?'

And suddenly, I understood.

It was because I hadn't thought of it. It hadn't even grazed my consciousness. The divine will is not at all like that, it is not a will: it is a VISION, a global vision, that sees and ... No, it does not guide (to guide suggests something outside, but nothing is outside), a creative vision, as it were; yet even then, the word 'create' does not here have the meaning we generally attribute to it.

And what is the Ashram? (I don't even mean in terms of the Universe – on Earth only.) A speck. And why should this speck receive exceptional treatment? ... Perhaps if people here had realized the supermind. But are they so exceptional as to expect exceptional treatment? ...

As Sri Aurobindo says, people see God as a magnified man: he is the Demiurge, Jehovah – what I call the 'Lord of Falsehood.'

Arbitrariness. But the Divine is not like that!

People say, 'I gave everything, I sacrificed everything. In exchange, I expect exceptional conditions – everything should be beautiful, harmonious, easy.'

But the divine vision is global. The people in the Ashram do not want this strike ... but what about the others? They are ignorant, mean, full of ill will, etc., but in their own way they are following a path, and why should they be deprived of the Grace? By the fact that their action is against the Ashram? It is certainly a Grace.

I said that I had not even thought of intervening. When things threatened to turn bad, I simply applied a force so that it wouldn't become too serious.

Complete surrender ... It is not a matter of giving what is small to something greater nor of losing one's will in the divine will; it is a matter of ANNULLING one's will in something that is of another nature.

What comes to replace this human will?

A consciousness and a vision. And one is filled with joy and ...

I used to be different (although I was said to be *non-interfering*); I acted, if at all, to defend myself ... But I understood very quickly that even this was a reaction of ignorance and that things would be set right automatically if one remained in the true consciousness.

A consciousness that sees and makes you see.

Which is why things go amiss when people try to force me to act: I am outside of myself, so to speak. As soon as I come back here, with no one around, then I see.

I have called for a greater 'package' of Grace and asked that the truth of things prevail. We shall see what happens.



October 8, 1956

(At about 6 a.m., before
Mother appeared on the balcony)

'Be always at the height of yourself,
in all circumstances.'

Then I wondered when and how I am at the height of myself. And this is what I saw:

Two things which were parallel and concomitant – that is, they are always together:

One – identity with the Origin, which imparts an absolute serenity and perfect detachment to the action.

The other – identity with the supreme Grace, which obliterates and abolishes all errors committed in the action by whomsoever and whatsoever – and which annuls all the consequences of these errors.

And the moment I perceived this, I saw that my third attitude in action, which is the will for progress for the whole earth as well as for each particular individual, was not the height of my being.

* * *

(later, at 10 a.m.)

One is never anything but a divine apprentice: the Divine of yesterday is only an apprentice to the Divine of tomorrow ... No, I am not speaking of a progressive manifestation – that is much farther below.

When I am at my highest, I am already too high for the manifestation.

I have gone far beyond what I wrote this morning.

What if the human is too heavy, too narrow, too obscure to follow you?

No, it is exactly the opposite of what you are saying. It is not that the Divine in his divinity is opposed to his own manifested self – He is very far beyond, beyond the necessity for Grace; He perceives his unique and exclusive responsibility, and that it is He and He alone who must change in His Manifestation so that all may change.

* * *

(later, at 1 p.m.)

Won't you at least take a flower?

I wanted to take this little rose ('*Tenderness for the Divine*'), for I consider it to be the manifestation nearest to divine Love. It's disinterested, spontaneous, intimate.

This is what I wanted to take with me to my super-heaven, as the most precious thing in the human heart.



October 28, 1956

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, October 28, 1956

Sweet Mother, my birthday is the day after tomorrow, the 30th. I come to place my inner situation before you so that you may help me take a decision.

I am facing the same difficulties as before my departure to Hyderabad, and I have made the same mistakes. The main reason for this state is that, on the one hand, words and ideas seem to have lost all power over me, and on the other, the vital elan which led me thus far is dead. So upon what shall my faith rest? I still have some faith, of course, but it has become totally ABSTRACT. The vital does not cooperate, so I feel all withered, suspended in a void, nothing seems to give me direction anymore. There is no rebelliousness in me, but rather a void.

In this state, I am ceaselessly thinking of my forest in Guiana or of my travels through Africa and the ardor that filled me with life in those days. I seem to need to have my goal before me and to walk towards it. Outer difficulties also seem to help me resolve my inner problems: there is a kind of need in me for the ‘elements’ – the sea, the forest, the desert – for a milieu with which I can wrestle and through which I can grow. Here, I seem to lack a dynamic point of leverage. Here, in the everyday routine, everything seems to be falling apart in me. Should I not return to my forest in Guiana?

Mother, I implore you, in the name of whatever led me to you in the first place, give me the strength to do WHAT HAS TO BE DONE. You who see and who can, decide for me. You are my Mother. Whatever my shortcomings, my difficulties, I feel I am so deeply your child.

Signed: Bernard

P.S. If you see that I should remain here, put in me the necessary strength and aspiration. I shall obey you. I want to obey you.

(Mother's reply)

10.30.56

One should beware of the charm of memories. What remains of past experiences is the effect they have had in the development of the consciousness. But when one attempts to relive a memory by placing oneself again in similar circumstances, one realizes quite rapidly how devoid they are of their power and charm, because they have lost their usefulness for progress.

You are now beyond the stage when the virgin forest and the desert can be useful for your growth. They had put you in contact with a life vaster than your own and they widened the limits of your consciousness. But now you need something else.

So far, your whole life has revolved around yourself; all you have done, even the apparently most disinterested or least egoistic act, has been done with a view to your own personal growth or illumination. It is time to live for something other than yourself, something other than your own

individuality.

Open a new chapter in your existence. Live, no longer for your own realization or the realization of your ideal, however exalted it may be, but to serve an eternal work that transcends your individuality on all sides.

Signed: Mother



November 22, 1956

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, November 22, 1956

Sweet Mother,

For weeks on end, I have been spending nearly all my nights battling with serpents. Last night, I was attacked by three different kinds of serpents, each more venomous and repugnant than the other???

Signed: Bernard



December 12, 1956

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, December 12, 1956

Mother, a letter from W. He is leaving Brazil and retiring from business for good.

Mother, what can I do with my life? I feel absolutely alone, in a void. What hope remains since I have not been able to integrate into the Ashram? I am goalless. I am from nowhere. I am good for nothing.

I have wanted to remain near you, and I love you, but there is something in me that does not accept an 'Ashram ending.' There is a need in me to DO, to act. But what? *What?* Have I something to do in this life?

For years I have dreamed of going to Chinese Turkestan. Should I head in that direction? Or towards Africa?

I don't see a thing, nothing. Oh Mother, I turn towards you in this void that is stifling me. Hear my prayer. Tell me what I must do. Give me a sign. Mother, you are my sole recourse, for who else would show me the path to be taken, who else but you would love me? Or is my fate to go off into the night?

Forgive me, Mother, for loving you so poorly, for giving myself so badly. Mother, you are my only hope, all the rest in me is utter despair.

*Your child,
Signed: Bernard*



December 26, 1956

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, December 26, 1956

Mother, perhaps it would be good if I told you what is happening within me, as sincerely as I can:

I feel that this Truth of my being, this self most intensely felt, is independent from any form or institution. As far back as I can reach in my consciousness, this 'thing' has been there; it was what drove me at an early age to liberate myself from my family, my religion, my country, a profession, marriage or society in general. I feel this 'thing' to be a kind of absolute freedom, and I have been feeling within me this same profound drive for more than a year. Is this need for freedom wrong? And yet is it not because of this that the best in me has blossomed?

This is actually what is happening in me: I never really accepted the W solution, and the solution of Somaliland doesn't appeal to me. But I feel drawn by the idea of Turkestan, as I already told you, and this is why:

Ten years ago, I had two intuitions – the first of which, to my great astonishment, was realized. It was that I had something important to do in South America – and though I never could have foreseen such a voyage, I went there. The second was that I had something to do in Turkestan.

Mother, this is the problem around which I have desperately been turning in circles. What is the truth of my destiny? Is it that which is urging me so strongly to leave, or that which is struggling against my freedom? For ultimately, sincerely, what I want is to fulfill my life's truth. If I have ever had a will, then it is: LET BE WHAT MUST BE. Mother, how can one truly know? Is this drive, this very old and very CLEAR urge in me, false??

*Your child,
Signed: Bernard*



January 1, 1957

1957

A power greater than that of Evil
can alone win the victory.
It is not a crucified
but a glorified body
that will save the world.



January 18, 1957

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, January 18, 1957

Sweet Mother,

The conflict that is tearing me apart is between this shadowy part of a past that does not want to die, and the new light. I wonder if, rather than escaping to some desert, it would not be wiser to resolve this conflict by objectify it, by writing this book I spoke to you about.

But I would like to know whether it is really useful for me to write this book, or whether it is not just some inferior task, a makeshift.

You told me one day that I could be ‘useful’ to you. Then, by chance, I came across this passage from Sri Aurobindo the other day: ‘Everyone has in him something divine, something *his own*, a chance of perfection and strength in however small a sphere which God offers him to take or refuse.’

Could you tell me, as a favor, what this particular thing is in me which may be useful to you and serve you? If I could only know what my real work is in this world ... All the conflicting impulses in me stem from my being like an *unemployed* force, like a being whose place has not yet been determined.

What do you see in me, Mother? Is it through writing that I shall achieve what is to be achieved – or does all this still belong to a nether world? But if so, then of what use am I? If I were good at something, it would give me some air to breathe.

*Your child,
Signed: Bernard*



March 3, 1957

(Letter from Mother to Satprem)

3.3.57

I name you Satprem (true love) for it is only when you awaken to divine love that you will feel that you love.

Signed: Mother



April 9, 1957

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, April 9, 1957

Mother,

I would like to throw myself at your feet and open my heart to you – but I cannot. I cannot.

For I SEE that, were I to give in now, I would be done for – there would be no alternative but to live out the rest of my days in the Ashram. But everything in me rebels at this idea. The idea of winding up as General Secretary of the Ashram, like Pavitra, makes my skin crawl. It is absurd, and I apologize for speaking this way, Mother, for I admire Pavitra – but I can't help it, I can't do it, I do not want to end up like that.

For more than a year now, I have been hypnotized by the idea that if I give in, I will be 'condemned' to remain here. Once more, forgive me for speaking so absurdly, for of course I know it is not a 'condemnation'; and yet a part of me feels that it would be.

Thus I am so tense that I do not even want to close my eyes to meditate for fear of yielding. And I fall into all kinds of errors that horrify me, simply because the pressure is too strong at times, and I literally suffocate. Mother, I am not cut out to be a 'disciple.'

I realize that all the progress I was able to make during the first two years has been lost and I am just as before, worse than before – as if all my strength were in ruin, all faith in myself undone – so much so that at times I curse myself for having come here at all.

That is the situation, Mother. I feel my unworthiness profoundly. I am the opposite of Satprem, unable to love and to give myself. Everything in me is sealed tight.

So what is to be done? I intend asking your permission to leave as soon as the book is finished (I am determined to finish it, for it will rid me of the past it represents). I expect nothing from the world, except a bit of external space, in the absence of another space.

Signed: Bernard

P.S. And yet, even if I leave, I know that I shall have to come back here ... Everything is a paradox, and I CANNOT get out of this paradox.

(Mother's reply)

April 11, 1957

My dear child,

I read your letter yesterday, and here is the answer that immediately came to me. I add to it the assurance that nothing has changed, nor can change, in my relationship with you, and that you are and always will be my child – for that is the truth of your being.

Here is what I wrote:

In your ignorance, you created a phantom of your destiny, and then, out of this non-existent ghost, you made a hobgoblin around which all the resistances of your outer nature have crystallized.

It is a double ignorance:

- in the universe, there are not – there cannot be – two similar destinies.
- each one's destiny is inevitably fulfilled, but the nearer one is to the Divine, the more does this destiny assume its divine qualities.

I am saying all this so that you do not hypnotize yourself further with some imaginary and groundless possibility.

I am with you always.

Signed: Mother



Undated 1957³⁸

³⁸The following conversation was noted from memory. At this time the conversations were not yet tape-recorded, and Satprem, alas, felt it proper to eliminate all personal issues so that only the 'teaching' would remain. The 'serious decision' in question concerns leaving the Ashram.

When a serious decision has to be made, how can one know in which direction lies one's true destiny?

We do not have one destiny, but several destinies.

Each one has the right to reunite with his supreme Origin whatever his place in the world order – that is the gift the Divine has given to matter, and this is your true destiny. And it is a special gift given to the earth; it does not exist in the other worlds. At the same time, each one has a particular role in the manifestation, which is determined by the Supreme, but this same role can exist on different levels depending upon the degree of evolution of ‘that’ which is within you. If ‘that’ within you is still very young, your realization may be absolute and you may effectively be able to reunite with the Supreme, but the field of realization in the world will be limited, very small. Along the vertical plane, you may be able to touch the Supreme directly, in spite of your smallness, but on the horizontal plane, the extent of your realization will be infinitesimal. We could take the example of Maheshwari, the Mother of Might and All-Wisdom. This aspect of the Mother will assume different forms depending upon the degree of evolution of ‘that’ within you: it might be a mere little group leader, a queen, an empress. She will be in the group leader as well as in the empress, but the field of realization will obviously be different.

So, along this same vertical line that leads you to your divine Origin, you might have several outer destinies depending upon your state of development. The yoga seeks to accelerate things, but this is not always possible, for some psychological combinations in the being can only be worked out through experience. This experience may take a few lifetimes, a few years, a few months, a few minutes.

When seen from the supreme consciousness, the unfolding of all the destinies and all the possibilities of destiny is something infinitely interesting. For example, there are beings accused of megalomania because they have vast projects and great designs which do not always fit in with the world’s present possibilities. Most often, it is a simple lack of judgment on their part, a lack of knowledge. They have indeed entered into communication with a higher truth, something that probably corresponds to a future phase of their destiny (which is why they are so convinced), but through lack of judgment, they do not see that the time for this truth has not yet come, that the circumstances are not yet ready, or that the conditions in which they were born prevent them from carrying out what they feel to be true. There is a gap between the vision of a truth and its present possibilities for realization. But these great dreams must not be killed, for it would mean killing something of your own future. Above all, we must refuse, energetically reject, this hideous morality of the Philistine which says that ‘nothing ever changes,’ this flat and vulgar common sense *a la* Sancho Panza. Simply, one must know how to wait and to nurture one’s dreams for a long time.

To conclude, this is what may be said: in the universe, there are no two destinies alike – there cannot be.

Each one’s destiny is inevitably fulfilled, but the nearer one is to the Divine, the more this destiny assumes its divine qualities.



April 22, 1957

(*Letter to Mother from Satprem*)

Pondicherry, April 22, 1957

Sweet Mother,

The book is finished.³⁹ I would like to give it to you personally, if it would not disturb you, whenever you wish.

Your child,

Signed: Satprem



July 3, 1957

(*Extract from the Wednesday class*)

I have been asked if we are doing a collective yoga and what are the conditions of a collective yoga.

First, I could tell you that to do a collective yoga, there has to be a collectivity! ... And I could speak to you about the different conditions required to be a collectivity. But last night (*smiling*), I had a symbolic vision of our collectivity.

This vision took place early in the night and woke me up with a rather unpleasant feeling. Then I fell back to sleep and forgot about it; but a little while ago, when I was thinking of the question put to me, it returned. It returned with a great intensity and so imperatively that now, just as I wanted to tell you what kind of collectivity we wish to realize according to the ideal described by Sri Aurobindo in the last chapter of *The Life Divine* – a gnostic, supramental collectivity, the only kind that can do Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga and be realized physically in a progressive collective body becoming more and more divine – the recollection of this vision became so imperative that I couldn't speak.

Its symbolism was very clear, though of quite a familiar nature, as it were, and because of its very familiarity, unmistakable in its realism ... Were I to tell you all the details, you would probably not even be able to follow: it was rather intricate. It was a kind of (how can I express it?) – an immense hotel where all the terrestrial possibilities were lodged in different apartments. And it was all in a constant state of transformation: parts or entire wings of the building were suddenly torn down and rebuilt while people were still living in them, such that if you went off somewhere within the immense hotel itself, you ran the risk of no longer finding your room when you wanted to return to it, for it might have been torn down and was being rebuilt according to another plan! It was

39L'Orpailleur.

orderly, it was organized ... yet there was this fantastic chaos which I mentioned. And all this was a symbol – a symbol that certainly applies to what Sri Aurobindo has written here⁴⁰ regarding the necessity for the transformation of the body, the type of transformation that has to take place for life to become a divine life.

It went something like this: somewhere, in the center of this enormous edifice, there was a room reserved – as it seemed in the story – for a mother and her daughter. The mother was a lady, an elderly lady, a very influential matron who had a great deal of authority and her own views concerning the entire organization. Her daughter seemed to have a power of movement and activity enabling her to be everywhere at once while at the same time remaining in her room, which was ... well, a bit more than a room – it was a kind of apartment which, above all, had the characteristic of being very central. But she was constantly arguing with her mother. The mother wanted to keep things ‘just as they were,’ with their usual rhythm, which precisely meant the habit of tearing down one thing to rebuild another, then again tearing down that to build still another, thus giving the building an appearance of frightful confusion. But the daughter did not like this, and she had another plan. Most of all, she wanted to bring something completely new into the organization: a kind of super-organization that would render all this confusion unnecessary. Finally, as it was impossible for them to reach an understanding, the daughter left the room to go on a kind of general inspection ... She went out, looked everything over, and then wanted to return to her room to decide upon some final measures. But this is where something rather ... peculiar began happening.

She clearly remembered where her room was, but each time she set out to go there, either the staircase disappeared or things were so changed that she could no longer find her way! So she went here and there, up and down, searched, went in and out ... but it was impossible to find the way to her room! Since all of this assumed a physical appearance – as I said, a very familiar and very common appearance, as is always the case in these symbolic visions – there was somewhere (how shall I put it?) the hotel’s administrative office and a woman who seemed to be the manager, who had all the keys and who knew where everyone was staying. So the daughter went to this person and asked her, ‘Could you show me the way to my room?’ – ‘But of course! Easily!’ Everyone around the manager looked at her as if to say, ‘How can you say that?’ However, she got up, and with authority asked for a key – the key to the daughter’s room – saying, ‘I shall take you there.’ And off she went along all kinds of paths, but all so complicated, so bizarre! The daughter was following along behind her very attentively, you see, so as not to lose sight of her. But just as they should have come to the place where the daughter’s room was supposed to be, suddenly the manageress (let us call her the manageress), both the manageress and her key ... vanished! And the sense of this vanishing was so acute that ... at the same time, everything vanished!

So ... to help you understand this enigma, let me tell you that the mother is physical Nature as she is, and the daughter is the new creation. The manageress is the world’s organizing mental consciousness as Nature has developed it thus far, that is, the most advanced organizing sense to have manifested in the present state of material Nature. This is the key to the vision.

Naturally, when I awoke, I immediately knew what could resolve this problem which appeared so absolutely insoluble. The vanishing of the manageress and her key was an obvious sign that she was altogether incapable of leading what could be called ‘the creative consciousness of the new world’ to its true place.

I knew this, but I did not have a vision of the solution, which means it has yet to manifest; this ‘thing’ had not yet manifested in the building, this fantastic construction, although it is the very mode of consciousness which could transform this incoherent creation into something real, truly conceived, willed and materialized, with a center in its proper place, a recognized place, and with a REAL effective power.

(silence)

40The Supramental Manifestation, (Cent. Ed. XVI, pp. 33-36.)

The symbolism is quite clear in that all the possibilities are there, all the activities are there, but in disorder and confusion. They are neither coordinated nor centralized nor unified around the central and unique truth and consciousness and will. So this brings us back ... precisely to this question of a collective yoga and of a collectivity capable of realizing it. What should this collectivity be?

It is certainly not an arbitrary construction of the type built by men, where everything is put pell-mell, without any order, without reality, and which is held together by only illusory ties. Here, these ties were symbolized by the hotel's walls, while actually in ordinary human constructions (if we take a religious community, for example), they are symbolized by the building of a monastery, an identity of clothing, an identity of activities, an identity even of movement – or to put it more precisely: everyone wears the same uniform, everyone gets up at the same time, everyone eats the same thing, everyone says his prayers together, etc.; there is an overall identity. But naturally, on the inside there remains the chaos of many disparate consciousnesses, each one following its own mode, for this kind of group identification, which extends right up to an identity of beliefs and dogma, is absolutely illusory.

Yet it is one of the most common types of human collectivity – to group together, band together, unite around a common ideal, a common action, a common realization but in an absolutely artificial way. In contrast to this, Sri Aurobindo tells us that a true community – what he terms a gnostic or supramental community – can be based only upon the INNER REALIZATION of each one of its members, each realizing his real, concrete oneness and identity with all the other members of the community; that is, each one should not feel himself a member connected to all the others in an arbitrary way, but that all are one within himself. For each one, the others should be as much himself as his own body – not in a mental and artificial way, but through a fact of consciousness, by an inner realization.

(silence)

This means that before hoping to realize such a gnostic collectivity, each one must first of all become (or at least start to become) a gnostic being. It is obvious that the individual work must take the lead and the collective work follow; but the fact remains that spontaneously, without any arbitrary intervention of will the individual progress IS restrained or CHECKED, as It were, by the collective state. Between the collectivity and the individual, there exists an interdependence from which one cannot be totally free, even if one tries. And even he who might try, in his yoga, to free himself totally from the human and terrestrial state of consciousness, would be at least subconsciously bound by the state of the whole, which impedes and PULLS BACKWARDS. One can attempt to go much faster, one can attempt to let all the weight of attachments and responsibilities fall off, but in spite of everything, the realization of even the most advanced or the leader in the march of evolution is dependent upon the realization of the whole, dependent upon the state in which the terrestrial collectivity happens to be. And this PULLS backwards to such an extent that sometimes one has to wait centuries for the earth to be ready before being able to realize what is to be realized.

This is why Sri Aurobindo has also written somewhere else that a double movement is necessary: the effort for individual progress and realization must be combined with the effort of trying to uplift the whole so as to enable it to make a progress indispensable for the greater progress of the individual: a mass progress, if you will, that allows the individual to take a further step forward.

And now you understand why I had thought it would be useful to have a few meditations in common, to work at creating a common atmosphere a bit more organized than ... my big hotel of last night!

So, the best way to use these meditations (and they are going to increase, since we are now also going to replace the 'distributions' with short meditations) is to go deep within yourselves, as far as you can, and find the place where you can feel, perceive and perhaps even create an atmosphere of oneness wherein a force of order and organization can put each element in its true place, and out of

the chaos existing at this hour, make a new, harmonious world surge forth.



July 18, 1957

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, July 18, 1957

Sweet Mother,

I have just received a letter from my friends in charge of the French Archaeological Expedition to Afghanistan. They need someone to assist them on their next field excavations (August 15 December 15) and have offered to take me if I wish to join them.

If I must have some new experience outside, this one has the advantage of being short-termed and not far away from India, and it is also in an interesting milieu. The only disadvantage is that I would have to pay for the trip as far as Kabul. But I don't want to do anything that displeases you or of which you do not really approve. In the event you might feel this to be a worthwhile experience, I would have to leave by the beginning of August.

I place this in your hands, *sincerely*.

*Your child,
Signed: Satprem*



Undated 1957

(Letter from Mother to Satprem)

Thursday

My dear child,

Those to whom I have said, 'You are my children,' are always so, no matter where they are or what they do.

Thus you are sure of always remaining my child – for the rest, act according to your heart, and you will always have my blessings.

Signed: Mother



September 27, 1957

*(A child's question concerning a vision in which
Mother had appeared to her in a luminous body)*

Why have you come as we are?

Why haven't you come as you really are?

Had I not come as you are, I would never have been able to be close to you and tell you:
'Become what I am.'



October 8, 1957

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, October 8, 1957

Mother,

I come to ask your permission to leave India. For more than a year now, I have been fighting not to leave, but this seems to be the wrong strategy.

There is no question of my abandoning the path – and I remain convinced that the only goal in life is spiritual. But I need things to help me along the way: I am not yet ripe enough to depend upon inner strength alone. And when I speak of the forest or a boat, it is not only for the sake of adventure or the feeling of space, but also because they mean a discipline. Outer constraints and difficulties help me, they force me to remain concentrated around that which is best in me. In a sense, life here is too easy. Yet it is also too hard, for one must depend on one's own discipline – I do not yet have that strength, I need to be helped by outer circumstances. The very difficulty of life in the outside world helps me to be disciplined, for it forces me to concentrate all my vital strength in effort. Here, this vital part is *unemployed*, so it acts foolishly, it strains at the leash.

I doubt that a new experience outside can really resolve things, but I believe it might help me make it to the next stage and consolidate my inner life. And if you wish, I would return in a year or two.

I shall soon have completed the revision⁴¹ of *The Life Divine* and *The Human Cycle*, so I believe I shall have done the best I could, at present, to serve you. October 30th is my birthday. Could I leave immediately thereafter?

It is not because I am unhappy with the Ashram that I want to leave, but because I am *unhappy with myself* and because I want to master myself through other means.

I give you so little love, but I have tried my best, and my departure is not a betrayal.

*Your child,
Signed: Satprem*

(Mother's reply)

Wednesday, 10.8.57

My dear child,

This is not an answer, but a comment.

There is a joy to which you still seem completely closed: it is the joy of SERVING.

In truth, the only thing in the world that interests you, directly or indirectly, is YOURSELF. That is why you feel imprisoned within such narrow, stifling limits.

Signed: Mother



October 17, 1957

(On freedom)

41Of Mother's French translation of these two books by Sri Aurobindo.

There are all kinds of freedom – mental freedom, vital freedom, spiritual freedom – which are the fruits of successive masteries. But a completely new freedom has become possible with the Supramental Manifestation: it is the freedom of the body.

One of the very first results of the supramental manifestation was to give the body a freedom and an autonomy it has never before known. And when I say freedom, I don't mean some psychological perception or an inner state of consciousness, but something else and far better – it is a new phenomenon in the body, in the cells of the body. For the first time, the cells themselves have felt that they are free, that they have the power to decide. When the new vibrations came and combined with the old ones, I felt it at once and it showed me that a new world was really taking birth.

In its normal state, the body always feels that it is not its own master: illnesses invade it without its really being able to resist them – a thousand factors impose themselves or exert pressure upon it. Its sole power is the power to defend itself, to react. Once the illness has got in, it can fight and overcome it – even modern medicine has acknowledged that the body is cured only when it decides to get cured; it is not the drugs *per se* that heal, for if the ailment is temporarily suppressed by a drug without the body's will, it grows up again elsewhere in some other form until the body itself has decided to be cured. But this implies only a defensive power, the power to react against an invading enemy – it is not true freedom.

But with the supramental manifestation, something new has taken place in the body: it feels it is its own master, autonomous, with its two feet solidly on the ground, as it were. This gives a physical impression of the whole being suddenly drawing itself up, with its head lifted high – I am my own master.

We live perennially with a burden on our shoulders, something that bows our heads down, and we feel pulled, led by all kinds of external forces, we don't know by whom or what, nor where to – this is what men call Fate, Destiny. When you do yoga, one of the first experiences – the experience of the *kundalini*, as it is called here in India – is precisely one in which the consciousness rises, breaks through this hard 'lid,' here, at the crown of the head, and at last you emerge into the Light. Then you see, you know, you decide and you realize – difficulties may still remain, but truly speaking one is above them. Well, as a result of the supramental manifestation, it is THIS experience that came into the body. The body straightened its head up and felt its freedom, its independence.

During the flu epidemic, for example, I spent every day in the midst of people who were germ carriers. And one day, I clearly felt that the body had decided not to catch this flu. It asserted its autonomy. You see, it was not a question of the higher Will deciding, no. It didn't take place in the highest consciousness: the body itself decided. When you are way above in your consciousness, you see things, you know things; but in actual fact, once you descend again into matter, it is like water running through sand. In this respect, things have changed, the body has a DIRECT power, independent of any outer intervention. Even though it is barely visible, I consider this to be a very important result.

And this new vibration in the body has allowed me to understand the mechanism of the transformation. It is not something that comes from a higher Will, not a higher consciousness that imposes itself upon the body: it is the body itself awakening in its cells, a freedom of the cells themselves, an absolutely new vibration that sets disorders right – even disorders that existed prior to the supramental manifestation.

Naturally, all this is a gradual process, but I am hopeful that little by little this new consciousness will grow, gain ground and victoriously resist the old forces of destruction and annihilation, and this Fatality we believed to be so inexorable.



October 18, 1957

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, October 18, 1957

Sweet Mother,

This evening, you spoke of the possibility of shortening the path of realization to a few months, days or hours. And yesterday, when you talked to me about 'the freedom of the body,' you spoke of the experience of the Kundalini, of this 'breaking of the lid' that makes you emerge once and for all, above difficulties, into the light.

I need a practical method *corresponding to my present possibilities and to results of which I am presently capable.* I feel that my efforts are dispersed by concentrating sometimes here, sometimes there – a feeling of not knowing exactly what to do to break through and get out of all this. Would you point out some particular concentration to which I could adhere, a particular method that I would stick to?

I am well aware that a supple attitude is recommended in the Yoga, yet for the time being, it seems to me that *one* well-defined method would help me hold on⁴² – this practical aspect would help me. I will do it methodically, obstinately, until it cracks for good.

*Your child,
Signed: Satprem*



November 12, 1957

The integral yoga is made up of an uninterrupted series of tests that you must pass through without any advance notice, thereby forcing you to be always vigilant and attentive.

Three groups of examiners conduct these tests. Apparently they have nothing in common and their methods are so different, at times even so seemingly contradictory, that they do not appear to work towards the same goal, and yet they complete one another, they work together for a common aim and each is indispensable for the integral result.

⁴²This unique method was to be the mantra, as Mother herself would discover.

These three categories of tests are: those conducted by the forces of Nature, those conducted by the spiritual and divine forces, and those conducted by the hostile forces. This latter category is the most deceptive in its appearance, and a constant state of vigilance, sincerity and humility is required so as not to be caught by surprise or unprepared.

The most commonplace circumstances, people, the everyday events of life, the most seemingly insignificant things, all belong to one or another of these three categories of examiners. In this considerably complex organization of tests, those events generally considered the most important in life are really the easiest of all examinations to pass, for they find you prepared and on your guard. One stumbles more easily over the little pebbles on the path, for they attract no attention.

The qualities more particularly required for the tests of physical Nature are endurance and plasticity, cheerfulness and fearlessness.

For the spiritual tests: aspiration, confidence, idealism, enthusiasm and generosity in self-giving.

For the tests stemming from the hostile forces: vigilance, sincerity and humility.

But do not imagine that those who are tested are on one side and those who test on the other; depending upon the times and circumstances, we are both examiners and examined, and it may even happen that simultaneously, at the very same moment, we are the examined and the examiner. And whatever benefits we derive depend, in both quality and quantity, upon the intensity of our aspiration and the alertness of our consciousness.

To conclude, a final recommendation: never pose as an examiner. For while it is good to remember constantly that perhaps one is passing a very important test, it is, on the other hand, extremely dangerous to imagine oneself entrusted with applying tests to others, for that is an open door to the most absurd and harmful vanities. It is not an ignorant human will that decides these things but the Supreme Wisdom.

* * *

Each time a progress is to be made, there is a test to pass.



November 13, 1957

Widen yourself as far as the extreme bounds of the universe – and beyond.

Take upon yourself always all the necessities of progress and dissolve them in the ecstasy of Unity. Then you will be divine.



Undated 1957

What is meant exactly by, 'I am with you.' Are we really always heard when we pray of struggle with an inner problem – in spite of our blunders and imperfections, even in spite of our ill will and mistakes? And who hears? You who are with us?

Is it you in your supreme consciousness, an impersonal divine force, the force of the yoga, or you, the embodied Mother with your physical consciousness – a personal presence really intimate to our every thought and act, and not some anonymous force? Can you tell us how and in what way you are present with us?

It is said that Sri Aurobindo and you are one and the same consciousness, but are the personal presence of Sri Aurobindo and your own personal presence two distinct things, each playing a particular role?

I am with you because I AM you or you are me.

'I am with you' means a world of things, for I am with you at every level, on every plane, from the supreme consciousness to my most physical consciousness. Here, in Pondicherry, you cannot breathe without breathing my consciousness. It permeates the atmosphere in the subtle physical almost materially and extends right to the lake, seven miles away from here. Beyond, my consciousness can be felt in the material vital, and then on the mental and the other higher planes everywhere. When I came here for the first time, I felt Sri Aurobindo's atmosphere, felt it materially, ten miles from the shore – ten nautical miles, not kilometers! It was very sudden, very concrete, a pure and luminous atmosphere, light, so light that it lifts you up.

A long time ago, Sri Aurobindo had this reminder, with which you are all quite familiar, put up everywhere in the Ashram: 'Always behave as if the Mother was looking at you; because she is, indeed, always present.'

This is not some mere sentence, these are not just words, it is a fact. I am very concretely with you, and those with a subtle vision can see me.

Generally speaking, my Force is constantly here at work, constantly changing the psychological elements of your being to put them into new relationships and to make clear to you the diverse facets of your nature so that you may see what must be changed, developed or eliminated.

But besides all this, there is a special personal bond of affection between you and me, between all who have turned towards Sri Aurobindo's teaching and me – and of course, distance does not count; you may be in France, at the other end of the world, or in Pondicherry, but this bond remains just as real and as living. Each time there is a call, each time I need to know something to send out a force, an inspiration, a protection or whatever else, a sort of message suddenly comes to me, and I do what is needed. Obviously, these communications come to me at any moment whatsoever, and you may have seen me more than once suddenly stop in the middle of a sentence or some work: it means something, some communication is coming, so I concentrate.

There is more than a bond with those whom I have accepted as disciples, those to whom I have said 'yes' – there is an emanation of myself. Whenever necessary, this emanation notifies me as to what is happening. In fact, I know constantly, but all these things are not registered in my active memory, otherwise I would be flooded – the physical consciousness acts as a filter: things are recorded on a subtle plane and remain there in the latent state, rather like music that is silently recorded, and when I need to know something with my physical consciousness, I plug into this subtle plane and the tape starts playing. Then I can see things, their evolution and the present result.

And if, for some reason or other, you write asking for my help, and I answer, 'I am with you,'

this means that the communication with you becomes active, that you are even in my active consciousness for some time – the time needed.

And this bond between you and me is never cut. There are people who left the Ashram a long time ago, in a state of revolt, and yet I continue to know them and to take care of them. You are never abandoned.

In truth, I feel responsible for everyone, even for people I have met for only one second in my life.

Now, you know that Sri Aurobindo and I are always one and the same consciousness, one and the same person. Only, when this unique force or presence is felt in your individual consciousness, it assumes different forms or appearances depending upon your temperament, your aspirations, your needs, the particular cast of your nature. Your individual consciousness is like a filter, a pointer, as it were; it makes a choice and settles upon one possibility in the infinity of divine possibilities. In truth, the Divine gives to each one exactly what he expects from Him. If you believe the Divine to be distant and cruel, He will be distant and cruel, because it may be necessary for your supreme wellbeing to feel the wrath of God. He will be Kali⁴³ for the worshippers of Kali, and bliss for the bhakta.⁴⁴ He will be the All-Knowledge of seekers after Knowledge, the Transcendent Impersonal of the illusionist. He will be an atheist for the atheist, and the love of the lover. He will be fraternal and near, an ever faithful friend, ever helpful, to those who feel him as the inner guide of each movement, at each minute. And if you believe that He can erase everything, He will erase all your faults, all your errors, tirelessly, and at each moment you will feel his infinite Grace. In truth, the Divine is what you expect of Him in your deep aspiration.

And once you enter into this consciousness where all things are seen with a single look, the infinite multitude of the Divine's relationships with men, you realize how wonderful everything is, in every detail. You can also look at the history of mankind and see how much the Divine has evolved depending upon what men have understood, desired, hoped for or dreamed; how he was materialistic with the materialist, and how each day he grows, draws nearer, becomes more luminous, as the human consciousness widens. Everyone is free to choose. The perfection of this endless variety of relationships between man and God throughout the history of the world is an unutterable wonder. Yet all this together is but a second in the total manifestation of the Divine.

The Divine is with you according to your aspirations. This does not mean, naturally, that He bends to the whims of your outer nature – I am speaking here of the truth of your being. Yet sometimes He does fashion himself according to your outer aspirations; and if, like the devout, you live alternately in estrangement and embrace, ecstasy and despair, the Divine too will be estranged from you or draw near, according to your belief. Therefore, one's attitude is extremely important, even one's outer attitude. People do not know just how important faith is, how faith is miracle – the creator of miracles. For if at each moment, you expect to be uplifted and drawn towards the Divine, He will come and uplift you, and He will be there, very near, nearer and nearer.



43Kali: the warrior (or destroyer) aspect of the Divine.

44Bhakta: one who follows the path of love.

Undated 1957

THE MOTHER'S SUTRAS⁴⁵

- 1) Be ambitious for nothing, above all pretend nothing, but be at each instant the utmost of what you can be.⁴⁶
- 2) As for your place in the universal manifestation, only the Supreme can assign it to you.
- 3) It is the Supreme Lord who has ineluctably decreed the place you occupy in the universal concert, but whatever be this place, you have equally the same right as all others to ascend the supreme summits right to the supramental realization.
- 4) What you are in the truth of your being is decreed in an irrevocable way, and nothing nor anyone can stop you from being it; but the path you take to get there is left to your own free choice.
- 5) On the road of the ascending evolution, every one is free to choose the direction he will take: the swift and steep climb towards the summits of Truth, to the supreme realization, or turning his back to the peaks, the easy descent to the interminable meanderings of endless incarnations.
- 6) In the course of time and even in the course of your present life, you can make your choice once and for all, irrevocably, and then you have only to *confirm* it with every new occasion; or else if you do not take a definite decision from the beginning, you will have to choose anew at each moment between the falsehood and the Truth.
- 7) But even in the event you have not made the irrevocable decision at the outset, should you have the good fortune to live during one of these unimaginable hours of universal history when the Grace is present, embodied upon earth, It will offer you, at certain exceptional moments, the renewed possibility of making a final choice that will lead you straight to the goal.



Undated 1957

(On past lives)

If we are to speak of these things truly, we must speak of everything, in all details, for among the innumerable experiences I have had for nearly eighty years, many were of such variety and apparently so contradictory that in truth it can be said that all is possible. Therefore, to say something about past lives without retrieving the thread that runs through all the elements is to open

45Sutra: aphorism, in Sanskrit.

46This first Sutra was ultimately destined to become the epigraph to Satprem's first novel, *L'Orpailleur*.

the door to dogmatism. One day they will say, ‘Mother said this, Mother said that ...’ and that is, alas, how dogmas are born.

So given the multiplicity of experiences and the impossibility of spending my life speaking and writing, you must clearly understand that everything is possible and not be dogmatic. Nevertheless, I can give you a few general indications.

It is only when one is consciously identified with his divine Origin that he can speak with complete truthfulness of a memory of past lives. Sri Aurobindo speaks of a progressive manifestation of the Spirit in the forms it inhabits. When one reaches the summit of this manifestation, one has a plunging view of the path already traversed, and one remembers.

But that does not mean remembering in a mental way. Those who claim to have been this or that baron in the Middle Ages or such and such a person who lived at such and such a place during such and such a time are fantasizing; they are simply victims of their own mental fancies. For what remains of past lives are not beautiful illustrated classics in which you see yourself as a great lord in a castle or a victorious general at the head of his army – all that is fiction. What remains is the memory of the INSTANTS when the psychic being emerged from the depths of your being and revealed itself to you, or in other words, the memory of those moments when you were fully conscious. The growth of the consciousness is effected progressively through evolution, and the memory of past lives is generally limited to the critical moments of this evolution, to the great, decisive turning points that have marked some progress in your consciousness.

While living such minutes of your life, you do not at all care about remembering whether you were Lord so and so who lived at such and such a place during such and such a time – it is not the memory of your civil status that remains. On the contrary, you lose sight of these petty external things, these minor perishable details, so as to be fully ablaze in this revelation of the soul or this divine contact. And when you recall these minutes of your past lives, the memory is so intense that it seems very near, still living – much more living than most of the ordinary memories of your present life. At times, in dreams, when you enter into contact with certain planes of consciousness, you may also have memories with this same intensity, this vibrant hue, as it were, so much more intense than the colors and things of the physical world. These being the moments of true consciousness, all assumes an extraordinary radiance, everything is vibrant, everything is charged with a quality that eludes our ordinary vision.

These minutes of contact with the soul are often those that mark a decisive turning point in one’s life, a step forward; a progress in consciousness, and they frequently result from a crisis, a situation of extreme intensity, when a call surges forth from the whole being, a call so strong that the inner consciousness pierces through the unconscious layers that envelop it and is revealed fully luminous upon the surface. This very strong call of the being can also call forth the descent of a divine emanation, an individuality, a divine aspect that unites with your own individuality at a given moment to do a given work, to win a particular battle, to express this thing or that. Then, when the work is accomplished, this emanation most often withdraws. So it may be that one retains the memory of the circumstances surrounding these minutes of revelation or inspiration, one sees again a landscape, the color of a garment one was wearing, the shade of one’s skin, things that were around you at that particular moment – all this is imprinted in an indelible way, with an extraordinary intensity, for the details of ordinary life are then also revealed in their true intensity, their true tonality. The consciousness that reveals itself in you reveals at the same time the consciousness in things. These details can sometimes help you reconstitute the period in which you lived or the deeds that were accomplished, surmise the country where you lived, but it is quite easy, too, to fantasize and mistake one’s imaginings for reality.

You should not conclude, however, that all memories of past lives refer to moments of great crisis, important missions or revelations. Sometimes these are very simple, transparent minutes when a perfect and integral harmony of the being is expressed. And these may correspond to entirely insignificant external situations.

But apart from the things that were around you at that minute, apart from that minute of contact with your psychic being, nothing remains. Once the privileged moment has passed, the psychic being sinks back into its inner somnolence and the whole outer life fades into a monotonous gray which leaves no trace. In fact, something of the same phenomenon occurs in the course of your present life: apart from those exceptional moments when you are at the summit of your mental, vital or even physical being, the rest of your existence seems to fade into an uninteresting, dull tonality, and it matters very little whether you have been at this place or some other or whether you have done this thing rather than another. If suddenly you try to look at your life in order to gather its essence – to peer twenty or thirty or forty years behind you – you will see two or three images spontaneously leap before you, and they are the true minutes of your life, but all the rest fades away. A spontaneous choice and a tremendous elimination thus take place in your consciousness. This gives you an idea of what happens in regard to past lives: a choice of a few special moments, and an immense elimination.

Of course, one's early lives are quite rudimentary and little remains of them, a few scattered memories. But the more you progress in consciousness and the more the psychic being consciously associates itself with the outer activities, the more abundant, coherent and precise do the memories become – yet here too the memory that remains is that of the contact with the soul, and sometimes of the things associated with the psychic revelation – not your civil status nor the ever-changing setting. And this explains why these so-called memories of animal lives partake of the highest fantasies; in animals, the divine spark is too deeply buried to come to the surface consciously and be associated with the outer life. One must become a totally conscious being, in all the parts of the being, and be totally united with one's divine origin before one can truly say that one recalls his past lives.



December 13, 1957

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, December 13, 1957

Sweet Mother, this is what is rising from my soul: I feel in me something unemployed, something seeking to express itself in life. I want to be like a knight, your knight, and go off in search of a treasure that I could bring back to you. The world has lost all sense of the wonderful, all beauty of Adventure, this quest known to the knights of the Middle Ages. It is this that calls so relentlessly within me, this need for a quest in the world and for a beautiful Adventure which at the same time would be an adventure of the soul. How I wish that the two things, inner and outer, be JOINED, that the joy of action, of the open road and the quest help the soul's blossoming, that they be like a prayer of the soul expressed in life. The knights of the Middle Ages knew this. Perhaps it is all childish and absurd in the midst of this 20th century, but this is what I feel, this that is summoning me to leave – not anything base, not anything mediocre, only a need for something in me to be fulfilled. If only I could bring you back a beautiful treasure!

After that, perhaps I would be riper to accept the everyday life of the Ashram, and know how to give myself better.

Mother, I feel all this very strongly; I need your help to follow the true path of my being and fulfill this new outer cycle, should you see that it has to be fulfilled. I feel so strongly that something remains for me to DO. Guide me, Sweet Mother.

*Your child,
Signed. Satprem*



December 21, 1957

The other day you told me that in order to know things, you plug into the subtle plane, and there it all unrolls as on a tape recorder. How does this work, exactly?

There is a whole gradation of planes of consciousness, from the physical consciousness to my radiant consciousness at the very highest level, that which knows the Will of the Supreme. I keep all these planes of consciousness in front of me, working simultaneously, coordinatedly, and I am acting on each plane, gathering the information proper to each plane, so as to have the integral truth of things. Thus, when I have a decision to make in regard to one of you, I plug into you directly from that level of the supreme consciousness which sees the deep truth of your being. But at the same time, my decision is shaped, as it were, by the information given to me by the other planes of consciousness and particularly by the physical consciousness, which acts as a recorder.

This physical consciousness records all it sees, all your reactions, your thoughts, all the facts – without preference, without prejudice, without persona] will. Nothing escapes it. Its work is almost mechanical. Therefore I know what to tell or to ask you according to the integral truth of your being and its present possibilities. Ordinarily, in the normal man, the physical consciousness does not see things as they are, for three reasons: because of ignorance, because of preference, and because of an egoistic will. You color what you see, eliminate what displeases you. In short, you see only what you desire to see.

Now, I recently had a very striking experience: a discrepancy occurred between my physical consciousness and the consciousness of the world. In some instances decisions made in the Light and the Truth produced unexpected results, upheavals in the consciousness of others that were neither foreseen nor desired, and I did not understand. No matter how hard I tried, I could not understand – and I emphasize this word ‘understand.’ At last, I had to leave my highest consciousness and pull myself down into the physical consciousness to find out what was happening. And there, in my head, I saw what appeared to be a little cell bursting, and suddenly I understood: the recording had been defective. The physical consciousness had neglected to register certain of your lower reactions. It could not have been through preference or through personal will (these things were eliminated from my consciousness long, long ago). But I saw that this most material consciousness was already completely permeated with the transforming supramental truth,

and it could no longer follow the rhythm of normal life. It was much more attuned to the true consciousness than to the world! I couldn't possibly blame it for lagging behind; on the contrary, it was in front, too far ahead! There was a discrepancy between the rhythm of the transformation of my being and the world's own rhythm. The supramental action on the world is slow, it does not act directly – it acts by infiltration, by traversing the successive layers, and the results are slow to come about. So I had to pull myself violently down in order to wait for the others.

One must at times know how not to know.

This experience showed me once more the necessity to be perfectly humble before the Lord. It is not enough merely to rise to the heights, to the ethereal planes of consciousness: these planes have also to descend into matter and illuminate it. Otherwise, nothing is really done. One must have the patience to establish the communication between the high and the low. I am like a tempest, a hurricane – if I listened to myself, I would tear into the future, and everything would go flying! But then, there would no longer be any communication with the rest.

One must have the patience to wait.

Humility, a perfect humility, is the condition for all realization. The mind is so cocksure. It thinks it knows everything, understands everything. And if ever it acts through idealism to serve a cause that appears noble to it, it becomes even more arrogant more intransigent, and it is almost impossible to make it see that there might be something still higher beyond its noble conceptions and its great altruistic or other ideals. Humility is the only remedy. I am not speaking of humility as conceived by certain religions, with this God that belittles his creatures and only likes to see them down on their knees. When I was a child, this kind of humility revolted me, and I refused to believe in a God that wants to belittle his creatures. I don't mean that kind of humility, but rather the recognition that one does not know, that one knows nothing, and that there may be something beyond what presently appears to us as the truest, the most noble or disinterested. True humility consists in constantly referring oneself to the Lord, in placing all before Him. When I receive a blow (and there are quite a few of them in my sadhana), my immediate, spontaneous reaction, like a spring, is to throw myself before Him and to say, 'Thou, Lord.' Without this humility, I would never have been able to realize anything. And I say 'I' only to make myself understood, but in fact 'I' means the Lord through this body, his instrument. When you begin living THIS kind of humility, it means you are drawing nearer to the realization. It is the condition, the starting point.

* * *

(Note written by Mother in connection with the conversation of December 21, 1957)

At the very top, a constant vision of the Supreme's will.

In the world, an overall vision of what is to be done.

Individually, at each moment and in each circumstance, the vision 'of the truth of the moment, of the circumstance, of the individual.'

In the external consciousness, the impersonal and mechanical recording of what is happening and of what are the people and things that comprise both the field of action and the limitations imposed upon this action. The recording is innately automatic and mechanical, without any kind of evaluation, as objective as possible.



Undated 1957

(Note from Mother to Satprem)

It is within oneself
that one finds
the Pretentaine.⁴⁷



⁴⁷Pretentaine: name of the boat on which Satprem wanted to sail around the world alone.

January 1, 1958

(Extract from the Wednesday class)

O Nature, Material Mother,
thou hast said that thou wilt collaborate
and there is no limit
to the splendor of this collaboration.

(Message of January 1, 1958)

Sweet Mother, will you explain this year's message?

There is nothing to explain. It is an experience, something that took place, and when it took place, I noted it down; and it so happens that it occurred just as I remembered that I had to write something for the new year (which at that time was the following year, that is, the year beginning today). When I remembered that I had to write something – not because of that, but simultaneously – this experience came, and when I noted it down, I realized that it was ... the message for this year!

(Mother reads the notation of her experience)

During one of our classes (*October 30, 1957*), I spoke of the limitless abundance of Nature, this tireless Creatrice who takes the multitude of forms, mixes them together, separates them again and reforms them, again undoes them, again destroys them, in order to move on to ever new combinations. As I said, it is a huge cauldron. Things get churned up in it and somehow something emerges; if it's defective, it is thrown back in and something else is taken out ... One form, two forms or a hundred forms make no difference to her, there are thousands upon thousands of forms – and one year, a hundred years, a thousand years, millions of years, what difference does it make? Eternity lies before her! She quite obviously enjoys herself and is in no hurry. If you speak to her of pressing on or of rushing through some part of her work or other, her reply is always the same: 'But what for? Why? Aren't you enjoying it?'

The evening I told you these things, I totally identified myself with Nature and I entered into her play. And this movement of identification brought forth a response, a new kind of intimacy between Nature and myself, a long movement of drawing ever nearer which culminated in an experience that came on November 8.

Nature suddenly understood. She understood that this newborn Consciousness does not seek to reject her, but wants to embrace her entirely. She understood that this new spirituality does not stand apart from life, does not timorously recoil before the awesome richness of her movement, but on the contrary wants to integrate all her facets. She understood that the supramental consciousness is not there to diminish her but to make her complete.

Then, from the supreme Reality came this command: 'Awaken, O Nature, to the joy of collaboration.' And suddenly, all Nature rushed forth in an immense bounding of joy, saying, 'I accept! I will collaborate!' And at the same time, there came a calm, an absolute tranquillity, to allow this receptacle, this body, to receive and contain without breaking and without losing anything of the Joy of Nature that was rushing forth in a movement of grateful recognition like an overwhelming flood. She accepted, she saw – with all eternity before her – that this supramental consciousness would fulfill her more perfectly and impart a still greater force to her movement and more richness, more possibilities to her play.

And suddenly, as if resounding from every corner of the earth, I heard these great notes which are sometimes heard in the subtle physical – rather like those of Beethoven's Concerto in D – which

come at moments of great progress, as though fifty orchestras were bursting forth all at once without a single discordant note, to sound the joy of this new communion of Nature and Spirit, the meeting of old friends who, after a long separation, find each other once more.

Then came these words: ‘O Nature, Material Mother, thou hast said that thou wilt collaborate, and there is no limit to the splendor of this collaboration.’

And the radiant felicity of this splendor was perceived in a perfect peace.

Such was the birth of this year’s message.

(Then Mother comments)

I have one thing to add: we must not misinterpret the meaning of this experience and imagine that henceforth everything will take place without difficulties or always in accordance with our personal desires. It is not at this level. It does not mean that when we do not want it to rain, it will not rain! Or when we want some event to take place in the world, it will immediately take place, or that all difficulties will be abolished and everything will be like a fairy tale. It is not like that. It is something more profound. Nature has accepted into her play of forces the newly manifested Force and has included it in her movements. But as always, the movements of Nature take place on a scale infinitely surpassing the human scale and invisible to the ordinary human consciousness. It is more of an inner, psychological possibility that has been born in the world than a spectacular change in earthly events.

I mention this because you might be tempted to believe that fairy tales are going to be realized upon earth. The time has not yet come.

(silence)

We must have a great deal of patience and a very wide and very complex vision to understand how things work.

(silence)

The miracles that are taking place are not what could be called literary miracles, for they do not take place as in storybooks. They are visible only to a very profound vision of things – very profound, very comprehensive, very vast.

(silence)

You first have to be able to follow the methods and the means of the Grace to recognize its action. You first have to be able to remain unblinded by appearances to see the deeper truth of things.



Undated 1958⁴⁸

- 1) The Divine alone is true – all the rest is falsehood.

⁴⁸Note written by Mother in English.

- 2) The Divine alone is real – all the rest is illusion.
 - 3) The Divine alone is life – all the rest belongs to the kingdom of death.
 - 4) The Divine alone is light – all the rest is semi-obscurity.
 - 5) The Divine alone is love – all the rest is selfish sentimentality.
- And yet the Divine is everywhere, in the ignorant man as well as in the sage.
And yet the Divine is everywhere, in the sinner as well as in the saint.



January 22, 1958

It is an error to confuse Joy and Felicity. They are two very different things. Not only are their vibrations different, but their colors are different. The color of Felicity is blue, a clear silvery blue (the blue of the Ashram flag), very luminous and transparent. And it has a passive and fresh quality that refreshes and rejuvenates.

Whereas Joy is a golden rose color, a pale gold with a tinge of red, a very pale red. It is active, warm, fortifying, intensifying. The first is sweetness, the second is tenderness.

And Bliss – what I spontaneously call Bliss – is the synthesis of both. It is found in the very heights of the supramental consciousness, in a diamond light, an uncolored, sparkling light containing all the colors. Joy and Felicity form two sides of a triangle that has Bliss at its apex.

Bliss contains coolness and warmth, passivity and activity, repose and action, sweetness and tenderness, all at the same time. Divine tenderness ... is something very different from sweetness – it is a paroxysm of joy, a vibration so strong that the body feels it will burst, so it is forced to widen.

The diamond light of Bliss has the power to melt all hostile forces. Nothing can resist it. No consciousness, no being, no hostile will can draw near it without immediately being dissolved, for it is the Divine light in its pure creative power.



January 25, 1958⁴⁹

⁴⁹Note written by Mother in English (with a touch of irony so reminiscent of Sri Aurobindo).

(Concerning Pakistan)

It is quite evident that for some reason or other – or perhaps for no reason at all – the Supreme has changed His mind about it.



Undated 1958

When the hostile forces want to attack those around me but do not succeed in making them overtly hostile to Sri Aurobindo's work or in making them turn against me personally, they always use the same tactic, with the same argument: 'You may have all the inner realizations you want,' they say, 'the most beautiful experiences possible inside your four Ashram walls, but as far as the outer world is concerned, your life is wasted, lost. There is an abyss you will never bridge between your inner experience and a concrete realization in the world.'

This is the number one argument of the hostile forces. I know it well – for millions of years I have been hearing them say the same thing over and over again, and each time I unmask them. It is a lie, it is THE Lie. All that seeks to establish a divorce between the Earth and the Spirit, all that separates the inner experience from the divine realization in the world is good for their purpose. But just the opposite is true! It is the inner realization that is the key to the outer realization. How can you possibly know the true thing you have to realize in the world as long as you do not possess the truth of your being?



February 3, 1958

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, February 3, 1958

Sweet Mother,

What you told me today at noon has left me stunned. I had decided to have my own way, but now I pray to be true.

I would like to tell you that 'I am staying,' very simply, for something in me wants this, but I am afraid to make a decision that I may not be able to keep. A force other than mine is needed. In short, you have to do the willing for me, to utter a word that would help me understand truly that I must stay here. Grant me the grace of helping and enlightening me. I would like to decide without preference, in obedience to the sole Truth and in accordance with my real possibilities.

I have received a long letter from Swami,⁵⁰ who in essence says that I should be able to realize what I have to realize right here with you, but he does not refuse to take me with him should I persist in my intention.

Mother, I am placing all this in your hands, *sincerely*.

I am your child.

Signed: Satprem



February 3, 1958

(The following experience was later read out to the Wednesday class on 2.19.58)

Between the beings of the supramental world and men, there exists approximately the same gap as between men and animals. Sometime ago, I had the experience of identification with animal life, and it is a fact that animals do not understand us; their consciousness is so constituted that we elude them almost entirely. And yet I have known domestic animals – cats and dogs, but especially cats – who made an almost yogic effort of consciousness to understand us. But generally, when they watch us living and acting, they don't understand, they don't SEE US as we are and they suffer because of us. We are a constant enigma to them Only a very tiny part of their consciousness is linked to us. And it is the same for us when we try to look at the supramental world. Only when the link of consciousness has been built shall we see it – and even then, only that part of our being which has undergone the transformation will be capable of seeing it as it is – otherwise the two worlds would remain as separate as the animal world and the human world.

The experience I had on February 3 proves this. Before, I had had an individual, subjective contact with the supramental world, whereas on February 3, I went strolling there in a concrete way – as concretely as I used to go strolling in Paris in times past – in a world that EXISTS IN ITSELF, beyond all subjectivity.

It is like a bridge being built between the two worlds.

This is the experience as I dictated it immediately thereafter:

(silence)

50A Sannyasi, or wandering monk, whom Satprem would join a few weeks later in Ceylon, on February 27, and who would initiate him as a Sannyasi. Unfortunately, almost all the correspondence from this period has been lost.

The supramental world exists in a permanent way, and I am there permanently in a supramental body. I had proof of this today when my earthly consciousness went there and consciously remained there between two and three o'clock in the afternoon: I now know that for the two worlds to join in a constant and conscious relationship what is missing is an intermediate zone between the existing physical world and the supramental world as it exists. This zone has yet to be built, both in the individual consciousness and in the objective world, and it is being built. When formerly I used to speak of the new world that is being created, I was speaking of this intermediate zone. And similarly, when I am on 'this' side – that is, in the realm of the physical consciousness – and I see the supramental power, the supramental light and substance constantly permeating matter, I am seeing and participating in the construction of this zone.

I found myself upon an immense ship, which is the symbolic representation of the place where this work is being carried out. This ship, as big as a city, is thoroughly organized, and it had certainly already been functioning for quite some time, for its organization was fully developed. It is the place where people destined for the supramental life are being trained. These people (or at least a part of their being) had already undergone a supramental transformation because the ship itself and all that was aboard was neither material nor subtle-physical, neither vital nor mental: it was a supramental substance. This substance itself was of the most material supramental, the supramental substance nearest the physical world, the first to manifest. The light was a blend of red and gold, forming a uniform substance of luminous orange. Everything was like that – the light was like that, the people were like that – everything had this color, in varying shades, however, which enabled things to be distinguished from one another. The overall impression was of a shadowless world: there were shades, but no shadows. The atmosphere was full of joy, calm, order; everything worked smoothly and silently. At the same time, I could see all the details of the education, the training in all domains by which the people on board were being prepared.

This immense ship had just arrived at the shore of the supramental world, and a first batch of people destined to become the future inhabitants of the supramental world were about to disembark. Everything was arranged for this first landing. A certain number of very tall beings were posted on the wharf. They were not human beings and never before had they been men. Nor were they permanent inhabitants of the supramental world. They had been delegated from above and posted there to control and supervise the landing. I was in charge of all this since the beginning and throughout. I myself had prepared all the groups. I was standing on the bridge of the ship, calling the groups forward one by one and having them disembark on the shore. The tall beings posted there seemed to be reviewing those who were disembarking, allowing those who were ready to go ashore and sending back those who were not and who had to continue their training aboard the ship. While standing there watching everyone, that part of my consciousness coming from here became extremely interested: it wanted to see, to identify all the people, to see how they had changed and to find out who had been taken immediately as well as those who had to remain and continue their training. After awhile, as I was observing, I began to feel pulled backwards and that my body was being awakened by a consciousness or a person from here⁵¹ – and in my consciousness, I protested: 'No, no, not yet! Not yet! I want to see who's there!' I was watching all this and noting it with intense interest ... It went on like that until, suddenly, the clock here began striking three, which violently jerked me back. There was the sensation of a sudden fall into my body. I came back with a shock, but since I had been called back very suddenly, all my memory was still intact. I remained quiet and still until I could bring back the whole experience and preserve it.

The nature of objects on this ship was not that which we know upon earth; for example, the clothes were not made of cloth, and this thing that resembled cloth was not manufactured – it was a part of the body, made of the same substance that took on different forms. It had a kind of plasticity. When a change had to be made, it was done not by artificial and outer means but by an inner working, by a working of the consciousness that gave the substance its form or appearance. Life

⁵¹Indeed, one of the people near Mother had pulled Her out of the experience.

created its own forms. There was ONE SINGLE substance in all things; it changed the nature of its vibration according to the needs or uses.

Those who were sent back for more training were not of a uniform color; their bodies seemed to have patches of a grayish opacity, a substance resembling the earth substance. They were dull, as though they had not been wholly permeated by the light or wholly transformed. They were not like this all over, but in places.

The tall beings on the shore were not of the same color, at least they did not have this orange tint; they were paler, more transparent. Except for a part of their bodies, only the outline of their forms could be seen. They were very tall, they did not seem to have a skeletal structure, and they could take on any form according to their needs. Only from their waists to their feet did they have a permanent density, which was not felt in the rest of their body. Their color was much more pallid and contained very little red, it verged rather on gold or even white. The parts of whitish light were translucent; they were not absolutely transparent, but less dense, more subtle than the orange substance.

Just as I was called back, when I was saying, ‘Not yet ... ,’ I had a quick glimpse of myself, of my form in the supramental world. I was a mixture of what these tall beings were and the beings aboard the ship. The top part of myself, especially my head, was a mere silhouette of a whitish color with an orange fringe. The more it approached the feet, the more the color resembled that of the people on the ship, or in other words, orange; the more it went up towards the top, the more translucent and white it was, and the red faded. The head was only a silhouette with a brilliant sun at its center; from it issued rays of light which were the action of the will.

As for the people I saw aboard ship, I recognized them all. Some were here in the Ashram, some came from elsewhere, but I knew them as well. I saw everyone, but as I realized that I would not remember everyone when I came back, I decided not to give any names. Besides, it is unnecessary. Three or four faces were very clearly visible, and when I saw them, I understood the feeling that I have had here, on earth, while looking into their eyes: there was such an extraordinary joy ... On the whole, the people were young; there were very few children, and their ages were around fourteen or fifteen, but certainly not below ten or twelve (I did not stay long enough to see all the details). There were no very old people, with the exception of a few. Most of the people who had gone ashore were of a middle age – again, except for a few. Several times before this experience, certain individual cases had already been examined at a place where people capable of being supramentalized are examined; I had then had a few surprises which I had noted – I even told some people. But those whom I disembarked today I saw very distinctly. They were of a middle age, neither young children nor elderly people, with only a few rare exceptions, and this quite corresponded to what I expected. I decided not to say anything, not to give any names. As I did not stay until the end, it would be impossible for me to draw an exact picture, for it was neither absolutely clear nor complete. I do not want to say things to some and not say them to others.

What I can say is that the criterion or the judgment was based EXCLUSIVELY on the substance constituting the people – whether they belonged completely to the supramental world or not, whether they were made of this very special substance. The criterion adopted was neither moral nor psychological. It is likely that their bodily substance was the result of an inner law or an inner movement which, at that time, was not in question. At least it is quite clear that the values are different.

When I came back, along with the memory of the experience, I knew that the supramental world was permanent, that my presence there is permanent, and that only a missing link is needed to allow the consciousness and the substance to connect – and it is this link that is being built. At that time, my impression (an impression which remained rather long, almost the whole day) was of an extreme relativity – no, not exactly that, but an impression that the relationship between this world and the other completely changes the criterion by which things are to be evaluated or judged. This criterion had nothing mental about it, and it gave the strange inner feeling that so many things we

consider good or bad are not really so. It was very clear that everything depended upon the capacity of things and upon their ability to express the supramental world or be in relationship with it. It was so completely different, at times even so opposite to our ordinary way of looking at things! I recall one little thing that we usually consider bad ... actually how funny it was to see that it is something excellent! And other things that we consider important were really quite unimportant there! Whether it was like this or like that made no difference. What is very obvious is that our appreciation of what is divine or not divine is incorrect. I even laughed at certain things ... Our usual feeling about what is anti-divine seems artificial, based upon something untrue, unliving (besides, what we call life here appeared lifeless in comparison with that world); in any event, this feeling should be based upon our relationship between the two worlds and according to whether things make this relationship easier or more difficult. This would thus completely change our evaluation of what brings us nearer to the Divine or what takes us away from Him. With people, too, I saw that what helps them or prevents them from becoming supramental is very different from what our ordinary moral notions imagine. I felt just how ... ridiculous we are.

(Then Mother speaks to the children)

There is a continuation to all this, which is like the result in my consciousness of the experience of February 3, but it seems premature to read it now. It will appear in the April issue [of the Bulletin], as a sequel to this.

But one thing – and I wish to stress this point to you – which now seems to me to be the most essential difference between our world and the supramental world (and it is only after having gone there consciously, with the consciousness that ordinarily works here, that this difference appeared to me in what might be called its enormity): everything here, except for what happens within and at a very deep level, seemed absolutely artificial to me. Not one of the values of ordinary physical life is based upon truth. Just as we have to buy cloth, sew it together, then put it on our backs in order to dress ourselves, likewise we have to take things from outside and then put them inside our bodies in order to feed ourselves. For everything, our life is artificial.

A true, sincere, spontaneous life, as in the supramental world, is a springing forth of things through the fact of conscious will, a power over substance that shapes this substance according to what we decide it should be. And he who has this power and this knowledge can obtain whatever he wants, whereas he who does not has no artificial means of getting what he desires.

In ordinary life, EVERYTHING is artificial. Depending upon the chance of your birth or circumstances, you have a more or less high position or a more or less comfortable life, not because it is the spontaneous, natural and sincere expression of your way of being and of your inner need, but because the fortuity of life's circumstances has placed you in contact with these things. An absolutely worthless man may be in a very high position, and a man who might have marvelous capacities of creation and organization may find himself toiling in a quite limited and inferior position, whereas he would be a wholly useful individual if the world were sincere.

It is this artificiality, this insincerity, this complete lack of truth that appeared so shocking to me that ... one wonders how, in a world as false as this one, we can arrive at any truthful evaluation of things.

But instead of feeling grieved, morose, rebellious, discontent, I had rather the feeling of what I spoke of at the end: of such a ridiculous absurdity that for several days I was seized with an uncontrollable laughter whenever I saw things and people! Such a tremendous laughter, so absolutely inexplicable (except to me), because of the ridiculousness of these situations.

When I invited you on a voyage into the unknown, a voyage of adventure,⁵² I did not know just how true were my words! And I can promise those who are ready to embark upon this adventure that they will make some very astonishing discoveries.

52See *Questions and Answers* (July 10, 1957).



February 1958

(A few days after the experience of February 3, Mother had other experiences that seemed a continuation of it)

Everyone carries with him, in his atmosphere, what Sri Aurobindo calls the ‘Censors’; in a way, they are the permanent delegates of the hostile forces. Their role is to criticize mercilessly each act, each thought, the least movement of the consciousness, and to place you before the most hidden motives of your behavior, to expose the least lower vibration accompanying your apparently purest or highest thoughts or acts.

It is not here a question of morality. These gentlemen are not moralizing agents, although they know very well how to make use of morality! And when they are dealing with a scrupulous conscience, they can harass it pitilessly, whisper to it at every minute, ‘You should not have done this, you should not have done that, you should have done such and such, said such and such; now you have ruined everything, you have made an irreparable mistake, just see how everything is irremediably lost now because of the mistake you made.’ They can even possess the consciousness of some people: you chase the thought away and vrrm! – two minutes later, back it comes! You chase it away again, but there it is still hammering away at you.

Each time I meet these gentlemen, I give them a hearty welcome, for they force you to be absolutely sincere, they unearth the subtlest hypocrisy and at each moment place you before your most secret vibrations. And they are intelligent, with an intelligence infinitely surpassing our own! They know everything, they know how to set your least thought against you, your least argument or action, with a really wonderful subtlety. Nothing escapes them. But what gives a hostile shading to these beings is that, first and foremost, they are defeatists. They always present you with the darkest side of the picture and if necessary distort your own intentions. They are truly instruments of sincerity. Yet they always overlook one thing, deliberately, something they reject and cast far behind, as if it didn’t exist – the divine Grace. They overlook prayer, this spontaneous prayer that suddenly surges up from the depths of your being like an intense call and makes the Grace descend and changes the course of things.

And each time that you have made some progress or passed to a higher level, they put you back in the presence of all the actions of your past and in a few months, a few days or a few minutes make you pass all the tests again, at a higher level. And it does not help to brush aside the thought, saying, ‘Oh, I know!’ and throw a little cloak over it so as not to see. You have to face and conquer, keep your consciousness filled with light, be unwavering, uncomplaining, without a single vibration in the cells of the body, and then the attack dissolves.

The other day, too, in your supramental experience, you said that moral values had lost all their meaning.

But our conceptions of Good and Evil are so ridiculous! Our ideas of what is near to the Divine or far from the Divine are so absurd! The experience of the other day [February 3] was quite a

revelation to me, and I came out of it utterly changed. I suddenly understood a great many things from the past – certain actions parts of my life that had remained inexplicable – in truth, the shortest path from one point to another is not the straight line we imagine!

And the whole time this experience lasted, one hour (an hour of THAT time is long!), I was in an extraordinarily mirthful, almost inebriated state ... The difference between the two consciousnesses is such that when you are in one, the other seems unreal like a dream. When I came back, I was at first struck by the futility of life here; our petty conceptions seem so comical, so laughable ... We say that certain people are mad, but their madness is perhaps a great wisdom from the supralental point of view, and their behavior is perhaps very near the truth of things – I am not speaking of the obscure insane who have had some brain disorder, but of many other incomprehensible mad people, the luminous mad: they have wanted to leap across the border too quickly, and the rest did not follow.

When one looks at the world of men from the supralental consciousness, the dominant characteristic is a feeling of oddity, of artificiality – a world that is absurd because it is artificial. This world is false because its material appearance does not at all express the profound truth of things. There is as if a discrepancy between the appearance and what lies within. Thus, a man with a divine power deep within him may, on the outer plane, find himself in the situation of a slave. It's preposterous! Whereas in the supralental world, the will acts directly upon the substance, and the substance is obedient to this will. When you want to clothe yourself, the substance you are living in immediately assumes the form of clothing to cover you. When you want to move from one place to another, your will is sufficient to carry you without your needing any kind of vehicle or artificial means. Thus, for example, the ship in my experience had no need of any mechanism whatsoever in order to move; it was the will that shaped the substance according to its needs. When it was necessary to disembark, the wharf formed by itself. When I wanted the groups to go ashore, those who had to do so automatically knew it, without my having to say a word, and they came in the right order. Everything took place in silence, there was no need to speak to be understood; but aboard the ship, the silence itself did not give this artificial impression it gives here. Here, when we want silence, we have to keep our mouths shut: silence is the opposite of noise. There, the silence was vibrant, living, active and comprehensible, comprehensible.

The absurdity here consists of all the artificial means that have to be used. Any imbecile has more power if he has more means by which to acquire the necessary artifice. Whereas in the supralental world, the more one is conscious and in contact with the truth of things, the more authority has the will over the substance. The authority is a true authority. If you want clothes, you have to have the power to make them, a real power. If you do not have this power, well then, you remain naked. There are no artificial means to compensate for this lack of power. Here, not once in a million times is authority the expression of something true. Everything is colossally stupid.

When I came back down ('came back down' is a manner of speaking, for it is neither high nor low, nor within nor without, it is ... somewhere), it took me a while to readjust. I even recall having said to someone, 'Now we are going to regress into our usual stupidity.' But I understood a lot of things, and I came back from there with a decisive force. Now I know that our way of seeing things here, our petty moral values, have nothing to do with the values of the supralental world.



Undated 1958

For me, the subtle physical is far more real than this distorted world, but to see it you have to be conscious there, whereas people want to get effects which give them the impression of the marvelous and the miraculous and they want the subtle physical to become visible in the material world IN SPITE OF the falsehood. What makes the great difference for the ordinary physical consciousness is this: it wants to come into contact with that in spite of the falsehood, whereas the universal law is, get out of the falsehood and that will become true for you.

For me, this subtle world is far more real than the material world – much truer, much more tangible, concrete, real – but for others in this material world to believe in the subtle worlds, either they must have some beginning of experience, or else they must agree to have confidence and say, ‘All right, they say it’s like that, therefore it must be like that.’ Otherwise, to be convinced they want the truth to manifest in a world of falsehood in spite of the falsehood. Their attitude is like this: ‘We are willing to admit that it is possible, that it is real, but as long as it has not manifested here, we do not quite believe in it.’

Are you referring to the supramental world?

It applies to everything: every true thing in the world, including all the fairy tale miracles. Things that appear miraculous to the physical consciousness happen in an altogether different way, but to it they are indeed miraculous since they don’t depend on any physical processes. As I have said,⁵³ to travel from one place to another there is no need for any means of transport, to feed ourselves it is not necessary to put external things into the body, to dress ourselves we have no need to put on clothes, etc . . . The play of forces is the spontaneous expression of Truth and of the true Will, the true vision.

The question remains: for those who have seen and to whom things have happened in this way (like the little child, for example, who was playing with fairies), is it that they enter into this consciousness and then remember when they leave it, or is it that this state really manifests here? For me, this is still a question.

As this experience often happens to people with a simple heart and mind, quite possibly they don’t realize that for a while they have lived in another consciousness and in another world and then have come back to an ordinary condition where they remember the other thing. For them, they do not see the difference.



February 15, 1958

Last night, I had the vision of what this supramental world could become if men were not sufficiently prepared. The confusion existing at present upon earth is nothing in comparison to what could take place. Imagine that every powerful will has the power to transform matter as it likes! If

⁵³Experience of the ‘Supramental Ship.’

the sense of collective oneness did not grow in proportion to the development of power, the resulting conflict would be yet more acute and chaotic than our material conflicts.



February 25, 1958

(On suffering)

These surface things are not dramatic. More and more, they seem to me like soap bubbles, especially since February 3.

Some people come to see me in utter despair, in tears, in what they call terrible moral suffering; when I see them like that I slightly shift the needle in that part of my consciousness containing all of you, and when they leave, they are completely relieved. It is just like a compass needle – I slightly shift the needle in my consciousness, and it's over. Naturally, through habit, it returns later on. But these are mere soap bubbles.

I too have known suffering, but there was always a part of me that knew how to hold itself back and remain aloof.

The only thing in the world that still appears intolerable to me now is all physical deterioration, physical suffering, the ugliness the powerlessness to express this capacity of beauty inherent in every being. But this, too, will be conquered one day. Here, too the power will come one day to shift the needle a little. Only, one has to climb higher in consciousness: the deeper into matter you want to descend, the higher must you ascend in consciousness.

It will take time. Sri Aurobindo was surely right when he spoke of a few centuries.



February 1958

Yesterday morning, while reading a letter from A.H., I understood the Christian symbolism. It could be that some people understand ... Anyway, I suddenly understood ... It is extremely metaphysical. I followed the idea from a metaphysical point of view, along the lines of what we were saying yesterday: this 'error' committed that allowed the world to become what it is. But at the

extreme limit, there always remains the question, ‘How is it possible?’ I was no longer seeing this with the mind.

I came to the conclusion that from a practical standpoint, the solution is that the part of humanity expressing this Error in its life and its consciousness should ... or to put it another way, that part of humanity, of the human consciousness, capable of uniting with the Supermind and of liberating itself, will be completely transformed. This humanity is moving towards a future reality not yet expressed in its outer form. Whereas the part of humanity nearer to the simplicity of the animal or of Nature will be reabsorbed by Nature and entirely reassimilated. The possibility of a mental consciousness that allows for perversion – that makes mental perversion such an excruciating thing – will be abolished. It will disappear. These things will no longer be.

In the vision, I went much deeper into this thought. I saw all the stages, but I no longer see them now. I can no longer explain – there was suddenly a vision that understood the idea of atonement and redemption. It was not formulated in words. Also, the idea that only an act of faith in a divine intervention could ... was the means of salvation. This was the idea of salvation. I understood Christ and faith in Christ. I understood it, and it did not apply uniquely to Christianity or to original sin. I understood what original sin and redemption through faith in Christ meant.



March 7, 1958

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Kataragama, March 7, 1958

Sweet Mother,

Since my departure, I have been feeling your Force continually, almost constantly. And I feel an infinite gratitude that you are there, and that this thread from you to me keeps me anchored to something in this world. Simply knowing that you exist, that you are there, that I have a goal, a center – fills me with infinite gratitude. On a street in Madras, the day after I left, I suddenly had a poignant experience: I felt that if ‘that’ were not in me, I would fall to pieces on the sidewalk, I would crumble, nothing would be left, nothing. And this experience remains. Like a litany, something keeps repeating almost incessantly, ‘I need you, need you, I have only you, you alone in the world. You are all my present, all my future, I have only you ...’ Mother, I am living in a state of need, like hunger.

On the way, I stopped at J and E’s place. They are living like native fishermen, in loincloths, in a coconut grove by the sea. The place is exceedingly beautiful, and the sea full of rainbow-hued coral. And suddenly, within twenty-four hours, I realized an old dream – or rather, I ‘purged’ myself of an old and tenacious dream: that of living on a Pacific island as a simple fisherman. And all at once, I *saw*, in a flash, that this kind of life totally lacks a center. You ‘float’ in a nowhere. It plunges you into some kind of higher inertia, an illumined inertia, and you lose all true substance.

As for me, I am totally out of my element in this new life, as though I were uprooted from

myself. I am living in the temple, in the midst of pujas,⁵⁴ with white ashes on my forehead, barefoot dressed like a Hindu, sleeping on cement at night, eating impossible curries, with some good sunburns to complete the cooking. And there I am, clinging to you, for if you were not there I would collapse, so absurd would it all be. You are the only reality – how many times have I repeated this to myself, like a litany! Apart from this, I am holding up quite well physically. But inside and outside, nothing is left but you. I need you, that's all. Mother, this world is so horrifyingly empty. I really feel that I would evaporate if you weren't there. Well, no doubt I had to go through this experience ... Perhaps I will be able to extract some book from it that will be of use to you. We are like children who need a lot of pictures in order to understand, and a few good kicks to realize our complete stupidity.

Swami must soon take to the road again, through Ceylon, towards March 20 or 25. So I shall go wandering with him until May; towards the beginning of May, he will return to India. I hope to have learned my lesson by then, and to have learned it well. Inwardly, I have understood that there is only you – but it's these problem children on the surface who must be made to toe the line once and for all.

Sweet Mother, I am in a hurry to work for you. Will you still want me? Mother, I need you, I need you. I would like to ask you an absurd question: Do you think of me? I have only you, you alone in the world.

Your child,
Signed: Satprem

* * *

(Mother's reply)

March 11, 58

My dear child

It is good, very good – in truth, everything is taking place as expected, as *the best* expected. And I am so happy for this.

To your question, I reply: I do not think of you, *I feel you*; you are with me, I am with you, in the light ...

Your place has remained vacant here; you alone can fill it, and it awaits your return, when the moment comes.

.....

As soon as the 'problem children' on the surface will also have learned their lesson, you have only to let me know of the date of your return and you will be welcome.

With you always and everywhere.

Signed: Mother



⁵⁴Puja: Hindu temple ceremony.

April 3, 1958

(*Letter to Mother from Satprem*)

Kataragama, April 3, 1958

Sweet Mother,

I was waiting for things to be well established in me before writing you again. An important change has occurred: it seems that something in me has ‘clicked’ – what Sri Aurobindo calls the ‘central will,’ perhaps – and I am living literally in the obsession of divine realization. This is what I want, nothing else, it is the only goal in life, and at last I have understood (not with the head) that the outer realization in the world will be the consequence of the inner realization. So thousands of times a day, I repeat, ‘Mother, I want to be your instrument, ever more conscious, I want to express your truth, your light. I want to be what you want, as you want, when you want.’ There is in me now a kind of need for perfection, a will to abolish this ego, a real understanding that to become your instrument means at the same time to find the perfect plenitude of one’s personality. So I am living in an almost constant state of aspiration, I feel your force constantly, or nearly so, and if I am ‘distracted’ a few minutes, I experience a void, an uneasiness that calls me back to you.

And at the same time, I *saw* that it is you who is doing everything, you who aspires in me, you who wants the progress, and that all ‘I’ myself am in this affair is a screen, a resisting obstacle. O Mother, break this screen that I may be wholly transparent before you, that your transforming force may purify all the secret recesses in my being, that nothing may remain but you and you alone. O Mother, may all my being be a living expression of your light, your truth.

Mother, from the depths of my being, I offer you a sole prayer: may I become your more and more perfect instrument, a sword of light in your hands. Oh, to get out of this ego that belittles everything, diminishes everything, to emerge from it! All is falsehood in it.

And I, who understood nothing of love, am beginning to suspect who Satprem is. Mother, your grace is infinite, it has accompanied me everywhere in my life.

We are still in Kataragama, and we shall only go up to northern Ceylon, to Jaffna, around the 15th, then return to India towards the beginning of May if the visa problems are settled. Only in India, at the temple of Rameswaram, can I receive the orange robe. I am living here as a sannyasi, but dressed in white, like a Hindu. It is a stark life, nothing more. I have seen however, that truth does not lie in starkness but in a change of consciousness. (Desire always finds a means to entrench itself in very small details and in very petty and stupid, though well-rooted, avidities.)

Mother, I am seeing all the mean pettiness that obstructs your divine work. Destroy my smallness and take me unto you. May I be sincere, integrally sincere.

With infinite gratitude, I am your child.

Signed: Satprem

P.S. My system is not in perfect condition due to this absurdly spiced food, and the river water that is used for everything.

(*Mother’s reply*)

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 4.10.58

My dear child,

It is with great joy that I shall receive you when you return in May.

We have a lot of work to do together, because I have kept everything for your return.

I am trying to be near you as MATERIALLY as possible in order to help your body victoriously pass through the test.

I want it to come out of this tempered forever, above all attacks.

May the joy of luminous love be with you.

Until we meet,

Signed: Mother



Undated 1958

(Concerning one of her commentaries on the Dhammapada, in the chapter 'The Thousand,' Mother remarks:)

All this seems quite dogmatic.

Each time, only ONE aspect of the question is considered, whereas to be truly accurate, EVERYTHING would have to be said. It should be emphasized that this is only ONE point of view and that there are also all the others. But people ... that swamps them! They don't like it, they are happier when they can cling to something solid.



May 1, 1958

These days I am having every possible experience in the body, one after the other. Yesterday and this morning ... oh, this morning!

I saw there (*center of the heart*) the Master of the Yoga; he was no different from me, but nevertheless I saw him, and he even seemed slightly imbued with color. Well, he does everything, he decides everything, he organizes everything with an almost mathematical precision and in the smallest details – everything.

To do the divine Will – I have been doing the sadhana for a long time, and I can say that not a day has passed that I have not done the Divine's Will. But I didn't know what it was! I was living in all the inner realms, from the subtle physical to the highest regions, yet I didn't know what it was ... I always had to listen, to refer things, to pay attention. Now, no more – bliss! There are no more problems, and everything is done in such harmony! Even if I had to leave my body, I would be in bliss! And it would happen in the best possible way.

Only now am I beginning to understand what Sri Aurobindo has written in *The Synthesis of Yoga*! And the human mind, the physical mind, appears so stupid, so stupid!



May 10, 1958

This morning, I suddenly looked at my body (usually, I don't look at it – I am inside it, working), I looked at my body and said to myself, 'Let's see, what would a witness say about this body?' – the witness Sri Aurobindo speaks of in *The Synthesis of Yoga*. Nothing very remarkable. So I formulated it like this (*Mother reads a written note*):

'This body has neither the uncontested authority of a god nor the imperturbable calm of the sage.'

So, what then?

'It is as yet only an apprentice in supermanhood.'

That is all it is trying to be.

I saw and understood very well that by concentrating, I could have given it the attitude of the absolute authority of the eternal Mother. When Sri Aurobindo told me, 'You are She,' at the same time he bestowed upon my body this attitude of absolute authority. But as I had the inner vision of this truth, I concerned myself very little with the imperfections of the physical body – I didn't bother about that, I only used it as an instrument. Sri Aurobindo did the sadhana for this body, which had only to remain constantly open to his action.⁵⁵

Afterwards, when he left and I had to do the Yoga myself, to be able to take his physical place, I could have adopted the attitude of the sage, which is what I did since I was in an unparalleled state of calm when he left. As he left his body and entered into mine, he told me, 'You will continue, you will go right to the end of the work.' It was then that I imposed a calm upon this body – the calm of total detachment. And I could have remained like that.

But in a way, absolute calm implies withdrawal from action, so a choice had to be made between one or the other. I said to myself, 'I am neither exclusively this nor exclusively that.' And actually, to do Sri Aurobindo's work is to realize the Supramental on earth. So I began that work and, as a matter of fact, this was the only thing I asked of my body. I told it, 'Now you shall set right everything which is out of order and gradually realize this intermediate supermanhood between man and the supramental being or, in other words, what I call the superman.'

⁵⁵This last sentence was later added by Mother in writing.

And this is what I have been doing for the last eight years, and even much more during the past two years, since 1956. Now it is the work of each day, each minute.

That's where I am. I have renounced the uncontested authority of a god, I have renounced the unshakable calm of the sage ... in order to become the superman. I have concentrated everything upon that.

We shall see.

I am learning to work. I am only an apprentice, simply an apprentice – I am learning the trade!

* * *

(*Soon afterwards*)

In a considerable number of people, it is their body, the physical body, that obstinately resists.

The difficulty is greater for Westerners than for Indians. It's as though their substance were steeped in falsehood. It also happens with Indians, of course, but generally the falsehood is much more in the vital than in the physical – because after all, the physical has been utilized by bodies belonging to enlightened beings. The European substance seems steeped in rebellion; in the Indian substance this rebelliousness is subdued by an influence of *surrender*. The other day, someone was telling me about some Europeans with whom he corresponds, and I said, 'But tell them to read, to learn, to follow *The Synthesis of Yoga!* – it leads you straight to the path.' Whereupon he replied, 'Oh, but they say it's full of talk on surrender, surrender, always surrender ...' and they want none of it.

They want none of it! Even if the mind accepts, the body and the vital refuse. And when the body refuses, it refuses with the stubbornness of a stone.

Is it not due to the body's unconsciousness?

No. From the minute it is conscious, it is conscious of its own falsehood! It is conscious of this law, of that law, of this third law that fourth law, this tenth law – everything is a 'law.' 'We are subject to physical laws: this will produce such and such a result if you do that, this will happen, etc.' Oh! It reeks! I know it well. I know it very well. These laws reek of falsehood. In the body, we have no faith in the divine Grace, none, none, none, none! Those who have not undergone a *tapasya*⁵⁶ as I have, say, 'Yes, all these inner moral things, feelings, psychology, all that is very good; we want the Divine and we are ready to ... But all the same, material facts are material facts, they have their concrete reality, after all an illness is an illness, food is food, and everything you do has a consequence, and when you are ...' – bah, bah, bah, bah, bah!

We must understand that this isn't true – it isn't true, it's a falsehood, all this is sheer falsehood. It is NOT TRUE, it is not true!

If only we would accept the Supreme inside our bodies, if we had the experience I had a few days ago⁵⁷ : the supreme Knowledge in action along with the complete abolition of all consequences, past and future. Each second has its own eternity and its own law, which is a law of absolute truth.

When I had this experience, I understood that only a month ago I was still uttering mountain-sized imbecilities. And I laughed to the point of almost approving those who say, 'But all the same, the Supreme does not decide the number of sugar cubes you put in your coffee! That would be to project your own way of being onto the Supreme.' But this is an Himalayan imbecility! It is a

⁵⁶*Tapasya*: yogic discipline or askesis.

stupidity, the mind's pretentious stupidity projecting itself onto the divine life and imagining that the divine life conforms to its own projection.

The Supreme does not decide: He knows. The Supreme does not want: He sees. And it is so for each thousandth of a second, eternally. That's all. And it is the only true condition.

I know that the experience I had the other day is new and that I was the first person on earth to have it. But it is the only thing that is true. All the rest ...

I began my sadhana at birth, without knowing that I was doing it. I have continued it throughout my whole life, which means for almost eighty years (even though for perhaps the first three or four years of my life it was only something stirring about in unconsciousness). But I began a deliberate, conscious sadhana at about the age of twenty-two or twenty-three, upon prepared ground. I am now more than eighty years old: I have thought of nothing but that, I have wanted nothing but that, I had no other interest in life, and not for a single minute have I ever forgotten that it was THAT that I wanted. There were not periods of remembering and forgetting: it was continuous, unceasing, day and night, from the age of twenty-four – and I had this experience for the first time about a week ago! So, I say that people who are in a hurry, people who are impatient, are arrogant fools.

... It is a hard path. I try to make it as comfortable as possible, but nevertheless, it is a hard path. And it is obvious that it cannot be otherwise. You are beaten and battered until you understand. Until you are in that state in which all bodies are your body. But at that point, you begin to laugh! You were upset by this, hurt by that, you suffered from this or that – but now, how laughable it all seems! And not only the head, but the body too finds it laughable!

(silence)

... but it is so deeply rooted: all the reactions of the body-consciousness are like that, with a kind of shrinking at the idea of allowing a higher power to intervene.

(silence)

From the positive point of view, I am convinced that we agree upon the result to be obtained, that is, an integral and unreserved consecration – in love, knowledge and action – to the Supreme AND TO HIS WORK. I say to the Supreme and to his work because consecration to the Supreme alone is not enough. Now we are here for the supramental realization, this is what is expected of us, but to reach it, our consecration to it must be total, unreserved absolutely integral. I believe you have understood this – in other words, that you have the will to realize it.

From the negative point of view – I mean the difficulties to be overcome – one of the most serious obstacles is that the ignorant and falsifying outer consciousness, the ordinary consciousness legitimizes all the so-called physical laws, causes, effects and consequences, all that science has discovered physically and materially. All this is an unquestionable reality to the consciousness, a reality that remains independent and absolute even in the face of the eternal divine Reality.

And it is so automatic that it is unconscious.

When it is a question of movements like anger, desire, etc., you recognize that they are wrong and must disappear, but when material laws are in question – laws of the body, for example, its needs, its health, its nourishment, all those things – they have such a solid, compact, established and concrete reality that it appears absolutely unquestionable.

Well, to be able to cure that, which of all the obstacles is the greatest (I mean the habit of putting spiritual life on one side and material life on the other, of acknowledging the right of material laws to exist), one must make a resolution never to legitimize any of these movements, at any cost.

To be able to see the problem as it is, it is absolutely indispensable, as a first step, to get out of the mental consciousness, even out of a mental transcription (in the highest mind) of the supramental vision and truth. A thing cannot be seen as it is, in its truth, except in the supramental consciousness, and if you try to explain, it immediately begins to escape you because you are

obliged to give it a mental formulation.

As for me, I saw the thing only at the time of this experience,⁵⁸ and as a result of this experience. But it is impossible to formulate even the experience itself, and as soon as I endeavored to formulate it and the more I was able to formulate it, the more the thing faded, escaped.

Consequently, if you do not remember having had the experience, you are left in the same condition as before, but with the difference that now you know, you can know, that these material laws do not correspond to the truth – that's all. They do not at all correspond to the truth, so consequently, if you want to be faithful to your aspiration, you must in no way legitimize all that. Rather, you must say that it is an infirmity from which we are suffering for the moment, for an intermediate period – it is an infirmity and an ignorance – for it really is an ignorance (this is not just a word): it is ignorance, it is not the thing as it is, even in regard to our present material bodies. Therefore, we will not legitimize anything. What we say is this – it is an infirmity which has to be endured for the time being, until we get out of it, but we do NOT ACKNOWLEDGE all this as a concrete reality. It does NOT have a concrete reality, it has a false reality – what we call concrete reality is a false reality.

And the proof – I have the proof because I experienced it myself – is that from the minute you are in the other consciousness, the true consciousness, all these things which appear so real, so concrete, change INSTANTLY. There are a number of things, certain material conditions of my body – material – that changed instantly. It did not last long enough for everything to change, but some things changed and never returned, they remained changed. In other words, if that consciousness were kept constantly, it would be a perpetual miracle (what we would call a miracle from our ordinary point of view), a fantastic and perpetual miracle! But from the supramental point of view, it would not be a miracle at all, it would be the most normal of things.

Therefore, if we do not want to oppose the supramental action by an obscure, inert and obstinate resistance, we have to admit once and for all that none of these things should be legitimized.



May 11, 1958

One of the things that most gives me the feeling of the miraculous is when these obscure throngs⁵⁹ – really tamasic⁶⁰ beings, in fact, with children crying, people coughing – when all that is gathered there, and then suddenly ... silence.

58May 1, 1958.

59Mother is referring to her “Darshan,” when four times a year She appeared on her balcony high above the assembled mass of disciples and visitors on the street below. The “darshan days” were February 21, April 24, August 15 and November 24.

60Tamas: in Indian psychology, inertia and obscurity.

Each time that happens, I have truly the feeling of a miracle! I immediately say, ‘Oh, Lord! Your Grace is infinite!’

* * *

Something quite curious took place during a recent meditation. I no longer recall when exactly, but it was at a time when there were many visitors, for the courtyard was full. After perhaps no more than a few minutes, I suddenly heard a distinct voice, coming from my right, say ‘OM,’ like that. And then a second time, ‘OM.’ What an impact it had upon me! I felt an emotion here (*gesture towards the heart*) as I have not felt for years and years and years. And all, all, all was filled with light, with force – it was absolutely marvelous. It was an invocation, and during the whole meditation the Presence was resplendent.

I said to myself, ‘Who could have done that?’ I was not sure if only I had heard it, so I asked. The reply was, ‘But it was the ship leaving!’ There was actually a ship which had left during the night⁶¹ – that is in support of those who said it was a ship. But for me, it was SOMEONE because I felt someone there and I thought, Oh! If someone, in the ardor of his soul, said that in this ... what I could call an atheistic silence. Because people here are so afraid of following tradition, of being the slaves of the old things, that they cast out anything closely or remotely resembling religion.

It was very strange, because my first reaction was one of bewilderment: how is it that someone ... I was really bewildered for a fraction, not even the fraction of a second. And then...

In any event, if it wasn’t a man, if it was a ship, then the ship said it! Because it was THAT – it was that, it was nothing other than an invocation. And the result was fantastic!

People immediately thought, ‘Oh, it’s the ship!’ Well, even if it was a ship, it was the ship that said OM!

And then I wondered, ‘If we were to repeat the mantra we heard the other day⁶² (*Om Namo Bhagavateh ...*) during the half-hour meditation, what would happen?’

What would happen?

And these things act upon my body. It is strange, but it coagulates something: all the cellular life becomes one solid, compact mass, in a tremendous concentration – with a single vibration. Instead of all the usual vibrations of the body, there is now only one single vibration. It becomes as hard as a diamond, a single massive concentration, as if all the cells of the body had ...

I became stiff from it. When the forest scene⁶³ was over, I was so stiff that I was like that (*gesture*): one single mass.



61The waters off Pondicherry occasionally serve as a port.

62During an Indian film on *Dhruva* in which this mantra was chanted for a long time. This film was shown at the Ashram Playground on April 29, 1958.

63In the same film.

May 17, 1958

Actually, when I myself am perfect, I believe that all the rest will become perfect automatically. But it does not seem possible to become perfect without there being a beginning of realization from the other side. So it proceeds like that, bumping from one side to the other, and we go stumbling along like a drunken man!



May 30, 1958

(*On Hostile Forces*)

I have noticed that in at least ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, it is an excuse people give to themselves. I have seen that practically, in the case of almost all the people who write to me saying, 'I am being violently attacked by hostile forces,' it's an excuse they are giving. It means that certain things in their nature do not want to yield, so they put all the blame on the hostile forces.

As a matter of fact, my tendency is more and more towards something in which the role of these hostile forces will be reduced to that of an examiner – which means that they are there to test the sincerity of your spiritual quest. These elements have a reality in their action and for the work – this is their great reality – but when you go beyond a certain region, it all grows dim to such a degree that it is no longer so well defined, so distinct. In the occult world, or rather if you look at the world from the occult point of view, these hostile forces are very real, their action is very real, quite concrete, and their attitude towards the divine realization is positively hostile; but as soon as you go beyond this region and enter into the spiritual world where there is no longer anything but the Divine in all things, and where there is nothing undivine, then these 'hostile forces' become part of the total play and can no longer be called 'hostile forces': it is only an attitude that they have adopted – or more precisely, it is only an attitude adopted by the Divine in his play.

This again belongs to the dualities that Sri Aurobindo speaks of in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, these dualities that are being reabsorbed. I don't know if he spoke of this particular one; I don't think so, but it's the same thing. It's again a certain way of seeing. He has written of the Personal-Impersonal duality, Ishwara-Shakti, Purusha-Prakriti ... but there is still one more: Divine and anti-divine.



June 6, 1958

It's all the same thing, but the word realization can be reserved for something that is durable, that does not wear off. Because everything on earth fades away – everything fades away, nothing remains. In this sense, there has never been any realization, for everything fades away. Nothing is ever permanent. And I know for myself: I am doing the sadhana at a gallop, as it were; never are two experiences identical nor do they recur in the same way. As soon as something is established, the next thing begins immediately. It may appear to fade away, but it doesn't fade away; rather, it is the basis upon which the next thing is built.

* * *

This morning while I was on the balcony, I had an interesting experience: the experience of man's effort, in all its forms and through all the ages, to approach the Divine. And I seemed to be growing wider and wider so that all the forms and all the ways of approaching the Divine attempted by man would be contained in the present Work.

It was represented by a kind of image in which I was as vast as the Universe, and each way of approaching the Divine was like a tiny image containing the characteristic form of this approach. And my impression was this: Why do people always limit, limit themselves? Narrow, narrow, narrow! They understand only when it is narrow.

Take all! Take all within you. And then you will begin to understand – you will begin.

* * *

It was in 1910 that I had this sort of reversal of consciousness about which I spoke the other evening – that is, the first contact with the higher Divine – and it completely changed my life.

From that moment on, I was conscious that all one does is the expression of the indwelling Divine Will. But it is the Divine Will AT THE VERY CENTER of oneself, although for a while there remained an activity in the physical mind. But this was stilled two or three days after I saw Sri Aurobindo for the first time in 1914, and it never started up again. Silence settled. And the consciousness was established above the head.

In the first experience [of 1910], the consciousness was established in the psychic depths of the being, and from that poise issued the feeling of no longer doing anything but what the Divine wanted – it was the consciousness that the divine Will was all-powerful and that there was no longer any personal will, although there was still some mental activity and everything had to be made silent. In 1914, it was silenced, and the consciousness was established above the head. Here (*the heart*) and here (*above the head*), the connection is constant.

Does one exclude the other?

They exist simultaneously; it's the same thing. When you start becoming truly conscious, you realize that it depends upon the kinds of activities you have to do. When you do a certain kind of work, it is in the heart that the Force gathers to radiate outwards, and when you do another kind of work, it is above the head that the Force concentrates to radiate outwards, but the two are not separate: the center of activity is here or there depending upon what you have to do.

As for the latest experience,⁶⁴ I can't say for sure that no one has ever had it, because someone

like Ramakrishna, individuals like that, could have had it. But I am not sure, for when I had this experience (not of the divine Presence, which I had already felt in the cells for a long time, but the experience that the Divine ALONE is acting in the body, that He has BECOME the body, yet all the while retaining his character of divine omniscience and omnipotence) well, the whole time it remained actively like that, it was absolutely impossible to have the LEAST disorder in the body, and not only in the body, but IN ALL THE SURROUNDING MATTER. It was as if every object obeyed without even needing to decide to obey: it was automatic. There was a divine harmony in EVERYTHING (it took place in my bathroom upstairs, certainly to demonstrate that it exists in the most trivial things), in everything, constantly. So if that is established in a permanent way, there CAN NO LONGER be illness it is impossible. There can no longer be accidents, there can no longer be illness, there can no longer be disorders, and everything should harmonize (probably in a progressive way) just as that was harmonized: all the objects in the bathroom were full of a joyful enthusiasm – everything obeyed, everything!

As it was the first experience, it started to fade slightly when I began having contact with people; but I really had the feeling that it was a first experience, new upon earth. For I have experienced an absolute identity of the will with the divine Will ever since 1910, it has never left me. It isn't that, it's SOMETHING ELSE. It is MATTER BECOMING THE DIVINE. And it really came with the feeling that this thing was happening for the first time upon earth. It is difficult to say for sure, but Ramakrishna died of cancer, and now that I have had the experience, I know in an ABSOLUTE way that this is impossible. If he had decided to go because the Divine wanted him to go, it would have been an orderly departure, in total harmony and with a total will, whereas this illness is a means of disorder.

Is this experience of May 1 related to the Supramental Manifestation of 1956? Is it a supramental experience?

It is the result of the descent of the supramental substance into Matter. Only this substance – what it has put into physical Matter – could have made it possible. It is a new ferment. From the material standpoint, it removes from physical Matter its tamas, the heaviness of its unconsciousness, and from the psychological standpoint, its ignorance and its falsehood. Matter is subtilized. But it has surely come only as a first experience to show how it will be.

It is truly a state of absolute omniscience and omnipotence in the body which changes all the vibrations around it.

It is likely that the greatest resistance will be in the most conscious beings due to a lack of mental receptivity, due to the mind itself which wants things to continue (as Sri Aurobindo has written) according to its own mode of ignorance. So-called inert matter is much more easily responsive, much more – it does not resist. And I am convinced that among plants, for example, or among animals, the response will be much quicker than among men. It will be more difficult to act upon a very organized mind; beings who live in an entirely crystallized, organized mental consciousness are as hard as stone! It resists. According to my experience, what is unconscious will certainly follow more easily. It was a delight to see the water from the tap, the mouthwash in the bottle, the glass, the sponge – it all had such an air of joy and consent! There is much less ego, you see, it is not a conscious ego.

The ego becomes more and more conscious and resistant as the being develops. Very primitive, very simple beings, little children will respond first, because they don't have an organized ego. But these big people! People who have worked on themselves, who have mastered themselves, who are organized, who have an ego made of steel, it will be difficult for them.

Unless they go beyond all this and have enough spiritual knowledge to be able to make the ego surrender ... in which case the realization will naturally be much greater – it will be more difficult to accomplish, but the result will be far more complete.

When you had this experience of February 3, 1958 [the supramental ship], the vision of your usual consciousness, which is nevertheless a Truth Consciousness, no longer seemed true to you at all. Did you see things you had never before seen, or did you see things in another way?

Yes, one enters into another world.

This consciousness here is true in relation to this world as it is, but the other ... is something else entirely. An adjustment is needed for the two to touch, otherwise one jumps from one to the other. And that serves no purpose. A progressive passage has to be built between the two. This means that a whole number of rungs of consciousness are missing. This consciousness here must consciously connect with that consciousness there, which means a multitude of stairs passing from one to the other. Then we will be able to rise up progressively, and the whole will arise.

Its action will be somewhat similar to what is described in the Last Judgment, which is an entirely symbolic expression of something that makes us discern between what belongs to the world of falsehood which is destined to disappear and what belongs to this same world of ignorance and inertia but is transformable. One will go to one side and the other to the other side. All that is transformable will be permeated more and more with this new substance and this new consciousness to such an extent that it will rise towards it and serve as a link between the two but all that belongs incorrigibly to falsehood and ignorance will disappear. This was also prophesied in the *Gita*: among what we call the hostile or anti-divine forces, those capable of being transformed will be uplifted and go off towards the new consciousness, whereas all that is irrevocably in darkness or belongs to an evil will shall be destroyed and vanish from the Universe. And a whole part of humanity that has responded to these forces rather too ... zealously will certainly vanish with them. And this is what was expressed in this concept of the Last Judgment.



June 1958

(At the time of publishing the following conversation of March 19, 1958, in the Ashram 'Bulletin,' Mother added certain commentaries that have a direct bearing upon the preceding conversation about the Last Judgment, and She incorporated an entire passage from the conversation of the end of February 1958 on the same subject.)

One thing seems clear: humanity has reached such a generalized state of tension – tension in effort, tension in action, tension even in daily life – with such an excessive hyperactivity, such an overall restlessness, that the species as a whole seems to have reached a point where it must either burst through the resistance and surge forth into a new consciousness, or else sink back into an abyss of obscurity and inertia.

This tension is so total and so generalized that obviously something must break. It cannot go on like this. Yet all this is a sure sign that a new principle of force, consciousness and power has been infused into matter and by its very pressure has produced this acute state. Outwardly, we might expect to see the old habitual means used by Nature whenever she wants to bring about an

upheaval; but here there is a new phenomenon, which is evidently visible only in a select few, although even these few are widespread enough – this phenomenon is not localized in one point or one place in the world, for the signs are to be found in every country all over the earth: the will to find a new, a higher, an ascending solution, an effort to surge forth into a vaster, more encompassing perfection.

Certain ideas of a more general, more extensive, more collective nature, as it were, are being worked out and are at work in the world. And the two go together: a greater and more total possibility of destruction and an inventiveness that unrestrainedly increases the possibility of catastrophe, a catastrophe that would be much more massive than it has ever been; and at the same time, the birth, or rather the manifestation, of much higher and more comprehensive ideas and wills which, when heard, will bring a vaster, more extensive, more complete and more perfect solution than before.

This struggle, this conflict between the constructive forces of an ascending evolution, of an increasingly perfect and divine realization, and the more and more destructive forces – powerfully destructive, forces of an uncontrollable madness – is becoming more obvious, unmistakably visible, and it is a kind of race or battle as to which will be first to reach its goal. All the hostile, anti-divine forces, these forces of the vital world, seem to have descended upon earth and are using it as their field of action; and at the same time, a new, higher, more powerful spiritual force has also descended upon earth to bring a new life to it. This renders the battle more bitter, violent and visible, but apparently more decisive, too, which is why we may hope to arrive at an early solution.

There was a time, not so very long ago, when man's spiritual aspiration was turned towards a silent, inactive peace, detached from all the things of this world, an evasion of life to avoid the struggle, precisely, to rise above the battle, to be liberated from effort. It was a spiritual peace where, along with the cessation of tension, struggle and effort, suffering in all its forms also ceased, and this was considered the true and unique expression of the spiritual and divine life. This is what was considered divine grace, divine succor, divine intervention. And even now, in this age of anguish, tension and hypertension, this sovereign peace is of all help the best received, the most welcome, the relief asked and hoped for. For many, it is still the true sign of divine intervention, of divine grace.

In fact, no matter what you wish to realize, you must begin by establishing this perfect and immutable peace – it is the necessary basis for any work; but unless you are thinking of an exclusive or personal and egoistic liberation, you cannot stop there. There is yet another aspect to the divine grace, the aspect of progress that will be victorious over all obstacles, the aspect that will propel humanity into a new realization, open the doors unto a new world, enable not only a select few to benefit from the divine realization, but through their influence, their example and their power, bring a new and better condition to the rest of humanity.

It opens vistas of realization into the future and already foreseen possibilities through which an entire section of humanity, which is consciously or unconsciously open to the new forces, will be lifted up, as it were, towards a higher, more harmonious, more perfect life ... and even if individual transformations are not permissible nor possible in all cases, at least there will be a kind of uplifting of the whole, a harmonization of everything, enabling a new order, a new harmony to be established and the anguish of disorder and the present strife to disappear and be replaced by an order that will allow for the harmonious working of the whole.

There will be other consequences that by opposite means will tend to eradicate the perversion and ugliness created in life due to the intervention of the mind, a whole range of deformations that have aggravated suffering, misery, moral poverty, a whole zone of sordid and repugnant miseries that makes an entire portion of human life so hideous. That must disappear. That is what in many respects makes humanity infinitely inferior to animal life, with its simplicity and its natural spontaneity, and which in spite of everything is harmonious. Suffering among animals is never as miserable and sordid as it is in a whole section of humanity perverted by a mentality exclusively

turned towards egoistic needs.

One must rise above, surge forth into the Light and the Harmony, or sink back down into the simplicity of a wholesome, unperverted animal life.

(After a moment of silence, Mother adds)

But those who cannot be lifted up, who refuse to progress, will automatically lose the use of the mental consciousness and fall back into an infrahuman stage.

I'll tell you of an experience I had which will help you better understand. It was a short while after the supramental experience of February 3, and I was still in that state where things of the physical world seemed so remote, so absurd. A group of visitors asked permission to greet me, and they came one evening to the playground. They were rich people – that is, they had more money than they needed to live. Among them was a woman in a saree. She was very fat, and her saree was so arranged as to hide her body. When she bent over to receive my blessings, a corner of her saree fell open, uncovering part of her body, a bare belly. An enormous belly. It came as a shock to me ... There are obese people who are not at all repugnant, but there I suddenly saw the perversion, the rottenness that this abdomen concealed. It was like an enormous abscess expressing greed, vice, depravity of taste, sordid desire that seeks satisfaction as no animal would, grossly, and above all, perversely. I saw the perversion of a depraved mind placed at the service of the basest appetites. Then, in a flash, something leapt forth from me, a prayer, like a Veda: 'O Lord, it is this that must vanish!'

One can well understand that physical misery or the unequal distribution of the world's wealth could be remedied. One can think of economic and social solutions that could remedy all that, but this particular misery, this mental misery, this vital perversion – it is this that cannot change, that does NOT WANT to change. And those who belong to this kind of humanity are condemned in advance to disintegration.

The meaning of original sin is precisely this: the perversion that began with the mind.

That part of humanity, of the human consciousness, which is able to unite with the Supermind and liberate itself will be completely transformed. It is moving towards its future reality as yet unexpressed in the outer form; the part very close to the simplicity of the animal, close to Nature, will be reabsorbed by Nature and thoroughly reassimilated. But that corrupted part of the human consciousness, which through its wrong use of the mind allows this perversion, will be abolished.

That kind of humanity belongs to an unfruitful attempt – and will be eliminated, like so many other abortive species which have vanished in the course of universal history.

Certain prophets in the past had this apocalyptic vision, but as usual things became mixed, and along with their vision of the apocalypse they did not have the vision of the supramental world that will come to uplift the consenting part of humanity and transform this physical world. However, to give hope to those born into this perverted part of the human consciousness, redemption through faith was taught: those who have faith in the sacrifice of the Divine in Matter will automatically be saved, in another world – faith alone, without understanding, without intelligence. They never saw the supramental world, nor did they see that the great Sacrifice of the Divine in Matter is that of an involution which will lead to the total revelation of the Divine in Matter itself.



June 1958 (?)⁶⁵

We are preparing upon earth the connecting-point, that point of communication and junction between the mental and terrestrial human consciousness and the supramental and superhuman Consciousness. It is a whole intermediate world that is being worked out, a new creation manifesting and materializing.

In order to be realized here upon earth, this creation must utilize the already existing material means and powers, but in a new way, adapted to the new needs. One of the most essential powers is the financial power.



June 22, 1958⁶⁶

Do not ask questions about the details of the material existence of this body: they are in themselves of no interest and must not attract attention.

Throughout all this life, knowingly or unknowingly, I have been what the Lord wanted me to be, I have done what the Lord wanted me to do. That alone matters.



July 2, 1958

Ramdas⁶⁷ must be a continuation of the line of Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, etc . . .

65Note written by Mother.

66Note written by Mother in English.

67Ramdas: a yogi from Northwest India who followed the path of love (*bhakti*). His whole yoga consisted in repeating the name *Ram*. He founded the *Anand-ashram* in Kanhargad, Kerala. He was born in 1884 and died in 1963.

(silence)

A subject for this evening ...

Something I have never said completely. On the one hand, there is the attitude of those in yesterday evening's film⁶⁸ : God is everything, God is everywhere, God is in he who smites you (as Sri Aurobindo wrote – 'God made me good with a blow, shall I tell Him: O Mighty One, I forgive you your harm and cruelty but do not do it again!'), an attitude which, if extended to its ultimate conclusion, accepts the world as it is: the world is the perfect expression of the divine Will. On the other hand, there is the attitude of progress and transformation. But for that, you must recognize that there are things in the world which are not as they should be.

In *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Sri Aurobindo says that this idea of good and bad, of pure and impure, is a notion needed for action; but the purists, such as Chaitanya, Ramakrishna and others, do not agree. They do not agree that it is indispensable for action. They simply say: your acceptance of action as a necessary thing is contrary to your perception of the Divine in all things.

How can the two be reconciled?

I recall that once I tried to speak of this, but no one followed me, no one understood, so I did not insist. I left it open and never pursued it further, for they could not decipher anything or find any meaning in what I was saying. But now I could give a very simple answer: Let the Supreme do the work. It is He who has to progress, not you!

Ramdas does not at all consider that the world as it is, is good.

No, but I know all these people, I know them thoroughly! I know Chaitanya, Ramakrishna and Ramdas thoroughly. They are utterly familiar to me. It doesn't bother them. These are people who live with a certain feeling, who have an entirely concrete experience and live in this experience, but they don't care at all if their formation – they have not even crystallized it, they leave it like that, vague – contains things that are mutually contradictory, because, in appearance, they reconcile them. They do not raise any questions, they do not have the need for an absolutely clear vision; their feeling is absolutely clear, and that's enough for them. Ramakrishna was like that; he said the most contradictory things without being bothered in the least, and they are all exactly and equally true.

But this crystal clear vision Sri Aurobindo had, where everything is in its place, where contradictions no longer exist – they never soared to that height. This was the thing, this really crystalline, perfect supramental vision, even from the standpoint of understanding and knowledge. They never went that far.

(Soon afterwards)

Each element, let us say each individual element (even though it is not exactly like that), is in its place according to whether the Grace acts on the individual or on the collectivity.

When the Grace acts on the collectivity, each thing, each element, each principle, is put in its place as the result of a karmic logic in the universal movement. This is what gives us the impression of disorder and confusion as we see it.

When the Grace acts on the individual, it gives to each the maximum position according to what he is and what he has realized.

And then, there is a super-grace, as it were, which works in a few exceptional cases, which places you not according to what you are but according to what you are to become, which means that the universal cosmic position is ahead of the individual's progress.

68Bishnupriya, a Bengali film.

And it is then that you should keep silent and fall on your knees.



July 5, 1958

I have just explained to Z my program for getting out of the present difficulties,⁶⁹ and I think if he has not concluded that I am totally mad, it is because he has an immense respect for me! But as always in these cases, there is such a joy in me, such an exultation: all the cells are dancing. I understand why people begin singing, dancing, etc. It takes a formidable power to remain like that (*gesture of solidity*): there is such a desire in the throat to sing!

* * *

S brought me a photograph (*taken on 2.21.58 during the Darshan*). A saint with a halo! (*Mother laughs mockingly.*)

The eyes are nice.

Yes, I remember. It was towards the end of the Darshan and I was repeating within me, ‘Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord ...’ But wordlessly. It came like that (*gesture*) and went far, far, far, far! It is all here (*motion around the head*). And that (*Mother points to her chin*) is determination (but there should have been a little more light on the chin!), the realizing will.

That’s it: the capacity to be an ABSOLUTELY receptive passivity – like that – in TOTAL silence and surrender, and at the same time here, there, an IRREDUCIBLE, OMNIPOTENT will with a total power to effectuate, shattering all resistances. Both simultaneously without one inhibiting the other, in the same joy – that is the GREAT secret! The harmonization of opposites, in joy and plenitude, ALWAYS, ALWAYS, for *all* problems: that is the great secret.



July 6, 1958

This morning I asked myself the question, ‘is money truly under Nature’s control?’ I shall have to

69In regard to the Ashram’s financial difficulties.

see ... Because for me personally, she always gives everything in abundance.

When I was young, I was as poor as a turkey, as poor as could be! As an artist, I sometimes had to go out in society (as artists are forced to do). I had lacquered boots that were cracked ... and I painted them so it wouldn't show! This is to tell you the state I was in – poor as a turkey. So one day, in a shop window, I saw a very pretty petticoat much in fashion then, with lace, ribbons, etc. (It was the fashion in those days to have long skirts which trailed on the floor, and I didn't have a petticoat which could go with such things – I didn't care, it didn't matter to me in the least, but since Nature had told me I would always have everything I needed, I wanted to make an experiment.) So I said, 'Well, I would very much like to have a petticoat to go with those skirts.' I got five of them! They came from every direction!

And it is always like that. I never ask for anything, but if by chance I say to myself, 'Hmm, wouldn't it be nice to have that,' mountains of them pour in! So last year, I made an experiment, I told Nature, 'Listen, my little one, you say that you will collaborate, you told me I would never lack anything. Well then, to put it on a level of feelings, it would really be fun, it would give me joy (in the style of Krishna's joy), to have A LOT of money to do everything I feel like doing. It's not that I want to increase things for myself, no; you give me more than I need. But to have some fun, to be able to give freely, to do things freely, to spend freely – I am asking you to give me a crore of rupees⁷⁰ for my birthday!

She didn't do a thing! Nothing, absolutely nothing: a complete refusal. Did she refuse or was she unable to? It may be that ... I always saw that money was under the control of an asuric force. (I am speaking of currency, 'cash'; I don't want to do business. When I try to do business, it generally succeeds very well, but I don't mean that. I am speaking of cash.) I never asked her that question.

You see, this is how it happened: there's this Ganesh⁷¹ ... We had a meditation (this was more than thirty years ago) in the room where 'Prosperity'⁷² is now distributed. There were eight or ten of us, I believe. We used to make sentences with flowers; I arranged the flowers, and each one made a sentence with the different flowers I had put there. And one day when the subject of prosperity or wealth came up, I thought (they always say that Ganesh is the god of money, of fortune, of the world's wealth), I thought, 'Isn't this whole story of the god with an elephant trunk merely a lot of human imagination?' Thereupon, we meditated. And who should I see walk in and park himself in front of me but a living being, absolutely alive and luminous, with a trunk that long ... and smiling! So then, in my meditation, I said, 'Ah! So it's true that you exist!' – 'Of course I exist! And you may ask me for whatever you wish, from a monetary standpoint, of course, and I will give it to you!'

So I asked. And for about ten years, it poured in, like this (*gesture of torrents*). It was incredible. I would ask, and at the next Darshan, or a month or several days later, depending, there it was.

Then the war and all the difficulties came, bringing a tremendous increase of people and expenditure (the war cost a fortune – anything at all cost ten times more than before), and suddenly, finished, nothing more. Not exactly nothing, but a thin little trickle. And when I asked, it didn't come. So one day, I put the question to Ganesh through his image (!), I asked him, 'What about your promise?' – 'I can't do it, it's too much for me; my means are too limited!' – 'Ah!' I said to myself (*laughing*), 'What bad luck!' And I no longer counted on him.

Once someone even asked Santa Claus! A young Muslim girl who had a special liking for 'Father Christmas' – I don't know why, as it was not part of her religion! Without saying a word to

70About one million dollars.

71Ganesh: a god with the head of an elephant; the son of Parvati, the Divine Mother.

72The room where, on the first of each month, Mother distributed to the disciples their needs for the month.

me, she called on Santa Claus and told him, ‘Mother doesn’t believe in you; you should give Her a gift to prove to Her that you exist. You can give it to Her for Christmas.’ And it happened! ... She was quite proud.

But it only happened like that once. And as for Ganesh, that was the end of it. So then I asked Nature. It took her a long time to accept to collaborate. But as for the money, I shall have to ask her about it; because for me personally, it is still going on. I think, ‘Hmm, wouldn’t it be nice to have a wristwatch like that.’ And I get twenty of them! I say to myself, ‘Well, if I had that ...’ and I get thirty of them! Things come in from every side, without my even uttering a word – I don’t even ask, they just come.

The first time I came here and spoke with Sri Aurobindo about what was needed for the Work, he told me (he also wrote it to me) that for the secure achievement of the Work we would need three powers: one was the power over health, the second was the power over government, and the third was the power over money.

Health naturally depends upon the sadhana; but even that is not so sure: there are other factors. As for the second, the power over government, Sri Aurobindo looked at it, studied it, considered it very carefully, and finally he told me, ‘There is only one way to have that power: it is TO BE the government. One can influence individuals, one can transmit the will to them, but their hands are tied. In a government, there is no one individual, nor even several who is all-powerful and who can decide things. One must be the government oneself and give it the desired orientation.’

For the last, for money, he told me, ‘I still don’t know exactly what it depends on.’ Then one day I entered into trance with this idea in mind, and after a certain journey I came to a place like a subterranean grotto (which means that it is in the subconscious, or perhaps even in the unconscious) which was the source, the place and the power over money. I was about to enter into this grotto (a kind of inner cave) when I saw, coiled and upright, an immense serpent, like an all black python, formidable, as big as a seven-story house, who said, ‘You cannot pass!’ – ‘Why not? Let me pass!’ – ‘Myself, I would let you pass, but if I did, “they” would immediately destroy me.’ – ‘Who, then, is this “they”?’ – ‘They are the asuric powers who rule over money. They have put me here to guard the entrance, precisely so that you may not enter.’ – ‘And what is it that would give one the power to enter?’ Then he told me something like this: ‘I heard (that is, he himself had no special knowledge, but it was something he had heard from his masters, those who ruled over him), I heard that he who will have a total power over the human sexual impulses (not merely in himself, but a universal power – that is, a power enabling him to control this everywhere, among all men) will have the right to enter.’ In other words, these forces would not be able to prevent him from entering.

A personal realization is very easy, it is nothing at all; a personal realization is one thing, but the power to control it among all men – that is, to control or master such movements at will, everywhere – is quite another. I don’t believe that this ... condition has been fulfilled. If what the serpent said is true and if this is really what will vanquish these hostile forces that rule over money, well then, it has not been fulfilled.

It has been fulfilled to a certain extent – but it’s negligible. It is conditional, limited: in one case, it works; in another, it doesn’t. It is quite problematic. And naturally, where terrestrial things are involved (I don’t say universal, but in any case terrestrial), when it is something involving the earth, it must be complete; there cannot be any approximations.

Therefore, it’s an affair between the asuras⁷³ and the human species. To transform itself is the only solution left to the human species – in other words, to tear from the asuric forces the power of ruling over the human species.

You see, the human species is a part of Nature, but as Sri Aurobindo has explained, from the moment mind expressed itself in man, it put him into a relationship with Nature very different from the relationship all the lower species have with her. All the lower species right up to man are

⁷³Asuras: the demons or dark forces of the mental plane.

completely under the rule of Nature; she makes them do whatever she wants, and they can do nothing without her consent. Whereas man begins to act and to live as an equal; not as an equal in terms of power, but from the standpoint of consciousness (he is beginning to do so since he has the capacity to study and to find out Nature's secrets). He is not superior to her, far from it, but he is on an equal footing. And so he has acquired – this is a fact – he has acquired a certain power of independence that he immediately used to put himself under the influence of the hostile forces, which are not terrestrial but extra-terrestrial.

I am speaking of terrestrial Nature. Through their mental power, men had the choice and the freedom to make pacts with these extraterrestrial vital forces. There is a whole vital world that has nothing to do with the earth, it is entirely independent or prior to earth's existence, it is self-existent – well, they have brought that down here! They have made ... what we see! And such being the case ... This is what terrestrial Nature told me: 'It is beyond my control.'

So considering all that, Sri Aurobindo came to the conclusion that only the supramental power ... (*Mother brings down her hands*) as he said, will be able to rule over everything. And when that happens, it will be all over – including Nature. For a long time, Nature rebelled (I have written about it often). She used to say, 'Why are you in such a hurry? It will be done one day.' But then last year, there was that extraordinary experience.⁷⁴ And it was because of that experience that I told her, 'Well, now that we agree, give me some proof; I am asking you for some proof – do it for me.' She didn't budge, absolutely nothing.

Perhaps it is a kind of ... it can hardly be called an intuition, but a kind of divination of this idea that made people speak of 'selling one's soul to the devil for money,' of money being an evil force, which produces this shrinking on the part of all those who want to lead a spiritual life – but as for that, they shrink from everything, not only from money!

Perhaps it would not be necessary to have this power over all men, but in any event, it should be great enough to act upon the mass. It is likely that once a certain movement has been mastered to some degree, what the mass does or doesn't do (this whole human mass that has barely, barely emerged into even the mental consciousness) will become quite irrelevant. You see, the mass is still under the great rule of Nature. I am referring to mental humanity, predominantly mental, which developed the mind but misused it and immediately set out on the wrong path – first thing.

There is nothing to say since the first thing done by the divine forces which emanated for the Creation was to take the wrong path!⁷⁵ That is the origin, the seed of this marvelous spirit of independence – the negation of *surrender*, in other words. Man said, 'I have the power to think; I will do with it what I want, and no one has the right to intervene. I am free, I am an independent being, IN-DE-PEN-DENT! So that's how things stand: we are all independent beings!'

But yesterday, in fact, I was looking (with all these mantras and these prayers and this whole vibration that has descended into the atmosphere, creating a state of constant calling in the atmosphere), and I remembered the old movements and how everything now has changed! I was also thinking of the old disciplines, one of which is to say, 'I am That.'⁷⁶ People were told to sit in meditation and repeat, 'I am That,' to reach an identification. And it all seemed to me so obsolete, so childish, but at the same time a part of the whole. I looked, and it seemed so absurd to sit in meditation and say, 'I am That!' 'I,' what is this 'I' who is That; what is this 'I,' where is it? ... I was trying to find it, and I saw a tiny, microscopic point (to see it would almost require some gigantic instrument), a tiny, obscure point in an im-men-sity of Light, and that little point was the

⁷⁴The experience of Nature's collaboration (November 8, 1957).

⁷⁵In effect, according to tradition, the first divine forces that emanated for the creation were the Asuras, who turned into demons. The gods were created later to repair the disorder engendered by the demons.

⁷⁶So 'ham the traditional mantra of the Vedantic path, which declares that the world is an illusion.

body. At the same time – it was absolutely simultaneous – I saw the Presence of the Supreme as a very, very, very, VERY immense Being, within which was ‘I’ in an attitude of ... (‘I’ was only a sensation, you see), an attitude ... (*gesture of surrender*) like this. There were no limits, yet at the same time, one felt the joy of being permeated, enveloped and of being able to widen, widen, widen indefinitely – to widen the whole being, from the highest consciousness to the most material consciousness. And then, at the same time, to look at this body and to see every cell, every atom vibrating with a divine, radiant Presence with all its Consciousness, all its Power, all its Will, all its Love – all, all, really – and a joy! An extraordinary joy. And one did not disturb the other, nothing was contradictory and everything was felt at the same time. That was when I said, ‘But truly! This body had to have the training it has had for more than seventy years to be able to bear all that without starting to cry out or dance or leap up or whatever it might be!’ No, it was calm (it was exultant, but it was very calm), and it remained in control of its movements and its words. In spite of the fact that it was really living in another world, it could apparently act normal due to this strenuous training in self-control by the REASON – by the reason – over the whole being, which has tamed it and given it such a great cohesive power that I can BE in the experience, I can LIVE this experience, and at the same time respond with the most amiable of smiles to the most idiotic questions!

And then, it always ends in the same way, by a canticle to the action of the grace: ‘O, Lord! You are truly marvelous! All the experiences I have needed to pass through You have given to me, all the things I needed to do to make this body ready You have made me do, and always with the feeling that it was You who was making me do it’ – and with the universal disapproval of all the right-minded humanity!



July 1958

To do this Yoga, one must have at least some sense of beauty. Without it, one lacks one of the most important aspects of the physical world.

There is a beauty of the soul, a dignity of the soul – it is a thing to which I am very sensitive, a thing that moves me and arouses great respect in me, always.

A beauty of the soul?

Yes, it shows through in the face; this kind of dignity, beauty, harmony of an integral realization. When the soul shows through in the physical, it imparts this dignity, this beauty, this majesty, the majesty that comes from being the Tabernacle. Thus, even things that have no particular beauty assume a sense of eternal beauty, of THE eternal beauty.

In this way, I have seen faces change from one extreme to the other in a flash. Someone who had this kind of beauty, harmony, this sense of divine dignity in the body, and suddenly the perception of the obstacle or the difficulty comes, then the sense of wrong, of unworthiness – there is a sudden distortion in the appearance, a kind of decomposition of the features! And yet it is the same face. It takes place in a flash, it’s frightful. This kind of hideousness of torment, of

degradation (it is exactly what has been expressed in religions as the ‘torment of sin’), it changes your face unrecognizably! Even features that are beautiful in themselves become frightful – and they are the same features, the same person.

Thus I saw how horrible is the sense of sin, how much it belongs to the world of falsehood.



July 19, 1958

A peach should ripen on the tree; it’s a fruit that should be picked when the sun is upon it. Just as the sun falls on it, you come along, pluck it and bite into it. Then it is absolute paradise.

There are two such fruits – peaches and golden green plums. It is the same for both. You must take them warm from the tree, bite into them, and you are filled with the taste of paradise.

Every fruit should be eaten in a special way.

At heart, this is the symbol of the earthly Paradise and the tree of Knowledge: by biting into the fruit of Knowledge, one loses the spontaneity of movement and begins objectivizing, learning, questioning. So as soon as they ate of this fruit, they were full of sin.

I say that every fruit should be eaten in its own way. The being who lives according to his own nature, his own truth, must spontaneously find the right way of using things. When you live according to the truth of your being, you don’t need to learn things: you do them spontaneously, according to the inner law. When you sincerely follow your nature, spontaneously and sincerely, you are divine. As soon as you think or look at yourself acting or start questioning, you are full of sin.

It is man’s mental consciousness that has filled all Nature with the idea of sin and all the misery it brings. Animals are not at all unhappy in the way we are. Not at all, not at all, except – as Sri Aurobindo says – those that are corrupted. Those that are corrupted are those that live with men. Dogs have the sense of sin and guilt, for their whole aspiration is to resemble man. Man is the god. Hence there is dissimulation, hypocrisy: dogs lie. But men admire that. They say, ‘Oh! How intelligent they are!’

They have lost their divinity.

Truly, the human species is at a point in the spiral which is not very pretty.

But isn’t a dog more conscious, more evolved than a tiger, or higher in the spiral – that is, nearer the Divine?

It’s not a question of being conscious. There is no doubt that man is more evolved than the tiger, but the tiger is more divine than man. One shouldn’t confuse things. These are two entirely different things.

The Divine is everywhere, in everything. We should never forget it – not for a second should we forget it. He is everywhere, in everything; and in an unconscious but spontaneous, therefore sincere, way, all that exists below the mental manifestation is divine, without mixture; in other words, it

exists spontaneously and in harmony with its nature. It is man with his mind who has introduced the idea of guilt. Naturally, he is much more conscious! There's no question about it, it's a fact, although what we call consciousness (what 'we' call it, that is, what man calls consciousness) is the power to objectify and mentalize things. It is not the true consciousness, but it's what men call consciousness. So according to the human mode, it is obvious that man is much more conscious than the animal, but the human brings in sin and perversion which do not exist outside of this state we call 'conscious' – which in fact is not conscious but merely consists in mentalizing things and in having the ability to objectify them.

It is an ascending curve, but a curve that swerves away from the Divine. So naturally, one has to climb much higher to find a higher Divine, since it is a conscious Divine, whereas the others are divine spontaneously and instinctively, without being conscious of it. All our moral notions of good and evil, all of that, are what we have thrown over the creation with our distorted and perverted consciousness. It is we who have invented it.

We are the distorting intermediary between the purity of the animal and the divine purity of the gods.



July 21, 1958

Human beings don't know how to keep energy. When something happens – an accident or an illness, for example – and they ask for help, a double or a triple dose of energy is sent. If they happen to be receptive, they receive it. This energy is given for two reasons: to restore order out of the disorder caused by the accident or illness, and to impart a transformative force to repair or change the source of the illness or accident.

But instead of using the energy in this way, they immediately throw it out. They start stirring about, reacting, working, speaking ... They feel full of energy and they throw it all out! They can't keep anything. So naturally, since the energy was not sent to be wasted like that but for an inner use, they feel absolutely flat, run down. And it is universal. They don't know, they do not know how to make this movement – to turn within, to use the energy (not to keep it, it doesn't keep), to use it to repair the damage done to the body and to go deeply within to find the reason for this accident or illness, and there to change it by an aspiration, an inner transformation. Instead of that, right away they start speaking, stirring about, reacting, doing this or that!

In fact, the immense majority of human beings feel they are living only when they waste their energy. Otherwise, it does not seem to them to be life.

Not to waste energy means to utilize it towards the ends for which it was given. If energy is given for the transformation, for the sublimation of the being, it must be used for that; if energy is given to restore something that has been disrupted in the body, it must be used for that.

Naturally, if a special work is given to someone along with the energy to do this work, it's very good as long as it is being used towards the end for which it was given.

But as soon as a man feels energetic, he immediately rushes into action. Or else, those who don't have the sense of doing something useful start gossiping. And still worse, those who have no

control over themselves become intolerant and start arguing! If someone contradicts their will, they feel full of energy and they mistake that for a ‘godlike wrath’!



July 23, 1958

In the final analysis, seeing the world such as it is and seems meant to be irremediably, human intellect has decided that this universe must be an error of God and that the manifestation or creation is certainly the result of a desire, the desire to manifest, know oneself, enjoy oneself. So the only thing to do is to put an end to this error as soon as possible by refusing to cling to desire and its fatal consequences.

But the Supreme Lord answers that the comedy is not entirely played out, and He adds: ‘Wait for the last act; undoubtedly you will change your mind.’



July (?) 1958

Why, by what mechanism, do mental formulations dissipate an experience and make it lose the major part of its power of action on the consciousness?

Suppose, for example, you want to undo a wrong movement and, as the result of a grace, the Force is sent for this purpose and begins acting upon the consciousness. Then if you pull it towards you, as it were, to try to formulate it, naturally you deconcentrate it, disperse and dissipate it.

But that's not all; the simple fact of speaking to another person automatically opens you to all that can come from that person. An exchange always takes place. His curiosity, his obscurity, his good or sometimes even his bad will interfere, modify, distort.

Whereas if you wish to speak of your experience to your guru and he consents to listen to you, it means that he ADDS his force, his knowledge, his experience to the working of the Force and he helps its effectuation.

But the damage caused by the formulation still exists?

Yes, but he repairs it.



August 7, 1958

It is very difficult to manage both at the same time: the transformation of the body and taking care of people. But what can I do? I told Sri Aurobindo I would do the work, and I am doing it – I cannot just abandon everything.

When I think of the time the hatha yogis devote to the work on the body – they do nothing but that; they do nothing but that all the time, until they have attained a certain point. This is in fact the reason why Sri Aurobindo wanted none of it: he found that it took a lot of time for a rather meager result.

* * *

Day and night, I am investigating all that has to be transformed ... I can assure you that there is plenty of work!

Last night, I had many dreams (not really dreams, but ...); I used to find them very interesting because they gave me certain indications, all kinds of things, but when I saw it all now, I said to myself, ‘Good Lord! What a waste of time! Instead, I could be living in a supramental consciousness and seeing things.’ So during the night, I made a resolution to change all this too. My nights have to change. I am already changing my days; now my nights have to change. But then all this subconscious in Matter, all this, it all has to change! There’s no choice, it has to be seen to.

Once you set to this work, it is such a formidable task! But what can I do?



August 8, 1958

It's remarkable that things you have understood in your consciousness ... reappear as problems to be solved in the cells of the body.

In the cells, both things are there. The body is convinced of the divine Presence everywhere, that all is the Divine – it lives in that; and at the same time, it shrinks from certain contacts! I saw that

this morning, both things at once, and I said, ‘Lord, I know nothing at all!’

There (*gesture above the head*), everything has been resolved, I could write books on how to resolve this or that, how the synthesis is made, etc., but here (*the body*) ... I live this synthesis stumblingly. The two coexist, but it is still not THAT (*gesture, hands clasped together, pointing upwards*).

(silence)

What problems come up! If there were a plague or cholera, for example, would the supramental Force in the cells, the supramental realization, be able to restore order out of the disorder that allows the epidemic to be? I don't mean on an individual level – individually, if you are in a certain consciousness, you can remain untouched – I am not speaking of that, I am speaking impersonally, as it were.

We know nothing. We believe we know, but as soon as it is a question of that (*the body*), we know nothing. As soon as we are in the subtle physical, we know everything, we live in bliss – but here, we know nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing.



August 9, 1958

If human love came forth unalloyed, it would be all-powerful. Unfortunately, in human love, there is as much SELF love as love for the beloved; it is not a love that makes you forget yourself.

Evidently the gods of the Puranas are a good deal worse than human beings, as we saw in that film the other day⁷⁷ (and that story was absolutely true). The gods of the Overmind are infinitely more egocentric – the only thing that counts for them is their power, the extent of their power. Man has in addition a psychic being, so consequently he has true love and compassion – wherein lies his superiority over the gods. It was very, very clearly expressed in this film, and it's very true.

The gods are faultless, for they live according to their own nature, spontaneously and without constraint; it is their godly way. But if one looks at it from a higher point of view, if one has a higher vision, a vision of the whole, they have fewer qualities than man. In this film, it was proved that through their capacity for love and self-giving, men can have as much power as the gods, and even more – when they are not egoists, when they can overcome their egoism.

Certainly man is nearer the Supreme than the gods. Provided he fulfills the necessary conditions, he can be nearer – he isn't so automatically, but he can be, he has the power, the potentiality to be.

⁷⁷Anusuya: wife of the rishi Atri and endowed with a great inner force. In her husband's absence, three gods came (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) disguised as brahmins and asked her for something to eat. Then they refused to eat unless she served them naked. Since they were brahmins, she could not send them away without feeding them, so by her inner power, she changed them into babies and served them naked. This film was shown at the Ashram Playground on August 5, 1958.



August 12, 1958

(Letter from Mother to Satprem, travelling)

8.12.58

My dear child,

Behind all the appearances and diverse entities, I am always present near you, and my love enfolds you.

I have put the work aside and shall be happy to do it with you upon your return.

My blessings never leave you.

Signed: Mother



August 29, 1958

(Note written by Mother after an experience She had during a playground meditation when Swami J.J. was present. It was this swami with whom Satprem journeyed in the Himalayas to receive tantric initiation.⁷⁸)

The mantra written upon each of the souvenirs⁷⁹ from the Himalayas has a strong power of evoking the Supreme Mother.

At the Thursday evening meditation, he appeared as the 'Guru of Tantric Initiation,' magnified and seated upon a symbolic representation of the forces and riches of material Nature (in the middle of the playground, to my left), and he put into my hand something sufficiently material for me to feel the vibrations physically, and it had a great realizing power. It was a kind of luminous and very vibrant globe which I held in my hands during the whole meditation.

⁷⁸Satprem would later part company with this Swami and follow a thorough tantric discipline with another guru who will henceforth be called X in the *Agenda*.

⁷⁹The Swami brought back various objects and souvenirs from the Himalayas which he presented to Mother.

S, who was sitting in front of me, spontaneously asked me afterwards what I had been holding in my hands during the meditation, and she described it thus: ‘It was round, very soft and luminous like the moon.’



August 30, 1958

(In the presence of Pavitra and Abhay Singh,⁸⁰ Mother recounts a vision she had during the night)

It was just at four o’clock in the morning, and it woke me up. It was exactly like this ... I was apparently in my bathroom, and I had to open the door between the bathroom and Sri Aurobindo’s room; the moment I put my hand on the doorknob, I knew with an absolute certainty that destruction was awaiting me behind the door. It had the form or image of those great invaders of India, those who had swooped down upon India and destroyed everything in their wake ... But it was only an impression.

So the door had to be opened and I ... felt and said, ‘Lord, may your will be done.’ I opened the door and behind it was Z⁸¹ in the same clothes he wears when he drives, and he was leaning against one of those big tractor tires – or perhaps he was holding it at the same time. I was so dumbfounded that I woke up. It took me a little while to be able to understand what it might mean, and afterwards ... Even now, I still don’t know ... What was I? Was I India, or was I the world? ... I don’t know. And what did Z represent? ... It was as imperative and clear, as positive and absolute as could be: the certitude that destruction was behind the door, that it was inevitable. And it had the form of those great Tartar or Mongol invaders, those people who came from the North and invaded India, who pillaged everything ... That’s what it was like. But what Z was doing there I don’t know. What does he represent? ... The first impulse was to tell Abhay Singh, ‘Forbid him to drive the tractor.’

(Pavitra:) What was he holding in his hands, Mother?

Huge tires ... He was standing there, like that, with a very majestic air. He was wearing his white outfit, those long pyjamas ...

(Abhay Singh:) Yesterday he drove the station wagon for the visitors.

Does it also have large tires?

(Pavitra:) A little bigger than jeep tires.

80The disciple who managed the Ashram ‘Atelier’: mechanical workshop, maintenance garage, automobile service, etc.

81A young disciple who worked in the Atelier.

No, it came up to here (*gesture to the top of the head*). It seemed to be a tractor tire, but it did not have the heavy tread that tractor tires have.

(*Abhay Singh:*) *There are tractor tires that have no tread.*

Ah! So ... He was standing, and it came up to here (*same gesture*). So it must have been a tractor tire. What could it represent, he, and the tractor? ... I don't know ... It was not personal, you see – I mean this body. It had nothing to do with that.

(*Pavitra:*) *The industrialization of India?*

(*silence*)

I don't know.



September 1958

(*Fragment of a conversation concerning the translation into French of Sri Aurobindo's aphorism: '... Knowledge is so much of the truth, seen in a distorted medium, as the mind arrives at by groping; Wisdom what the eye of divine vision sees in the spirit.' Mother compares the Truth to a pure white light, then continues:)*

... But this white, precisely, is composed of all the colors. So when you perceive a thing, instead of seeing it as white, there are a certain number of colors that completely elude your perception: you see red, green, yellow, blue or something else, but it does not make white because some colors are missing. This is a very good image. The distorted milieu cannot perceive the whole, it perceives only partially – not partially the parts of a complete whole, but a mixture of something which escapes it in its entirety because the milieu is unfit to manifest or express or even perceive the totality.

This color metaphor is quite adequate.

Truth is like a white light recomposed, for it contains all that is, but the milieu is unfit to manifest all the elements or all the colors – and it can be said that the best escape. So, instead of seeing a white light, you see a number of colors of something from which they derived.

Sri Aurobindo put it as vaguely as possible on purpose: 'so much of the truth ... as the mind arrives at.' It must be put in as vague a form as possible – all precision is falsifying. I searched for one hour and didn't find it. I put 'autant de la vérité ... que le mental peut saisir.' 'Autant' is not elegant, it is scarcely French, but I think it is the only way to put it which is not false (I believe so, unless you have something better to suggest). But in any event, what you say is unacceptable; you cannot put 'la partie ou la portion de la vérité' [the part or portion of truth] – it's not a portion, it is not at all a portion.

*Then we could say ‘ce que’: ‘La Connaissance est ce que, de la vérité vue dans un milieu déformé, le mental peut saisir ...*⁸²

(Mother assents)



⁸²Final translation:’ ... La Connaissance est ce qu’en tâtonnant le mental peut saisir de la Vérité vue dans un milieu déformé; la Sagesse, ce que l’oeil de la vision divine voit en l’esprit.’

September 16, 1958

I would very much like to have a ‘true mantra.’

I have a whole stock of mantras; they have all come spontaneously, never from the head. They sprang forth spontaneously, as the Veda is said to have sprung forth.

I don’t know when it began – a very long time ago, before I came here, although some of them came while I was here. But in my case, they were always very short. For example, when Sri Aurobindo was here in his body, at any moment, in any difficulty, for anything, it always came like this: ‘My Lord!’ – simply and spontaneously – ‘My Lord!’ And instantly, the contact was established. But since He left, it has stopped. I can no longer say it, for it would be like saying ‘My Lord, My Lord!’ to myself.

I had a mantra in French before coming to Pondicherry. It was *Dieu de bonté et de miséricorde* ... [God of kindness and mercy], but what it means is usually not understood – it is an entire program, a universal program. I have been repeating this mantra since the beginning of the century; it was the mantra of ascension, of realization. At present, it no longer comes in the same way, it comes rather as a memory. But it was deliberate, you see; I always said *Dieu de bonté et de miséricorde*, because even then I understood that everything is the Divine and the Divine is in all things and that it is only we who make a distinction between what is or what is not the Divine.

My experience is that, individually, we are in relationship with that aspect of the Divine which is not necessarily the most in conformity with our natures, but which is the most essential for our development or the most necessary for our action. For me, it was always a question of action because, personally, individually, each aspiration for personal development had its own form, its own spontaneous expression, so I did not use any formula. But as soon as there was the least little difficulty in action, it sprang forth. Only long afterwards did I notice that it was formulated in a certain way – I would utter it without even knowing what the words were. But it came like this: *Dieu de bonté et de miséricorde*. It was as if I wanted to eliminate from action all aspects that were not this one. And it lasted for ... I don’t know, more than twenty or twenty-five years of my life. It came spontaneously.

Just recently one day, the contact became entirely physical, the whole body was in great exaltation, and I noticed that other lines were spontaneously being added to this *Dieu de bonté et de misericorde*, and I noted them down. It was a springing forth of states of consciousness – not words.

Seigneur, Dieu de bonte et de misericorde
Seigneur, Dieu d'unite souveraine
Seigneur, Dieu de beaute et d'harmonie
Seigneur, Dieu de puissance et de realisation
Seigneur, Dieu d'amour et de compassion
Seigneur, Dieu du silence et de la contemplation
Seigneur, Dieu de lumiere et de connaissance
Seigneur, Dieu de vie et d'immortalite Seigneur,
Dieu de jeunesse et de progres
Seigneur, Dieu d'abondance et de plenitude
Seigneur, Dieu de force et de sante.

Lord, God of kindness and mercy
Lord, God of sovereign oneness
Lord, God of beauty and harmony
Lord, God of power and realization
Lord, God of love and compassion

Lord, God of silence and contemplation
Lord, God of light and knowledge
Lord, God of life and immortality
Lord, God of youth and progress
Lord, God of abundance and plenitude
Lord, God of strength and health.

The words came afterwards, as if they had been superimposed upon the states of consciousness, grafted onto them. Some of the associations seem unexpected, but they were the exact expression of the states of consciousness in their order of unfolding. They came one after another, as if the contact was trying to become more complete. And the last was like a triumph. As soon as I finished writing (in writing, all this becomes rather flat), the impetus within was still alive and it gave me the sense of an all-conquering Truth. And the last mantra sprang forth:

Seigneur, Dieu de la Verite victorieuse!

Lord, God of victorious Truth!

Like a triumph. But I didn't write that one down because I did not want to spoil my impression.

Of course, these things should not be published. We can file them in this *Agenda of the Supramental Manifestation* for later on. Later on, when the Victory is won, we shall say, 'If you want to see the curve ... '

But what is going to come now? I constantly hear the Sanskrit mantra:

*OM NAMO BHAGAVATEH*⁸³

It is there, all around me; it takes hold of all the cells and at once they spring forth in an ascension. And Narada's mantra, too:

Narayana, Narayana ...

(it is actually a Command which means: now you shall do as I wish), but it doesn't come from the heart.

What will it be?

It will simply spring forth in a flash, all of a sudden, and it will be very powerful. Only power can do something. Love vanishes like water running through sand: people remain beatific ... and nothing moves! No, power is needed – like Shiva, stirring, churning ...

When I have this mantra, instead of saying hello, good-bye, I shall say that. When I say hello, good-bye, it means 'Hello: the Presence is here, the Light is here.' 'Good-bye: I am not going away, I am staying here.'

But when I have this mantra, I believe something will happen.

(silence)

For the moment, of all the formulas or mantras, the one that acts most directly on this body, that seizes all the cells and immediately does this (*vibrating motion*) is the Sanskrit mantra: OM NAMO BHAGAVATEH.

As soon as I sit for meditation, as soon as I have a quiet minute to concentrate, it always begins with this mantra, and there is a response in the body, in the cells of the body: they all start vibrating.

This is how it happened: Y had just returned, and he brought back a trunk full of things which

⁸³The first syllable of NAMO is pronounced with a short 'a,' as in *nahmo*. The final word is pronounced BHA-GAHA-VA-TEH.

he then proceeded to show me, and his excitement made tight, tight little waves in the atmosphere, making my head ache; it made ... anyway, it was unpleasant. When I left, just after that had happened, I sat down and went like this (*gesture of sweeping out*) to make it stop, and immediately the mantra began.

It rose up from here (*Mother indicates the solar plexus*), like this: Om Namo Bhagavateh OM NAMO BHAGAVATEH OM NAMO BHAGAVATEH. It was formidable. For the entire quarter of an hour that the meditation lasted, everything was filled with Light! In the deeper tones it was of golden bronze (at the throat level it was almost red) and in the higher tones it was a kind of opaline white light: OM NAMO BHAGAVATEH, OM NAMO BHAGAVATEH, OM NAMO BHAGAVATEH.

The other day (I was in my bathroom upstairs), it came; it took hold of the entire body. It rose up in the same way, and all the cells were trembling. And with such a power! So I stopped everything, all movement, and I let the thing grow. The vibration went on expanding, ever widening, as the sound itself was expanding, expanding, and all the cells of the body were seized with an intensity of aspiration ... as if the entire body were swelling – it became overwhelming. I felt that it would all burst.

I understood those who withdraw from everything to live that totally.

And it has such a transformative power! I felt that if it continued, something would happen, something like a change in the equilibrium of the body's cells.

Unfortunately, I was unable to continue, because ... I don't have the time; it was just before the balcony darshan and I was going to be late. Something told me, 'That is for people who have nothing to do.' Then I said, 'I belong to my work,' and I slowly withdrew. I put on the brakes, and the action was cut short. But what remains is that whenever I repeat this mantra ... everything starts vibrating.

So each one must find something that acts on himself, individually. I am only speaking of the action on the physical plane, because mentally, vitally, in all the inner parts of the being, the aspiration is always, always spontaneous. I am referring only to the physical plane.

The physical seems to be more open to something that is repetitious – for example, the music we play on Sundays, which has three series of combined mantras. The first is that of Chandi, addressed to the universal Mother:

*Ya devi sarvabhuteshu matrirupena sansthita
Ya devi sarvabhuteshu shaktirupena sansthita
Ya devi sarvabhuteshu shantirupena sansthita
Namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai namo namah*

The second is addressed to Sri Aurobindo (and I believe they have put my name at the end). It incorporates the mantra I was speaking of:

*Om namo namah shrimirambikayai
Om namo bhagavateh shriaravindaya
Om namo namah shrimirambikayai.*

And the third is addressed to Sri Aurobindo: 'Thou art my refuge.'

Shriaravindah sharanam mama.

Each time this music is played, it produces exactly the same effect upon the body. It is strange, as if all the cells were dilating, with a feeling that the body is growing larger ... It becomes all dilated, as if swollen with light – with force, a lot of force. And this music seems to form spirals, like luminous ribbons of incense smoke, white (not transparent, literally white) and they rise up and up. I always see the same thing; it begins in the form of a vase, then swells like an amphora and

converges higher up to blossom forth like a flower.

So for these mantras, everything depends upon what you want to do with them. I am in favor of a short mantra, especially if you want to make both numerous and spontaneous repetitions – one or two words, three at most. Because you must be able to use them in all cases, when an accident is about to happen, for example. It has to spring up without thinking, without calling: it should issue forth from the being spontaneously, like a reflex, exactly like a reflex. Then the mantra has its full force.

For me, on the days when I have no special preoccupations or difficulties (days I could call normal, when I am normal), everything I do, all the movements of this body, all, all the words I utter, all the gestures I make, are accompanied and upheld by or lined, as it were, with this mantra:

OM NAMO BHAGAVATEH ... OM NAMO BHAGAVATEH ...

all, all the time, all the time, all the time.

That is the normal state. It creates an atmosphere of an intensity almost more material than the subtle physical; it's like ... almost like the phosphorescent radiations from a medium. And it has a great action, a very great action: it can prevent an accident. And it accompanies you all the time, all the time.

But it is up to you to know what you want to do with it.

To sustain the aspiration – to remember. We so easily lapse into forgetfulness. To create a kind of automatism.

You have no mantras that have come to you, that give you a more living feeling? ... Are their mantras long?

Yes, they are long. And he⁸⁴ has not given me any mantra of the Mother, so ... They exist, but he has not given me any ... I don't know, they don't have much effect on me. It is something very mental.

That's why it should spring forth from you.

(silence)

This one, this mantra, OM NAMO BHAGAVATEH, came to me after some time, for I felt ... well, I saw that I needed to have a mantra of my own, that is, a mantra consonant with what this body has to do in the world. And it was just then that it came.⁸⁵ It was truly an answer to a need that had made itself felt. So if you feel the need – not there, not in your head, but here (*Mother points to the center of her heart*), it will come. One day, either you will hear the words, or they will spring forth from your heart ... And when that happens, you must hold onto it.



84The tantric Swami.

85The different mantras or prayers that came to Mother and which She grouped under the heading *Prayers of the Consciousness of the Cells*, are included as an addendum to the *Agenda* of 1959.

September 19, 1958

Something the modern world has completely lost is the sense of the sacred.

‘Ever since my childhood, I have spent my time veiling myself’: one veil over another veil over another veil, so as to remain invisible. Because to see me without the true attitude is the arch-sin. Anyway, ‘sin’ in the sense Sri Aurobindo defines it – meaning that things are no longer in their place.



October 1, 1958

(Mother speaks of an experience She had during, the Wednesday class at the playground:)

It was so strong, so strong that it was really inexpressible. The negative expel fence of no longer being an individual, or in other words, the dissolution of the ego, took place a long time ago and still takes place quite often: the ego completely vanishes. But this was a positive experience of being ... not just the universe in its totality, but something else – ineffable, yet concrete, absolutely concrete! Unutterable⁸⁶ – and yet utterly concrete: the divine Person beyond the Impersonal.

The experience lasted for only a few minutes. And I knew, then, that all our words ... all our words are empty. But circumstances were such that I had to speak ...



October 4, 1958

Do all our vibrations reach you or must they have a special intensity?

⁸⁶Later, Mother added: ‘Because I do not say everything; when I am in that state, there is a lethargy of expression!

It must be strong enough to pull me from my concentration or my activity. If I knew when you concentrate or do your *puja*,⁸⁷ I could tune into you, and shell I would know more; otherwise, my inner life is too ... I am not at all passive inwardly, you see, I am very active, so I don't usually receive your vibrations unless they impose themselves strongly or unless I have decided beforehand to be attentive to what is coming from someone or other. If I know that at a given moment something is going to happen, then I open a door, as it were. But it's difficult to speak of these things.

When you left on your journey,⁸⁸ for example, I made a specie! concentration for all to go well so that nothing untoward happen to you. I even made a formation and asked for a constant, special help over you. Then I renewed my concentration every day, which is how I came to notice that you were invoking me very regulary. I Saw you everyday, everyday, with a very regular precision. It was something that imposed itself on me, but it imposed itself only because I had initially made a formation to follow you.

For people here in the Ashram, my work is not the same. It is more like a kind of atmosphere that extends everywhere – a very conscious atmosphere – which I let work for each one according to his need. I don't have a special action for each person, unless something requires my special attention. When I would tune into you while you were travelling, I clearly saw your image appear before me, as though you were looking at me, but now that you have returned here, I no longer see it. Rather, I receive a sensation or an impression; and as these sensations and impressions are innumerable, it's rather like one element among many. It no longer imposes itself in such an entirely distinct way nor does it appear before me in the same manner, as a clear image of yourself, as though you wanted to know something.

As soon as I am alone, I enter into a very deep concentration, – a state of consciousness, a kind of universal activity. Is it deep? What is it? ... It is far beyond all the mental regions, far, far beyond, and it is constant. As soon as I am alone or resting somewhere, that's how it is.

The other day when I was in this state of concentration, I had the vision that I mentioned to you. I felt I was being pulled, that something was pulling me and trying to draw my attention. I felt it very strongly. So I opened my eyes, my mental eyes (the physical eyes may remain opened or closed, it makes no difference either way; when I am concentrated, things on the physical plane no longer exist), I deliberately opened the mind's eyes, for that is where I felt myself being pulled, and then I had this vision I told you of. Someone was trying to draw my attention, to tell me something. It takes someone really quite powerful, with a very great power of concentration, to do that – there are certainly a great many people here and elsewhere who try to do this, yet I don't feel a thing.⁸⁹

In the outer, practical domain, I might suddenly think of someone, so I know that this person is calling or thinking of me. When you left on your trip, I created a special link-up so that if ever, at any moment, you called me for anything, I would know it instantly, and I remained attentive and alert. But I do that only in exceptional cases. Generally speaking, when I haven't made this special link-up, things keep coming in and coming in and coming in and coming in, and the answer goes out automatically, here or there or there or there – hundreds and hundreds of things that I don't keep in my memory because then it would really be frightful. I don't keep these things in my consciousness; it is rather a work that is done automatically.

When you asked me if X⁹⁰ were thinking of me, I consulted my atmosphere and saw that it was true, that even many times a day X's thoughts were coming. So I know that he is concentrating on

87Puja: ceremony , invocation or evocation of a god (in this case, a tantric ritual).

88When the disciple became a Sannyasi and travelled in the Himalayas with the tantric Swami

89In this vision, the d. ceased tantric guru of the guru who initiated Satprem appeared to Mother in a dark blue light and 'imposed' himself on her to tell her certain things.

me, or something: it simply passes through me, and I answer automatically. But I don't particularly pay attention to X, unless you ask me a question about him, in which case I deliberately tune into him, then observe and determine whether it's like this or like that. Whereas this vision the other day was something that thrust itself on me; I was in another region altogether, in my inner contemplation, my concentration – a very strong concentration – when I was forced to enter into contact with this being whose vision I had and who was obviously a very powerful being. After telling me what he had to tell me, he went away in a very peculiar way, not at all suddenly as most people appear and disappear, not at all like that. When I first saw him, there was a living form – the being himself was there – but upon leaving (probably to see the effect, to find out whether he had truly succeeded in making himself understood), he left behind a kind of image of himself. Afterwards, this image blurred and it left only a silhouette, an outline, then it disappeared altogether leaving only an impression. That was the last thing I saw. So I kept the impression and analyzed it to find out exactly what was involved; all this was filed away, and then it was over. I began my concentration once again.

I intentionally carry everybody in my active consciousness for the work, and I do the work consciously; but the extent to which people in the world, or those who are here in the Ashram, are conscious of this or receive the results depends upon them, though not exclusively.

The other day, for example, though I no longer recall exactly when (I forgot everything on purpose) – but it was in the last part of the night – I had a rather long activity concerning the whole realization of the Ashram, notably in the fields of education and art. I was apparently inspecting this area to see how things were there, so naturally I saw a certain number of people, their work and their inner states. Some saw me and, at that moment, had a vision of me. It is likely that many were asleep and didn't notice anything, but some actually saw me. The next morning, for example, someone who works at the theater told me that she had had a splendid vision of me in which I had spoken to her, blessed her, etc. This was her way of receiving the work I had done. And this kind of thing is happening more and more, in that my action is awakening the consciousness in others more and more strongly.

Naturally, the reception is always incomplete or partially modified; when it passes through the individuality, it becomes narrowed, a personal thing. It seems impossible for each one to have a consciousness vast enough to see the thing in its entirety.

You said that our way of receiving your work or becoming conscious of it does not 'exclusively' depend upon us. What do you mean?

It depends upon the progress in the consciousness. The more the action is suprimentalized, the more its reception is IMPOSED upon the consciousness of each one. The action's progress makes it more and more perceptible IN SPITE OF each one's condition. The milieu obviously limits and alters – distorts – what it receives, but the quality of the Work acts upon this receptivity and imposes itself on it in a more and more efficient and imperious way.

There is an interdependence between the individual progress and the collective progress, between that which works and that which is worked upon. It proceeds like this (*gesture of intermeshing*), and as one progresses, the other progresses. The progress above not only hastens the progress below but brings the two nearer together, thus changing the distance in the relationship; that is, the distance will not remain the same, the ratio between the progress here and the progress above won't always be identical.

The progress above follows a certain trajectory, and in some cases the distance increases, in others it decreases (although on the whole, the distance remains relatively unchanged), but my feeling is that the collective receptivity will increase as the action becomes increasingly suprimentalized. And the need for an individual receptivity – with all its distortions and alterations

90The disciple's tantric guru.

and limitations – will decrease in importance as the supramental influence increasingly imposes its power. This influence will impose itself in such a way that it will no longer be subject to the defects in receptivity.

(Shortly afterwards, concerning the experience of Wednesday, October 1: the divine Person beyond the Impersonal)

Before, I always had the negative experience of the disappearance of the ego, of the oneness of Creation, where everything implying separation disappeared – an experience that, personally, I would call negative. Last Wednesday, while I was speaking (and that's why at the end I could no longer find my words), I seemed suddenly to have left this negative phenomenon and entered into the positive experience: the experience of BEING the Supreme Lord, the experience that nothing exists but the Supreme Lord – all is the Supreme Lord, there is nothing else. And at that moment, the feeling of this infinite power that has no limit, that nothing can limit, was so overwhelming that all the functions of the body, of this mental machine that summons up words, all this was ... I could no longer speak French. Perhaps the words could have come to me in English – probably, because it was easier for Sri Aurobindo to express himself in English, and that's how it must have happened: it was the part embodied in Sri Aurobindo (the part of the Supreme that was embodied in Sri Aurobindo for its manifestation) that had the experience. This is what joined back with the Origin and caused the experience – I was well aware of it. And that is probably why its transcription through English words would have been easier than through French words (for at these moments, such activities are purely mechanical, rather like automatic machines). And naturally the experience left something behind. It left the sense of a power that can no longer be 'qualified,'⁹¹ really. And it was there yesterday evening.

The difficulty – it's not even a difficulty, it's just a kind of precaution that is taken (automatically, in fact) in order to ... For example, the volume of Force that was to be expressed in the voice was too great for the speech organ. So I had to be a little attentive – that is, there had to be a kind of filtering in the outermost expression, otherwise the voice would have cracked. But this isn't done through the will and reason, it's automatic. Yet I feel that ... the capacity of Matter to contain and express is increasing with phenomenal speed. But it's progressive, it can't be done instantly. There have often been people whose outer form broke because the Force was too strong; well, I clearly see that it is being dosed out. After all, this is exclusively the concern of the Supreme Lord, I don't bother about it – it's not my concern and I don't bother about it – He makes the necessary adjustments. Thus it comes progressively, little by little, so that no fundamental disequilibrium occurs. It gives the impression that one's head is swelling so tremendously it will burst! But then if there is a moment of stillness, it adapts; gradually, it adapts.

Only, one must be careful to keep the 'sense of the Unmanifest' sufficiently present so that the various things – the elements, the cells and all that – have time to adapt. The sense of the Unmanifest, or in other words, to step back into the Unmanifest.⁹² This is what all those who have had experiences have done, they always believed that there was no possibility of adaptation, so they left their bodies and went off.

* * *

(Towards the end of the conversation, about money:)

Money belongs to the one who spends it; that is an absolute law. You may pile up money, but it

⁹¹We believe that Mother used the word 'qualified' in the sense of restrict, limit Or modify – a limitless Power.

⁹²The vastness beyond the creation or the cosmic manifestation, the solid base upon which all the rest can unfold.

doesn't belong to you until you spend it. Then you have the merit, the glory, the joy, the pleasure of spending it!

Money is meant to circulate. What should remain constant is the progressive movement of an increase in the earth's production – an ever-expanding progressive movement to increase the earth's production and improve existence on earth. It is the material improvement of terrestrial life and the growth of the earth's production that must go on expanding, enlarging, and not this silly paper or this inert metal that is amassed and lifeless.

Money is not meant to generate money; money should generate an increase in production, an improvement in the conditions of life and a progress in human consciousness. This is its true use. What I call an improvement in consciousness, a progress in consciousness, is everything that education in all its forms can provide – not as it's generally understood, but as we understand it here: education in art, education in ... from the education of the body, from the most material progress, to the spiritual education and progress through yoga; the whole spectrum, everything that leads humanity towards its future realization. Money should serve to augment that and to augment the material base for the earth's progress, the best use of what the earth can give – its intelligent utilization, not the utilization that wastes and loses energies. The use that allows energies to be replenished.

In the universe there is an inexhaustible source of energy that asks only to be replenished; if you know how to go about it, it is replenished. Instead of draining life and the energies of our earth and making of it something parched and inert, we must know the practical exercise for replenishing the energy constantly. And these are not just words; I know how it's to be done, and science is in the process of thoroughly finding out – it has found out most admirably. But instead of using it to satisfy human passions, instead of using what science has found so that men may destroy each other more effectively than they are presently doing, it must be used to enrich the earth: to enrich the earth, to make the earth richer and richer, more active, generous, productive and to make all life grow towards its maximum efficiency. This is the true use of money. And if it's not used like that, it's a vice – a 'short circuit' and a vice.

But how many people know how to use it in this way? Very few, which is why they have to be taught. What I call 'teach' is to show, to give the example. We want to be the example of true living in the world. It's a challenge I am placing before the whole financial world: I am telling them that they are in the process of withering and ruining the earth with their idiotic system; and with even less than they are now spending for useless things – merely for inflating something that has no inherent life, that should be only an instrument at the service of life, that has no reality in itself, that is only a means and not an end (they make an end of something that is only a means) – well then, instead of making of it an end, they should make it the means. With what they have at their disposal they could ... oh, transform the earth so quickly! Transform it, put it into contact, truly into contact, with the supramental forces that would make life bountiful and, indeed, constantly renewed – instead of becoming withered, stagnant, shrivelled up: a future moon. A dead moon.

We are told that in a few millions or billions of years, the earth will become some kind of moon. The movement should be the opposite: the earth should become more and more a resplendent sun, but a sun of life. Not a sun that burns, but a sun that illuminates – a radiant glory.



Undated 1958

(*Concerning Finances*⁹³)

Money is a force and should not be an *individual possession*, no more than air, water or fire.

To begin with, the abolishment of inheritance.

* * *

Financial power is the materialization of a vital force turned into one of the greatest powers of action: the power to attract acquire, and utilize.

Like all the other powers, it must be put at the service of the Divine.



October 6, 1958

When I am not in my body, I have all kinds of contacts with people, contacts of different types. And it's not a thing decided in advance, it is not willed, it is not even thought out; it is simply ... observed.

Certain relationships are entirely within me, entirely. It is not a relationship between individuals, but a relationship between states of being – which means that with the same individual there may be many different relationships. If it were a single whole ... but I am still not sure if there is a single person with whom the relationship is global.

So there are parts which are entirely within me, entirely – there is no difference; they are myself. There are other parts with which I am conscious of an exchange – a very familiar, very intimate exchange. And there are parts outside of me with which I still have relationships, not exactly as with strangers but merely as acquaintances; it is still necessary to observe their reactions in order to do the correct thing. And the ratio between these different parts is naturally different depending upon the different individuals.

* * *

(*The disciple complains of his difficulties*)

Difficulties are sent to us exclusively to make the realization more perfect.

Each time we try to realize something and we encounter a resistance or an obstacle, or even a failure – what appears to be a failure – we should know, we should NEVER forget, that it is exclusively, absolutely, to make the realization more perfect.

93Note written by Mother in French. The heading is hers.

So this habit of cringing, of being discouraged or even feeling ill at ease or abusing oneself, saying, ‘There, I’ve done it again ...’ All this is absolute foolishness.

Rather, simply say, ‘We do not know how to do things as they should be done, well then, let them be done for us and come what may!’ If we could only see how everything that looks like a difficulty, an error, a failure or an obstacle is simply there to help us make the realization more perfect.

Once we know this, everything becomes easy.



October 10, 1958

(The disciple asks to know what he must do and what his place is in the universal manifestation)

In all religious and especially occult initiations, the ritual of the different ceremonies is prescribed in every detail; all the words pronounced, all the gestures made have their importance, and the least infraction of the rule, the least fault committed can have fatal consequences. It is the same in material life – if one had the initiation into the true way of living, one could transform physical existence.

If we consider the body as the tabernacle of the Lord, then medical science, for example, becomes the initiatory ritual of the service of the temple, and doctors of all kinds are the officiating priests in the different rituals of worship. Thus, medicine is really a priesthood and should be treated as such.

The same can be said of physical culture and of all the sciences that are concerned with the body and its workings. If the material universe is considered as the outer sheath and the manifestation of the Supreme, then it can generally be said that all the physical sciences are the rituals of worship.

We always come back to the same thing: the absolute necessity for perfect sincerity, perfect honesty and a sense of the dignity of all we do so that we may do it as it should be done.

If we could truly, perfectly know all the details of the ceremony of life, the worship of the Lord in physical life, it would be wonderful – to know, and no longer to err, never again to err. To perform the ceremony as perfectly as an initiation.

To know life utterly ... Oh, there is a very interesting thing in this regard! And it’s strange, but this particular knowledge reminds me of one of my Sutras⁹⁴ (which I read out, but no one understood or understood only vaguely, ‘like that’):

‘It is the Supreme Lord who has ineluctably decreed the place you occupy in the universal concert, but whatever be this place, you have equally the same right as all others to ascend the supreme summits right to the supramental realization.’

⁹⁴see *Agenda 1957*, p. 119.

There is one's position in the universal hierarchy, which is something ineluctable – it is the eternal law – and there is the development in the manifestation, which is an education; it is progressive and done from within the being. What is remarkable is that to become a perfect being, this position – whatever it is, decreed since all eternity, a part of the eternal Truth – must manifest with the greatest possible perfection as a result of evolutionary growth. It is the junction, the union of the two, the eternal position and the evolutionary realization, that will make the total and perfect being, and the manifestation as the Lord has willed it since the beginning of all eternity (which has no beginning at all!).

And for the cycle to be complete, one cannot stop on the way at any plane, not even the highest spiritual plane nor the plane closest to matter (like the occult plane in the vital, for example). One must descend right into matter, and this perfection in manifestation must be a material perfection, or otherwise the cycle is not complete – which explains why those who want to flee in order to realize the divine Will are in error. What must be done is exactly the opposite! The two must be combined in a perfect way. This is why all the honest sciences, the sciences that are practiced sincerely, honestly, exclusively with a will to know, are difficult paths – yet such sure paths for the total realization.

It brings up very interesting things. (What I am going to say now is very personal and consequently cannot be used, but it may be kept anyway:)

There are two parallel things that, from the eternal and supreme point of view, are of identical importance, in that both are equally essential for the realization to be a true realization.

On the one hand, there is what Sri Aurobindo – who, as the Avatar, represented the supreme Consciousness and Will on earth – declared me to be, that is, the supreme universal Mother; and on the other hand, there is what I am realizing in my body through the integral sadhana.⁹⁵ I could be the supreme Mother and not do any sadhana, and as a matter of fact, as long as Sri Aurobindo was in his body, it was he who did the sadhana, and I received the effects. These effects were automatically established in the outer being, but he was the one doing it, not I – I was merely the bridge between his sadhana and the world. Only when he left his body was I forced to take up the sadhana myself; not only did I have to do what I was doing before – being a bridge between his sadhana and the world – but I had to carry on the sadhana myself. When he left, he turned over to me the responsibility for what he himself had been doing in his body, and I had to do it. So there are both these things. Sometimes one predominates, sometimes the other (I don't mean successively in time, but ... it depends on the moment), and they are trying to combine in a total and perfect realization: the eternal, ineffable and immutable Consciousness of the Executrice of the Supreme, and the consciousness of the Sadhak of the integral Yoga who strives in an ascending effort towards an ever increasing progression.

To this has been added a growing initiation into the supramental realization which is (I understand it well now) the perfect union of what comes from above and what comes from below, or in other words, the eternal position and the evolutionary realization.

Then – and this becomes rather amusing like life's play ... Depending upon each one's nature and position and bias, and because human beings are very limited, very partial and incapable of a global vision, there are those who believe, who have faith, or to whom the eternal Mother is revealed through Grace, who have this kind of relationship with the eternal Mother – and there are those who themselves are plunged in sadhana, who have the consciousness of a developed sadhak, and thereby have the same relationship with me as one has with what they generally call a 'realized soul.' Such persons consider me the prototype of the Guru teaching a new way, but the others don't have this relationship of sadhak to Guru (I am taking the two extremes, but of course there are all the possibilities in between), they are only in contact with the eternal Mother and, in the simplicity of their hearts, they expect Her to do everything for them. If they were perfect in this attitude, the

⁹⁵Sadhana: yogic discipline. Sadhak: seeker.

eternal Mother would do everything for them – as a matter of fact, She does do everything, but as they aren't perfect, they cannot receive it totally. But the two paths are very different, the two kinds of relationships are very different; and as we all live according to the law of external things, in a material body, there is a kind of annoyance, an almost irritated misunderstanding, between those who follow this path (not consciously and intentionally, but spontaneously), who have this relationship of the child to the Mother, and those who have this other relationship of the sadhak to the Guru. So it creates a whole play, with an infinite diversity of shades.

But all this is still in suspense, on the way to realization, moving forward progressively; therefore, unless we are able to see the outcome, we can't understand a thing. We get confused. Only when we see the outcome, the final realization, only when we have TOUCHED *there*, will everything be understood – then it will be as clear and as simple as can be. But meanwhile, my relationships with different people are very funny, utterly amusing!

Those who have what I would call the more 'outer' relationship compared to the other (although it is not really so) – the relationship of yoga, of sadhana – consider the others superstitious; and the others, who have faith OI perception, or the Grace to have understood what Sri Aurobindo meant (perhaps even before knowing what he said, but in any event, after he said it), discard the others as ignorant unbelievers! And there are all the gradations in between, so it really becomes quite funny!

It opens up extraordinary horizons; once you have understood this, you have the key – you have the key to many, many things: the different positions of each of the different saints, the different realizations and ... it resolves all the incoherencies of the various manifestations on earth.

For example, this question of Power – THE Power – over Matter. Those who perceive me as the eternal, universal Mother and Sri Aurobindo as the Avatar are surprised that our power is not absolute. They are surprised that we have not merely to say, 'Let it be thus' for it to be 'thus.' This is because, in the integral realization, the union of the two is essential: a union of the power that proceeds from the eternal position and the power that proceeds from the sadhana through evolutionary growth. Similarly, how is it that those who have reached even the summits of yogic knowledge (I was thinking of Swami) need to resort to beings like gods or demigods to be able to realize things? – Because they have indeed united with certain higher forces and entities, but it was not decreed since the beginning of time that they were this particular being. They were not born as this or that, but through evolution they united with a latent possibility in themselves. Each one carries the Eternal within himself, but one can join Him only when one has realized the complete union of the latent Eternal with the eternal Eternal.

And ... this explains everything, absolutely everything: how it works, how it functions in the world.⁹⁶ I was saying to myself, 'But I have no powers, I have no powers!' Several days ago, I said, 'But after all, I KNOW WHO is there, I know, yet how is it that ... ? There, up to there (*the level of the head*), it is all-powerful, nothing can resist – but here ... it is ineffective.' So those who have faith, even an ignorant but real faith (it can be ignorant but nevertheless it is real), say, 'What! How can you have no powers?' ... Because the sadhana is not yet over.

The Lord will possess his universe only when the universe will have consciously become the Lord.



⁹⁶Mother added: 'The most beautiful part of the experience is missing ... When I try to formulate something in too precise a way, all the vastness of the experience evaporates. The entire world is being revealed in all its organization down to the minutes" details – but *everything* simultaneously – how can that be explained? It's not possible.'

October 17, 1958

(Mother brings with her the continuation of the first seven Sutras written by Her, probably in 1957.⁹⁷)

They are in two groups.

The first group ends with a helping hand to those who have made the wrong choice (!):

7) But even in the event you have not made the irrevocable decision at the outset, should you have the good fortune to live during one of these unimaginable hours of universal history when the Grace is present, embodied upon earth, It will offer you, at certain exceptional moments, the renewed possibility of making a final choice that will lead you straight to the goal.

That was the message of hope.

And then it continues (*Mother reads*):

8) All division in the being is an insincerity.

9) The greatest insincerity is to carve an abyss between one's body and the truth of one's being.

10) When an abyss separates the true being from the physical being, Nature immediately fills it with all the hostile suggestions, of which the most deadly is fear and the most pernicious, doubt.

I wrote that before reading Sri Aurobindo's aphorism on 'the sentinels of Nature.'⁹⁸ I found it very interesting and I said to myself, 'Well! That's exactly what came to me!'

There is still one more (but it is not the last):

11) Allow nothing, nowhere, to deny the truth of your being: that is sincerity.



October 25, 1958

(Concerning the disciple's tantric guru)

When X does his puja, I clearly see the particular form of the Mother he is invoking – I see her

⁹⁷See p. 119.

⁹⁸'If mankind only caught a glimpse of what infinite enjoyments, what perfect forces, what luminous reaches of spontaneous knowledge, what wide calms of our being lie waiting for us in the tracts which our animal evolution has not yet conquered, they would leave all and never rest till they had gained these treasures. But the way is narrow, the doors are hard to force, and fear, distrust and scepticism are there, sentinels of Nature to forbid the turning away of our feet from less ordinary pastures.' (Cent. Ed. Vol. XVII, p. 79)

descending.

Each one is in touch with the universal expression of an aspect or a will or a mode of the Supreme, and if one aspires for this, it is this that comes, with an extraordinary plasticity. And when that happens, I even become the Witness (not the witness in the way of the Purusha⁹⁹ : a witness far more ... infinite and eternal than the Purusha). I see what responds, why it responds, how it responds. This is how I know what people want (not here below, nor even in their highest aspiration). I see it even when the people themselves are no longer conscious – or rather, not yet conscious (for me, it's 'no longer,' but anyway ...), when they are not yet conscious of this identification somewhere. Even then I see it.

It's interesting.

They do pujas to all these forces or divinities, but it is not ... it is not the highest Truth. What Sri Aurobindo called the true 'surrender,' the surrender to the Supreme, is a truth higher than that of relying solely upon oneself.

And that is what always brings in complications, conflicts. I was surprised that the atmosphere [of the Ashram] is filled with conflict when he is here – but that is the reason.¹⁰⁰

Why aren't people conscious of this identification while having it in a part of their being?

Between the outer consciousness and the deepest consciousness there are truly holes – which are 'missing links' between states of being and which have to be built, but they don't know how to do it. So their first reaction when they go within is panic! They feel they are falling into night, into nothingness, into non-being!

I had a Danish friend, an artist, to whom this happened. He wanted me to teach him how to go out of his body. He had interesting dreams so he thought it might be worthwhile to go there consciously. I helped him to 'go out' – but it was frightful! ... When he dreamed, a part of his mind indeed remained conscious, active, and a kind of link remained between this active part and his outer being, so he remembered some of his dreams, but it was only a very partial phenomenon. To go out of your body means that you must gradually pass through ALL the states of being, if you are to do it systematically. But already in the subtle physical it was almost non-individualized, and as soon as he went a bit further, there was no longer anything! It was unformed, nonexistent.

So they sit down (they are told to interiorize, to go within themselves), and they panic! – Naturally they feel that they ... that they are disappearing: there is nothing! There is no consciousness!



November 2, 1958

99Purusha: the Being or the Self that witnesses and supports the Becoming.

100The occult atmosphere of tantric pujas invokes forces that do not coincide with the completely different atmosphere and the completely different attitude of the supramental yoga.

Last night, I thought, ‘My god! If I have to ...’ Individually, with this one or that one, by selecting the best, I could get somewhere, but this ... this mass.¹⁰¹ Swami had told me so – he told me immediately after his first meditation (*collective meditation at the Ashram playground*), he told me, ‘The stuff is not good!’ (*Mother laughs*)

I didn’t press the matter.

All this together constitutes one collective entity, and the individual is lost in it. If I had to deal with this person or that person individually, it would be different. But all together, taking them all together as a collective entity, well, it’s not brilliant.



November 4, 1958

(*Concerning; the Agenda of August 9, 1958, on the gods of the Puranas*)

The gods of the Puranas are merciless gods who respect only power and have nothing of the true love, charity or profound goodness that the Divine has put into the human consciousness – and which compensate psychically for all the outer defects. They themselves have nothing of this, they have no psychic.¹⁰² The Puranic gods have no psychic, so they act according to their power. They are restrained only when their power is not all-powerful, that’s all.

But what does Anusuya represent?¹⁰³

She is a portrait of the ideal woman according to the Hindu conception, the woman who worships her husband as a god, which means that she sees the Supreme in her husband. And so this woman was much more powerful than all the gods of the Puranas precisely because she had this psychic capacity for total self-giving; and her faith in the Supreme’s presence in her husband gave her a much greater power than that of all the gods.

The story narrated in the film went like this: Narada, as usual, was having fun. (Narada is a demigod with a divine position – that is, he can communicate with man and with the gods as he pleases, and he serves as an intermediary, but then he likes to have fun!) So he was quarrelling with one of the goddesses, I no longer recall which one, and he told her ... (Ah, yes! The quarrel was with Saraswati.) Saraswati was telling him that knowledge is much greater than love (much greater

101Mother is referring to the Ashram as a collectivity.

102In Sri Aurobindo’s and Mother’s terminology, ‘psychic’ or ‘psychic being’ means the soul or the portion of the Supreme in man which evolves from life to life until it becomes a fully self-conscious being. The soul is a special capacity or grace of human beings on earth.

103The film on August 5.

in that it is much more powerful than love), and he replied to her, ‘You don’t know what you’re talking about! (*Mother laughs*) Love is much more powerful than knowledge.’ So she challenged him, saying, ‘Well then, prove it to me.’ – ‘I shall prove it to you,’ he replied. And the whole story starts there. He began creating a whole imbroglio on earth just to prove his point.

It was only a film story, but anyway, the goddesses, the three wives of the Trimurti – that is, the consort of Brahma, the consort of Vishnu and the consort of Shiva – joined forces (!) and tried all kinds of things to foil Narada. I no longer recall the details of the story ... Oh yes, the story begins like this: one of the three – I believe it was Shiva’s consort, Parvati (she was the worst one, by the way!) – was doing her puja. Shiva was in meditation, and she began doing her puja in front of him; she was using an oil lamp for the puja, and the lamp fell down and burned her foot. She cried out because she had burned her foot. So Shiva at once came out of his meditation and said to her, ‘What is it, Devi?’ (*laughter*) She answered, ‘I burned my foot!’ Then Narada said, ‘Aren’t you ashamed of what you have done? – to make Shiva come out of his meditation simply because you have a little burn on your foot, which cannot even hurt you since you are immortal!’ She became furious and snapped at him, ‘Show me that it can be otherwise!’ Narada replied, ‘I am going to show you what it is to really love one’s husband – you don’t know anything about it!’

Then comes the story of Anusuya and her husband (who is truly a husband ... a very good man, but well, not a god, after all!), who was sleeping with his head resting upon Anusuya’s knees. They had finished their puja (both of them were worshippers of Shiva), and after their puja he was resting, sleeping, with his head on Anusuya’s knees. Meanwhile, the gods had descended upon earth, particularly this Parvati, and they saw Anusuya like that. Then Parvati exclaimed, ‘This is a good occasion!’ Not very far away a cooking fire was burning. With her power, she sent the fire rolling down onto Anusuya’s feet – which startled her because it hurt. It began to burn; not one cry, not one movement, nothing ... because she didn’t want to awaken her husband. But she began invoking Shiva (Shiva was there). And because she invoked Shiva (it is lovely in the story), because she invoked Shiva, Shiva’s foot began burning! (*Mother laughs*) Then Narada showed Shiva to Parvati: ‘Look what you are doing; you are burning your husband’s foot!’ So Parvati made the opposite gesture and the fire was put out.

That’s how it went.

Lovely.

Oh, the story was very lovely all along. There was one thing after another, one thing after another, and always the power of Anusuya was greater than the power of the gods. I liked that story very much.

It ended in a ... (Oh, the story was very long; it lasted three hours!) But really, it was lovely throughout. Lovely in the way it showed that the sincerity of love is much more powerful than anything else.

If I were to narrate the whole thing to you, there would be no end to it, but anyway, you get the idea.

* * *

(*Shortly afterwards, the disciple again brings up the topic of August 9, where Mother had said that the gods are ‘a good deal worse than human beings’*)

It should be said that we are speaking of the Puranic gods, because the Christians, for example, do not understand what this can mean. They have an entirely different conception of the gods. It could apply to the old Greek mythology, though.

No, not uniquely. It could apply in many other cases. Even if the Christians don't understand, there are many others who will!

Those who have read a little and who know something other than their little rut will understand.

There is something similar between the Puranic gods and the gods of Greek or Egyptian mythology. The gods of Egyptian mythology are terrible beings ... They cut off people's heads, tear their enemies to pieces! ...

The Greeks were not always tender either!

In Europe and in the modern Western world, it is thought that all these gods – the Greek gods and the ‘pagan’ gods, as they are called – are human fancies, that they are not real beings. To understand, one must know that they are real beings. That is the difference. For Westerners, they are only a figment of the human imagination and don’t correspond to anything real in the universe. But that is a gross mistake.

To understand the workings of universal life, and even those of terrestrial life, one must know that in their own realms these are all living beings, each with his own independent reality. They would exist even if men did not exist! Most of these gods existed before man.

They are beings who belong to the progressive creation of the universe and who have themselves presided over its formation from the most etheric or subtle regions to the most material regions. They are a descent of the divine creative Spirit that came to repair the *mischief* ... in short, to repair what the Asuras had done. The first makers created disorder and darkness, an unconsciousness, and then it is said that there was a second ‘lineage’ of makers to repair that evil, and the gods gradually descended through realities that were ever more – one can’t say dense because it isn’t really dense, nor can one even say material, since matter as we know it does not exist on these planes – through more and more concrete substances.

All these zones, these planes of reality, received different names and were classified in different ways according to the occult schools, according to the different traditions, but there is an essential similarity, and if we go back far enough into the various traditions, hardly anything but words differ, depending upon the country and the language. The descriptions are quite similar. Moreover, those who climb back up the ladder – or in other words, a human being who, through his occult knowledge, goes out of one of his ‘bodies’ (they are called *sheaths* in English) and enters into a more subtle body – in order to ACT in a more subtle body – and so forth, twelve times (you make each body come out from a more material body, leaving the more material body in its corresponding zone, and then go off through successive exteriorizations), what they have seen, what they have discovered and seen through their ascension – whether they are occultists from the Occident or occultists from the Orient – is for the most part analogous in description. They have put different words on it, but the experience is very analogous.

There is the whole Chaldean tradition, and there is also the Vedic tradition, and there was very certainly a tradition anterior to both that split into two branches. Well, all these occult experiences have been the same. Only the description differs depending upon the country and the language. The story of creation is not told from a metaphysical or psychological point of view, but from an objective point of view, and this story is as real as our stories of historical periods. Of course, it’s not the only way of seeing, but it is just as legitimate a way as the others, and in any event, it recognizes the concrete reality of all these divine beings. Even now, the experiences of Western occultists and those of Eastern occultists exhibit great similarities. The only difference is in the way they are expressed, but the manipulation of the forces is the same.

I learned all this through Theon. Probably, he was .. I don’t know if he was Russian or Polish (a Russian or Polish Jew), he never said who he really was or where he was born, nor his age nor anything.

He had assumed two names: one was an Arab name he had adopted when he took refuge in Algeria (I don't know for what reason). After having worked with Blavatsky and having founded an occult society in Egypt, he went to Algeria, and there he first called himself 'Aia Aziz' (a word of Arabic origin meaning 'the beloved'). Then, when he began setting up his *Cosmic Review* and his 'cosmic group,' he called himself Max Theon, meaning the supreme God (!), the greatest God! And no one knew him by any other name than these two – Aia Aziz or Max Theon.

He had an English wife.

He said he had received initiation in India (he knew a little Sanskrit and the Rig-Veda thoroughly), and then he formulated a tradition which he called the 'cosmic tradition' and which he claimed to have received – I don't know how – from a tradition anterior to that of the Cabala and the Vedas. But there were many things (Madame Theon was the clairvoyant one, and she received visions; oh, she was wonderful!), many things that I myself had seen and known before knowing them which were then substantiated.

So personally, I am convinced that there was indeed a tradition anterior to both these traditions containing a knowledge very close to an integral knowledge. Certainly, there is a similarity in the experiences. When I came here and told Sri Aurobindo certain things I knew from the occult standpoint, he always said that it conformed to the Vedic tradition. And as for certain occult practices, he told me that they were entirely tantric – and I knew nothing at that time, absolutely nothing, neither the Vedas nor the Tantras.

So very probably there was a tradition anterior to both. I have recollections (for me, these are always things I have LIVED), very clear, very distinct recollections of a time that was certainly VERY anterior to the Vedic times and to the Cabala, to the Chaldean tradition.

But now, there is only a very small number of people in the West who know that it isn't merely subjective or imaginative (the result of a more or less unbridled imagination), and that it corresponds to a universal truth.

All these regions, all these realms are filled with beings who exist separately in their own realms, and if you are awake and conscious on a given plane – for example, if while going out of a more material body you awaken on some higher plane – you can have the same relationship with the things and people of that plane as with the things and people of the material world. In other words, there exists an entirely objective relationship that has nothing to do with your own idea of things. Naturally, the resemblance becomes greater and greater as you draw nearer the physical world, the material world, and there is even a moment when one region can act directly upon the other. In any case, in what Sri Aurobindo calls the 'kingdoms of the overmind,' you find a concrete reality entirely independent of your personal experience; whenever you come back to it, you again find the same things, with some differences that may have occurred DURING YOUR ABSENCE. And your relationships with the beings there are identical to those you have with physical beings, except that they are more flexible, more supple and more direct (for example, there is a capacity to change the outer form, the visible form, according to your inner state), but you can make an appointment with someone, come to the meeting and again find the same being, with only certain differences that may have occurred during your absence – but it is absolutely concrete, with absolutely concrete results.

However, you must have at least a little experience of these things to understand them. Otherwise, if you are convinced that all this is just human fancy or mental formations, if you believe that these gods have such and such a form because men have imagined them to be like that, or that they have such and such defects or qualities because men have envisioned it that way – as with all those who say God is created in the image of man and exists only in human thought – all such people won't understand, it will seem absolutely ridiculous to them, a kind of madness. You must live a little, touch the subject a little to know how concrete it is.

Naturally, children know a great deal – if they have not been spoiled. There are many children who return to the same place night after night and continue living a life they have begun there.

When these faculties are not spoiled with age, they can be preserved within one. There was a time when I was especially interested in dreams, and I could return exactly to the same place and continue some work I had begun there, visit something, for example, or see to something, some work of organization or some discovery or exploration; you go to a certain place, just as you go somewhere in life, then you rest a while, then you go back and begin again – you take up your work just where you left it, and you continue. You also notice that there are things entirely independent of you, certain variations which were not at all created by you and which occurred automatically during your absence.

But then, you must LIVE these experiences yourself; you yourself must see, you must live them with enough sincerity to see (by being sincere and spontaneous) that they are independent of any mental formations. Because one can take the opposite line and make an intensive study of the way mental formations act upon events – which is very interesting. But that's another field. And this study makes you very careful, very prudent, because you start noticing to what extent you can delude yourself. Therefore, both one and the other, the mental formation and the occult reality, must be studied to see what the ESSENTIAL difference is between them. The one exists in itself, entirely independent of what we think about it, and the other ...

That was a grace. I was given every experience without knowing ANYTHING of what it was all about – my mind was absolutely ... blank. There was no active correspondence in the formative mind. I only knew about what had happened or the laws governing these happenings AFTERWARDS, when I was curious and inquired to find out what it related to. Then I found out. But otherwise, I didn't know. So that was the clear proof that these things existed entirely outside of my imagination or thought.

It doesn't happen very frequently in this world. And that's why these experiences, which otherwise seem quite natural, quite obvious, appear to be ... extravagant fancies to people who know nothing.

But if you transposed this to France, to the West, unless you frequent occult circles, people would look at you with ... And behind your back, they would say, 'That person is cracked!'

* * *

(Later, the disciple asks Mother for some clarification on the "essential difference" between the occult reality and mental formations)

Once you have worked in this field, you realize that when you have studied a subject, when you have mentally understood something, it gives a special tonality to the experience. The experience may be quite spontaneous and sincere, but the simple fact of having known this subject and of having studied it gives a particular tonality; on the other hand, if you have learned nothing of the subject, if you know nothing at all, well, when the experience comes, the notation of it is entirely spontaneous and sincere. It can be more or less adequate, but it is not the result of a former mental formation.

What happened in my life is that I never studied or knew things until AFTER having the experience – only BECAUSE OF the experience and because I wanted to understand it would I study things related to it.

It was the same thing for visions of past lives. I knew NOTHING when I would have the experience, not even the possibility of past lives, and only after having had the experience would I study the question and, for example, even verify certain historical facts that had occurred in my vision but about which I had no prior knowledge.

* * *

(Then the disciple asks for details on going out of each successive body into the next, more subtle one)

There are subtle bodies and subtle worlds that correspond to these bodies; it is what the psychological method calls ‘states of consciousness,’ but these states of consciousness really correspond to worlds. The occult process consists in becoming aware of these various inner states of being, or subtle bodies, and of mastering them sufficiently to be able to make one come out of the other, successively. For there is a whole hierarchy of increasing subtleties – or decreasing, depending upon the direction – and the occult process consists in making a more subtle body come out from a denser body, and so forth, right to the most ethereal regions. You go out through successive exteriorizations into more and more subtle bodies or worlds. Each time it is rather like passing into another dimension. In fact, the fourth dimension of the physicists is only the scientific transcription of an occult knowledge.

To give another comparison, it could be said that the physical body is at the center – it is the most material and the most condensed, as well as the smallest – and the more subtle inner bodies increasingly overlap the limits of this central physical body; they pass through it and extend further and further out, like water evaporating from a porous vase which creates a kind of steam all around it. And the more subtle it is, the more its extension tends to fuse with that of the universe: you finally become universal. It is an entirely concrete process that makes the invisible worlds an objective experience and even allows you to act in those worlds.



Undated 1958

When you are exteriorized during sleep and conscious in the vital world, you can live a vital life as conscious as the physical life. I have known people who had this capacity and who were so intensely interested in their experiences in the vital world that they returned only with regret to their bodies. If you are conscious and master of yourself in the vital world and if you possess a certain power there, the circumstances are marvelous, infinitely more varied and more beautiful than in the physical world.

Suppose, for example, that you are very tired and need to rest. If you know how to exteriorize yourself and consciously enter into the vital world, you will find there a region like a miraculous virgin forest with all the splendors of a rich and harmonious vegetation, magnificent mirrors of water and an atmosphere so filled with this living, vibrant vitality of the plants!

There is such a life there, such a beauty, so much richness and plenitude that you awaken full of force and with an absolutely wonderful feeling of energy, even if you remain there but a minute.

And it is so objective, so concrete! I have taken people there, without telling them what it was all about, and they were able to describe the place exactly as I myself would.

There are regions like that – not very many, but some.

On the other hand, there are many unpleasant places in the vital world where it is better not to go. Those who can easily learn to go out of their bodies should do so with a great deal of caution. I

could never teach this to many people, for were they to do it alone, it would mean abandoning them, sometimes without protection, to experiences that can be extremely harmful.

The vital world is a world of extremes. If, for example, you eat a bunch of grapes in the vital world, you feel so nourished that you can remain without hunger for thirty-six hours. But you can also run into things and enter places that will wrest all the energy from you in a minute and at times leave you ill or even disabled.

I knew an absolutely exceptional woman¹⁰⁴ from the occult point of view who had just such an accident in the vital world. While trying to wrest someone she valued from the beings of the vital world, she received such a blow to one eye that she lost it.

Without going that far, it may happen that you meet with accidents in the vital world that leave their trace for hours after awakening.



November 8, 1958

I found my message for the 1st of January ... It was quite unforeseen. Yesterday morning, I thought, 'All the same, I have to find my message, but what?' I was absolutely ... like that, neutral, nothing. Then yesterday evening at the class (*of Friday, November 7*) I noticed that these children who had had a whole week to prepare their questions on the text had not found a single one! A terrible lethargy! A total lack of interest. And when I had finished speaking, I thought to myself, 'But what IS there in these people who are interested in nothing but their personal little affairs?' So I began descending into their mental atmosphere, in search of the little light, of that which responds ... And it literally pulled me downwards as into a hole, but in such a material way; my hand, which was on the arm of the chair, began slipping down, my other hand went like this (*to the ground*), my head, too! I thought it was going to touch my knees!

And I had the impression ... It was not an impression – I saw it. I was descending into a crevasse between two steep rocks, rocks that appeared to be made of something harder than basalt, BLACK, but metallic at the same time, with such sharp edges – it seemed that a mere touch would lacerate you. It appeared endless and bottomless, and it kept getting narrower, narrower and narrower, narrower and narrower, like a funnel, so narrow that there was almost no more room – not even for the consciousness – to pass through. And the bottom was invisible, a black hole. And it went down, down, down, like that, without air, without light, except for a sort of glimmer that enabled me to make out the rock edges. They seemed to be cut so steeply, so sharply ... Finally, when my head began touching my knees, I asked myself, 'But what is there at the bottom of this ... this hole?'

And as soon as I had uttered, 'What is there at the bottom of this hole?' I seemed to touch a spring that was in the very depths – a spring I didn't see but that acted instantly with a tremendous power – and it cast me up forthwith, hurled me out of this crevasse into ... (*arms extended, motionless*) a formless, limitless vast which was infinitely comfortable – not exactly warm, but it gave a feeling of ease and of an intimate warmth.

104Madame Theon.

And it was all-powerful, with an infinite richness. It did not have ... no, it didn't have any kind of form, and it had no limits (naturally, as I was identified with it I knew there was neither limit nor form). It was as if (because it was not visible), as if this vast were made of countless, imperceptible points – points that occupied no place in space (there was no sense of space), that were of a deep warm gold – but this is only a feeling, a transcription. And all this was absolutely LIVING, living with a power that seemed infinite. And yet motionless.

It lasted for quite some time, for the rest of the meditation.

It seemed to contain a whole wealth of possibilities, and all this that was formless had the power to become form.

At the time, I wondered what it meant. Later, of course, I found out, and finally this morning, I said to myself, 'Ah, so that's it! It came to give me my message for the new year!' Then I transcribed the experience – it can't be described, of course, for it was indescribable; it was a psychological phenomenon and the form it took was only a way of describing the psychological state to oneself. Here is what I wrote down, obviously in a mental way, and I am thinking of using it as my message.

There was a hesitation in the expression, so I brought the paper and I want us to decide upon the final text together.

I have not described anything. I have only stated a fact (*Mother reads*):

'At the very bottom of the unconscious most hard and rigid and narrow and stifling, I struck upon an almighty spring that cast me up forthwith into a formless, limitless Vast, generator of all creation.'

And it is again one more proof. The experience was absolutely ... the English word *genuine* says it.

Genuine and spontaneous?

Yes, it was not a willed experience, for I had not decided I would do this. It did not correspond to an inner attitude. In a meditation, one can decide, 'I will meditate on this or on that or on something else – I will do this or that.' For meditations, I usually have a kind of inner (or higher) perception of what has to be done, and I do it. But it was not that way. I had decided: nothing, to decide nothing, to be 'like that' (*gesture of turning upwards*).

And then it happened.

Suddenly, while I was speaking (it was while I was speaking), I felt, 'Well really, can anything be done with such material?' Then, quite naturally, when I stopped speaking, oh! – I felt that I was being pulled! Then I understood. Because I had asked myself the question, 'But what is HAPPENING in there behind all those forms? ...' I can't say that I was annoyed, but I said to myself, 'Well really, this has to be shaken up a bit!' And just as I had finished, something pulled me – it pulled me out of my body, I was literally pulled out of my body.

And then, down into this hole ... I still see what I saw then, this crevasse between two rocks. The sky was not visible, but on the rock summits I saw ... something like the reflection of a glimmer – a glimmer – coming from 'something' beyond, which (*laughing*) must have been the sky! But it was invisible. And as I descended, as if I were sliding down the face of this crevasse, I saw the rock edges; and they were really black rocks, as if cut with a chisel, cuts so fresh that they glistened, with edges as sharp as knives. There was one here, one there, another there, everywhere, all around. And I was being pulled, pulled, pulled, I went down and down and down – there was no end to it, and it was becoming more and more compressing.¹⁰⁵ It went down and down ...

¹⁰⁵Later Mother added, 'stifling, suffocating.'

And so, physically, the body followed. My body has been taught to express the inner experience to a certain extent. In the body there is the body-force or the body-form or the body-spirit (according to the different schools, it bears a different name), and this is what leaves the body last when one dies, usually taking a period of seven days to leave.¹⁰⁶ With special training, it can acquire a conscious life – independent and conscious – to such a degree that not only in a state of trance (in trance, it frequently happens that one can speak and move if one is slightly trained or educated), but even in a cataleptic state it can produce sounds and even make the body move. Thus, through training, the body begins to have somnambulistic capacities – not an ordinary somnambulism, but it can live an autonomous life.¹⁰⁷ This is what took place, yesterday evening it was like that – I had gone out of my body, but my body was participating. And then I was pulled downwards: my hand, which had been on the arm of the chair, slipped down, then the other hand, then my head was almost touching my knees! (The consciousness was elsewhere, I saw it from outside – it was not that I didn't know what I was doing, I saw it from outside.) So I said, 'In any case, this has to stop somewhere because if it continues, my head (*laughing*) is going to be on the ground!' And I thought, 'But what is there at the bottom of this hole? ...'

Scarcely had these words been formulated when there I was, at the bottom of the hole! And it was absolutely as if a tremendous, almighty spring were there, and then ... (*Mother hits the table*) vrrrm! I was cast out of the abyss into a vastness. My body immediately sat straight up, head on high, following the movement. If someone had been watching, this is what he would have seen: in a single bound, vrrrm! Straight up, to the maximum, my head on high.

And I followed all this without objectifying it in the least; I was not aware of what it was nor of what was happening, nor of any explanation at all, nothing: it was 'like that.' I was living it, that's all. The experience was absolutely spontaneous. And after this rather ... painful descent, phew! – there was a kind of super-comfort. I can't explain it otherwise, an *ease*,¹⁰⁸ but an ease ... to the utmost. A perfect immobility in a sense of eternity – but with an extraordinary INTENSITY of movement and life! An inner intensity, unmanifested; it was within, self-contained. And motionless (had there been an outside, it would have been motionless in relation to that) and it was in a ... life so immeasurable that it can only be expressed metaphorically as infinite. And with an intensity, a POWER, a force ... and a peace – the peace of eternity. A silence, a calm. A POWER capable of ... of EVERYTHING. Everything.

And I was not imagining nor objectifying it; I was living it with ease – with a great ease. And it lasted until the end of the meditation. When it gradually began fading, I stopped the meditation and left.

Later, after I returned (*to the Ashram*), I wondered, 'What was that? What does it signify?' Then I understood.

That's all.

Now I am going to write it down clearly. Hand me a piece of paper.

(*Mother begins recopying her message*)

'At the very bottom of the unconscious most hard and rigid ...' Because generally, the unconscious

106Later Mother further explained: 'When one is exteriorized, this body-spirit retains a connection with the being that has gone out, and what has gone out has a power over it – which is precisely why one isn't completely dead! The being that has gone out also has the power to make the body move.'

107Later, Mother explained: 'I don't mean an autonomous will (it is the being that has gone out which has the power to make the body move), it has only acquired, through training, the capacity to express the will of the being with which it has kept a relationship through this link of the body-spirit which is broken only at death.'

108Original English.

gives the impression, precisely, of something amorphous, inert, formless, drab and gray (when formerly I entered the zones of the unconscious, that was the first thing I encountered). But this was an unconscious ... it was hard, rigid, COAGULATED, as if coagulated to resist: all effort slides off it, doesn't touch it, cannot penetrate it. So I am putting, '... most hard and rigid and narrow' (the idea of something that compresses, compresses, compresses you) 'and stifling' – yes, stifling is the word.

'... I struck upon an almighty spring that cast me up forthwith into a formless, limitless vast, generator of all creation.' It was ... yes, I have the feeling that it was not the ordinary creation, the primordial creation, but the SUPRAMENTAL creation, for it bore no similarity to the experience of returning to the Supreme, the origin of everything. I had utterly the feeling of being cast into the origin of the supramental creation – something that is already (how can it be expressed?) objectified from the Supreme, with the explicit goal of the supramental creation.

That was my feeling.

I don't think I am mistaken, for there was such a superabundant feeling of power, of warmth, of gold ... It was not fluid, it was like a powdering. And each of these things (they cannot be called specks or fragments, nor even points, unless you understand it in the mathematical sense, a point that occupies no space) was something equivalent to a mathematical point, but like living gold, a powdering of warm gold. I cannot say it was sparkling, I cannot say it was dark, nor was it made of light, either: a multitude of tiny points of gold, nothing but that. They seemed to be touching my eyes, my face ... and with such an inherent power and warmth – it was a splendor! And then, at the same time, the feeling of a plenitude, the PEACE of omnipotence ... It was rich, it was full. It was movement at its ultimate, infinitely swifter than all one can imagine, and at the same time it was absolute peace, perfect tranquillity.

(Mother resumes her message)

I do not want to put the word ... Unless, instead of putting generator of all creation,' I put 'of the new creation ...' Oh, but then it becomes absolutely overwhelming! It is THAT, in fact. It is that. But is it time to say so? I don't know ... Generator of the new creation ...



November 11, 1958

(*Mother arrives with a new change in her message for January 1, 1959: instead of 'an almighty spring that cast me up forthwith into a formless, limitless Vast, generator of the new world,' Mother puts 'a formless, limitless Vast vibrating with the seeds of a new world'*)

The objectification of the experience came progressively, as always happens to me. When I have the experience, I am absolutely 'blank,' like a newborn baby to whom things come just 'like that.' I don't know what is happening, and I expect nothing. How much time it has taken me to learn this!

There is no preliminary thought, preliminary knowledge, preliminary will: all those things do not exist. I am only like a mirror receiving the experience, the simplicity of a little child learning

life. It is like that. And it is the gift of the Grace, truly the Grace: in the face of the experience, the simplicity of a little child just born. And it is spontaneously so, but deliberately too; in other words, during the experience I am very careful not to watch myself having the experience so that no previous knowledge intervenes. Only afterwards do I see. It is not a mental construction, nor does it come from something higher than the mind (it is not even a knowledge by identity that makes me see things); no, the body (when the experience is in the body) is ... like that, what in English is called *blank*. As if it had just been born, as if just then it were being born with the experience.

And only little by little, little by little, is this experience put in the presence of any previous knowledge. Thus, its explanation and its evaluation come about progressively.

It is indispensable if one doesn't want to be arbitrary.

So in fact, only the final wording is correct, but from the point of view of the 'historical' unfolding, it is interesting to observe the passage. It was exactly the same phenomenon for the experience of the Supramental Manifestation. Both these things, the experience of November 7 and of the Supramental, occurred in the same way, identically: I WAS the experience, and nothing else. Nothing but the experience at the time it was occurring. And only slowly, while coming out of it, did the previous knowledge, the previous experiences, all the accumulation of what had come before, examine it and put it in its place.

This is why I arrive at a verbal expression progressively, gropingly; these are not literary gropings – it is aimed at being precise, specific and concise at the same time.

When I write something, I don't expect people to understand it, but I try to avoid the least possible distortion of the experience or the image in this kind of 'shrinking' towards expression.

What is this spring?

The spring? It means exactly this: in the deepest depths of the Inconscient is the supreme spring that makes us touch the Supreme. It is like the Supreme making us touch the Supreme: that is the almighty spring. When you arrive at the very bottom of the Inconscient, you touch the Supreme.

So that is the shortest path!

Not the shortest path! Already for me, it was hard to touch the bottom of the Inconscient, but for others it would take an eternity.

It is something similar to what Sri Aurobindo has written in 'A God's Labour.'

Was it the Supreme at the very bottom of the Inconscient who cast you up directly to the Supreme?

Yes. Because at the very bottom of the Inconscient is the Supreme. It is the same idea as the highest height touching the deepest depth. The universe is like a circle – it is represented by the serpent biting its tail, its head touching its tail. It means that the supreme height touches the most material matter, without any intermediary. I have already said this several times. But that was the experience. I didn't know what was happening. I expected nothing and ... it was stupendous – in a single bound, I sprang up! If someone had had his eyes open, I assure you he would have had to laugh: I was bent over, like this, more and more, more and more, more and more, my head was just about to touch my knees when suddenly – vrrrm! Straight, straight up, my head upright in a single bound!

But as soon as you want to express it, it escapes like water running through your fingers; all the fluidity is lost, it evaporates. A rather vague, poetic or artistic expression is much truer, much nearer to the truth – something hazy, nebulous, undefined. Something not concretized like a rigid mental expression – this rigidity that the mind has introduced right down into the Inconscient.

This vision of the Inconscient ... (Mother *remains gazing for a moment*) it was the MENTAL Inconscient. Because the starting point was mental. A special Inconscient – rigid, hard, resistant – with all that the mind has brought into our consciousness. But it was far worse, far worse than a purely material Inconscient! A ‘mentalized’ Inconscient, as it were. All this rigidity, this hardness, this narrowness, this fixity – a FIXITY – comes from the presence of the mind in creation. When the mind was not manifested, the Inconscient was not like that! It was formless and had the plasticity of something that is formless – the plasticity has gone.

It is a terrible image of the Mind’s action in the Inconscient.

It has made the Inconscient aggressive – it was not so before. Aggressive, resistant, OBSTINATE. That was not there before.

Yes, that’s it. It was not an ‘original’ Inconscient. It was a mentalized Inconscient. With all that the mind has brought in in the way of OPPOSITION – of resistance, hardness, rigidity.

It would be interesting to mention this.

Because the starting point, precisely, was to look into the mental unconsciousness of these people. It was the mental Inconscient. Well, the mental Inconscient REFUSES to change – which is not true of the other one; the other is nothing, it doesn’t exist, it is not organized in any way, it has no way of being, whereas this one is an ORGANIZED Inconscient – organized by a beginning mental influence. A hundred times worse!

This is a very interesting point to note.

It is not the experience, which I had once before, of the original Inconscient. The experience I had this time is of the Inconscient that has undergone the influence of the Mind in creation. It has become ... It has become a FAR greater obstacle than before. Before, it did not even have the power to resist, it had nothing, it was truly unconscious. Now it is an Inconscient organized in its refusal to change!

It was a very new experience.

That’s where we are.

And this almighty spring is the perfect image of what is happening – what must happen, what will happen – FOR EVERYONE: suddenly, one is cast forth into the vast.



November 14, 1958

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, November 14, 1958

Mother,

I feel disguised.¹⁰⁹ And I detest hypocrisy – I have many faults, but not that one.

So I believe it would be better for me to leave.

Through my friends in Hyderabad, I can contact some people who are doing business in the forests of the Belgian Congo. I want to go there, alone and far away from everything.

But there is always this wretched question of money. I need it to leave and to pay for the journey. Afterwards, I will manage. Anyway, it is all the same to me; I am not afraid of anything any longer.

It seems to me that the sooner I leave the better, because of this hypocrisy I detest.¹¹⁰

Signed: Satprem

(Mother's reply)

Friday evening, November 14, 1958

Satprem,

One does not cure hypocrisy by pulling down below what is already above – but by lifting upwards what is still down below. To yield to an impulse of revolt is a defeat and a cowardice unworthy of a soul like yours.

Do not flee the difficulty, face it courageously and carry home the victory.

My love is with you.

Signed: Mother



November 15, 1958

(Concerning an experience Mother had on November 13 in regard to the disciple's difficulties)

Truly speaking, perhaps one is never rid of the hostile forces as long as one has not permanently emerged into the Light, above the lower hemisphere. There, the term 'hostile forces' loses its meaning; they become only forces of progress, they force you to progress. But to see things in this way, you have to get out of the lower hemisphere, for below, they are very real in their opposition to the divine plan.

It was said in the ancient traditions that one could not live for more than twenty days in this higher state without leaving one's body and returning to the supreme Origin. Now this is no longer

109Due to the orange robes of the sannyasi.

110Shortly afterwards, in the last days of November, Satprem would leave the Ashram once again.

true.

It is precisely this state of perfect Harmony beyond all attacks that will become possible with the supramental realization. It is what all those who are destined for the supramental transformation will realize. The hostile forces know it well; in the supramental world, they will automatically disappear. Having no more utility, they will be dissolved without our having to do anything, simply through the presence of the supramental force. So now they are being unleashed with a fury in a negation of everything, everything.

The link between the two worlds has not yet been built, but it is in the process of being built; this was the meaning of the experience of February 3, 1958¹¹¹ : to build a link between the two worlds. For both worlds are indeed there – not one above the other, but within each other, in two different dimensions. Only, there is no communication between them; they overlap, as it were, without being connected. In the experience of February 3, I saw certain people from here (and from elsewhere) who already belong to the supramental world in a part of their being, but there is no connection, no link. But now the hour has come in universal history for this link to be built.

What is the relationship between this experience of February 3 and that of November 7 (the almighty spring)? Is what you found in the depths of the Inconscient this same Supramental?

The experience of November 7 was a further step in the building of the link between the two worlds. Where I was cast was clearly into the origin of the supramental creation – all this warm gold, this tremendous living power, this sovereign peace. And once again I saw that the values governing the supramental world have nothing to do with our values here, even the values of our highest wisdom, even those we consider the most divine when we live constantly in a divine Presence: it is utterly different.

Not only in our state of adoration and surrender to the Supreme, but even in our state of identification, the QUALITY of the identification is different depending upon whether we are on this side, progressing in this hemisphere, or have passed to the other side and have emerged into the other world, the other hemisphere, the higher hemisphere.

The quality or the kind of relationship I had with the Supreme at that moment was entirely different from the one we have here – even the identification had a different quality. One can very well understand that all the lower movements are different but this identification by which the Supreme governs and lives in us was the summit of our experience here – well, the way He governs and lives is different depending on whether we are in this hemisphere here or in the supramental life. And at that moment (*the experience of November 13*), what made the experience so intense was that I came to perceive vaguely both these states of consciousness at once. It was almost as if the Supreme Himself were different, or our experience of Him. And yet, in both cases, it was a contact with the Supreme. It is probably how we perceive Him or the way in which we translate it that differs, but the fact is that the quality of the experience is different.

In the other hemisphere, there is an intensity and a plenitude which are translated by a power different from the one here. How can I formulate it? – I cannot.

The quality of the consciousness itself seems to change. It is not something higher than the summit we can attain here, it is not one MORE rung, not that. Here, we have reached the end, the summit, but ... it's the quality that is different. The quality, in the sense that a fullness, a richness, a power is there (this is a translation, you see, in our way), but there is a 'something' that ... that eludes us. It is truly a new reversal of consciousness.

When we begin living the spiritual life, a reversal of consciousness takes place which for us is the proof that we have entered the spiritual life; well, yet another occurs when we enter the supramental world.

111The Supramental Ship.

And probably each time a new world opens up, there will again be a new reversal. This is why even our spiritual life, which is such a total reversal compared to ordinary life, seems something still so ... so totally different when compared to this supramental consciousness that the values are almost opposite.

It can be expressed in this way (but it's quite approximate, more than diminished or deformed): it's as if our entire spiritual life were made of silver, whereas the supramental life is made of gold – as if our entire spiritual life here were a vibration of silver, not cold but simply a light, a light that goes right to the summit, an absolutely pure light, pure and intense; but in the other, in the supramental world, there is a richness and a power that make all the difference. This whole spiritual life of the psychic being and of all our present consciousness that appears so warm, so full, so wonderful, so luminous to the ordinary consciousness, well, all this splendor seems poor in comparison to the splendor of the new world.

I can explain the phenomenon like this: successive reversals such that an EVER NEW richness of creation will take place from stage to stage, making whatever came before seem so poor in comparison. What to us seems supremely rich compared to our ordinary life, appears so poor compared to this new reversal of consciousness. Such was my experience.

Last night, my effort to understand what was missing in order to help you completely and truly come out of the difficulty reminded me of what I said the other day about Power, the transforming power, the true realizing power, the supramental power. When you enter that, when you suddenly surge into that Thing, then you see – you see that it is truly almighty in comparison to what we are here. So once again, I touched it, I experienced both states simultaneously.

But as long as this is not an accomplished fact, it will still be a progression – a progression, an ascension; you gain a little, you gain some ground, you rise higher and higher. But as long as the new reversal has not taken place, it's as if everything had still to be done. It is a repetition of the experience below, reproduced above.

(silence)

And each time, you have the feeling of having lived on the surface of things. It's a feeling that is repeated over and over again. With each new conquest, you feel that until then you had lived only on the surface of things – on the surface of the realization, on the surface of 'surrender,' on the surface of power. It was only the surface of things, the surface of the experience. Behind the surface, there is a depth, and only when one enters into this depth does one touch the True Thing. And it is the same experience each time: what seemed a depth becomes the surface. A surface, with all that it entails of inaccuracy, yes, of artificiality – artificial – an artificial transcription. It feels like something not really alive, a copy, an imitation: it's an image, a reflection, but not THE Thing itself. You step into another zone and you feel you have uncovered the Source and the Power and the Truth of things; then this source and power and truth in turn become an appearance, an imitation, a mere transcription in comparison to something concrete: the new realization.

(silence)

Meanwhile, we should acknowledge that we don't have the key, it is not yet in our hands. Or rather, we know quite well where it is, and there is only one thing to do: the perfect 'surrender' Sri Aurobindo speaks of, the total surrender to the divine Will whatever happens, even in the dark of night.

There is night and sun, night and sun, and night again, many nights, but one must cling to this will for 'surrender,' cling as through a storm, and put everything into the hands of the Supreme Lord. Until the day when the Sun shall shine forever, the day of total Victory.



November 20, 1958

(Mother tries to find the origin of the disciple's difficulties)

I don't have all the information, otherwise certainly ... Two things made me see ... I saw them the other day. First of all, when you didn't understand my letter, for I wrote it to a part of you that without any doubt should have understood; I was referring to something other than what is seen and known by this part of you which is ... this center, this knot of revolt that seems to resist everything, that really remains knotted, in spite of your experiences and the strides you have made, as well as your openings. And what made me see is especially the fact that it resists experiences, it is not touched by experiences; this was the point that did not understand what I wrote. Because the part of you that had the experience must necessarily understand what I wrote, without the shadow of a doubt.

Time is needed ...

I had two visions which are certainly related to this. The most recent one was yesterday, and it concerned a past life in India. It is something that took place in India about one thousand years ago, perhaps a little more (I am not yet sure about this). And it contains both things. It's strange, both things together – the origin of the power of realization in this life and the obstacle to be conquered.

I had the last vision yesterday evening. You were much taller than you are now; you were wearing the orange robe, and you were backed up against a door of bronze, a bronze door like the door of a temple or a palace ... but at the same time it was symbolic (it was a fact, it actually took place like this, but at the same time it was symbolic). And ... unfortunately, it didn't last because I was disturbed. But it contained the key.

I was VERY HAPPY with the vision, for there was a great POWER, though it was rather ... terrible. But it was magnificent. When I saw that, I ... This vision was given to me because I had concentrated with a will to find the solution, a true solution, an enduring and permanent solution – that is, I had this spontaneous gratitude which goes out to the Grace when it brings some effective help. Only, what followed was interrupted by someone who came to call me and that cut it short, but it will return.

But now I KNOW – before I did not know. The other morning I saw, and I was told very clearly that it was a karma¹¹² to be worked out; so then I told you, but at the time I didn't know what it was.

And I saw that with the new Power, the supramental power ... That is something absolutely new ... It used to be thought that nothing had the power to eliminate the consequences of karma and that only by exhausting it through a series of actions could its consequences be transformed ... exhausted, eliminated. But I KNOW that with the supramental power it can be done without following all the steps of the process.

In any event, one point is clear: it is something that happened in India, and the origin of the karma and the remedy of the karma go together. And it has to do with this initiation you received in

¹¹²Karma: positive (or negative) consequences of actions performed in past lives (every action is endowed with a self-perpetuating dynamism).

Rameswaram.¹¹³

So the difficulty and the victory go together. It's very interesting.

But what had I done in that life? ... What did I do? WHAT?!?

Yes, that's the point. I think I know, but I don't want to say anything without being sure.

(silence)

It is good that it comes in stages.

(silence)

What is needed – what is needed is simply endurance, the capacity to hold on, which means to stay still within. Not to yield to ... not to yield when you feel within yourself, 'I can't bear it.'

And it seems to me that it's relatively easier than when you have to confront the thing all alone.

If you can ... when the attack comes, if you can cling to something that knows, or to something in you that has had the experience, and if you can hold onto that memory, even if it is only a memory, and cling to that in spite of all that denies and revolts ... Above all not ... To keep your head as still as possible. And not follow the movement, not succumb to the vibration.

Because from what I have seen and from what I was told, I am sure that it is decisive, that what is offered to you is the possibility of a decisive victory, which means that it will no longer recur in the same way.

There is such an abyss between what one truly is and what we are that at times it is dizzying. But one must not let oneself become dizzy. One must not yield. One must remain like a rock until it passes.



November 22, 1958

Even at a very young age, I had a kind of intuition of my destiny. I felt that something in me had to be exhausted, or that I had to exhaust myself. I don't know, as though I had to descend into the depths of the night to find the thing. I thought it was the concentration camps. Perhaps this was still not deep enough ... Do you see any meaning in all this?

It can hardly be formulated; these are merely impressions that follow one another. I know that when you thought of leaving with Swami,¹¹⁴ I saw that a door was opening, that it was the truth, that this was IT.

My immediate impression was that you were being put in direct contact with this ... this sort of

113A temple-island in southern India where Satprem became a sannyasi.

114The first tantric guru whom the disciple joined in Ceylon and with whom he travelled in the Himalayas.

Fatality that here they call karma, which is the consequence ... yes, something that must be exhausted, something that remains in the consciousness.

This is how it works: the psychic being passes from one life to another, but there are cases in which the psychic incarnates in order to ... to work out¹¹⁵ ... to pass through a certain experience, to learn a certain thing, to develop a certain thing through a certain experience. And so in this life, in the life where the experience is to be made, it can happen (there may be more than one reason) that the soul does not come down accurately in the place it should have, some shift or other may occur, a set of contrary circumstances – this happens sometimes – and then the incarnation miscarries entirely and the soul leaves. But in other cases, the soul is simply placed in the impossibility of doing exactly what it wants and it finds itself swept away by ... unfortunate circumstances. Not only unfortunate from an objective standpoint, but unfortunate for its own development, and then that creates in it the necessity to begin the experience all over again, and in much more difficult conditions.

And if – it can happen – if the second attempt also miscarries, if the conditions make the experience the soul is seeking still more difficult ... for example, if one is in a body with an inadequate will or some distortion in the thought, or an egoism too ... too hardened, and it ends in suicide, it is dreadful. I have seen this many times, it creates a dreadful karma that can be repeated for lifetimes on end before the soul can conquer it and manage to do what it wants. And each time, the conditions become more difficult, each time it requires a still greater effort. And people who know this say, ‘You cannot get out!’ In fact, it is this kind of desire to escape which pushes you into more foolish things¹¹⁶ that result in a still greater accumulation of difficulty. There are moments – moments and circumstances – when no one is there to help you, and then things become so ... horrible, the circumstances become so abominable.

But if the soul has had but ONE call, but ONE contact with the Grace, then in your next life you are put in the conditions, once, whereby EVERYTHING can be swept away at one stroke. And at this present moment on earth, you cannot imagine the number of people I have met – that is, the number of souls – who had reached out towards this possibility with such an intensity – and they have all found themselves on my path.

At that point, sometimes a great courage is needed, sometimes a great endurance is needed, sometimes a true love is enough, sometimes, oh! if only faith were there, one thing, one tiny little thing is enough, and ... everything can be swept away. I have done it often; there are times when I have failed. But more often than not I have been able to remove it. But then, what is needed is a great, stoical courage or a capacity to endure and to SEE IT THROUGH. The resistance (especially in cases of former suicide), the resistance to the temptation of renewing this stupidity creates a terrible formation. Or else this habit of fleeing when suffering comes: flee, flee, instead of ... absorbing the difficulty, holding on.

But just this, a faith in the Grace, or an awareness of the Grace, or the intensity of the call, or else naturally the response – the response, the thing that opens, that breaks – the response to this marvelous love of the Grace.

It is difficult without a strong will; and above all, above all the capacity to resist the temptation, which was the fatal temptation throughout all one’s lives – because its power builds up. Each defeat gives it renewed force. But a tiny victory can dissolve it.

Oh, the most terrible of all is when one does not have the strength, the courage, something indomitable! How many times do they come to tell me, ‘I want to die, I want to flee, I want to die.’ – I say, ‘But die, then, die to yourself! No one is asking you to let your ego survive! Die to yourself

115Original English.

116Mother specified: ‘The subconscious memory of the past creates a kind of irresistible desire to escape from the difficulty, and you recommence the same foolishness, or an even greater foolishness.’

since you want to die! Have that courage, the true courage, to die to your egoism.'

But because it is karma, one must, one must DO something oneself. Karma is the construction of the ego; the ego MUST DO something, everything cannot be done for it. This is it, THIS is the thing: karma is the result of the ego's actions, and only when the ego abdicates is the karma dissolved. One can help it along, one can assist it, give it strength, bestow courage upon it, but the ego must then make use of it.

(silence)

So this is what I saw for you: that the crystallization of this karma occurred during a life in India in which you were put in the presence of the possibility of liberation and ... I don't know the details; I don't know the material facts at all. So far, I know nothing, I have only had a vision. I saw you there, as I told you, taller than you are now, in an Indian body, north Indian, for it was not dark but fair. But there was a HARDNESS in the being, the hardness born of a kind of despair mixed with rebellion, incomprehension and an ego that resists. That is all I know. The image was of you backed up against a bronze door: BACKED UP against it. I didn't see what had caused it. As I told you, something interrupted me, so I was unable to follow it.

The other indication is what I told you the other day. When you thought of leaving to join Swami, I immediately saw a stream of light: Ah, the road is opening up! So I said, 'It is good.' And while you were away in Ceylon, I followed you from day to day. You called much more than the second time, when you were in the Himalayas; and with the physical hardships you were undergoing, I was very, very close to you – I constantly felt what was happening.

And then I saw a GREAT light, like a glory, when you were at Rameswaram. A great light. And when you returned here, this light was upon you, very strong and imposing. But at the same time, I felt that it needed protecting – to be shielded, protected – that it was not yet established. Established, ready to resist all that decomposes an experience. I would have liked to have kept you apart, under a glass case, but then I saw that this would have drawbacks as well as advantages. Also, I liked the way you wanted to fight against an uncomprehending reception due to your orange robes and your shaved head. Of course, it was a much shorter path than the other, but it was more difficult.

And then, more and more, I felt that if what I saw, as I saw it, could be realized ... I saw two things: a journey – not at all a pilgrimage as it is commonly understood – a journey towards solitude in arduous conditions, and a sojourn in a very severe solitude, facing the mountains, in arduous physical conditions. The contact with this majesty of Nature has a great influence upon the ego at certain moments: it has the power to dissolve it. But all this complication, all these organized pilgrimages, all that ... it brings in the whole petty side of human life which spoils everything ...

Yes, that whole journey was odious ...

... which spoils everything.

The other thing was the tantric initiation. But I wanted the conditions of this initiation to be at least as favorable as those in Rameswaram, by which I mean conducted by someone very capable and as far as possible free from the whole formalistic and external side. A TRUE initiation – someone who would be capable of pulling down the Power and putting you in conditions rigorous enough for you to be able to hold this Power, to receive it and hold it.

As soon as you had left, and since I was following you, I saw that nothing of the kind was going to happen, but rather something very superficial which would not be of much use. And when I received your letters and saw that you were in difficulty, I did something. There are places that are favorable for occult experiences. Benares is one of these places, the atmosphere there is filled with vibrations of occult forces, and if one has the slightest capacity, it spontaneously develops there, in the same way that a spiritual aspiration develops very strongly and spontaneously as soon as one

lands in India. These are Graces. Graces, because it is the destiny of the country, it has been so throughout its history, and because India has always been turned much more towards the heights and the inner depths than towards the outer world. Now, it is in the process of losing all that and wallowing in the mud, but that's another story ... it was like that and it is still like that. And in fact, when you returned from Rameswaram with your robes, I saw with much satisfaction that there was still a GREAT dignity and a GREAT sincerity in this endeavor of the Sannyasis towards the higher life and in the self-giving of a certain number of people to realize this higher life. When you returned, it had become a very concrete and a very real thing that immediately commanded respect. Before, I had seen only a copy, an imitation, an hypocrisy, a pretension – nothing that was really lived. But then, I saw that it was true, that it was lived, that it was real and that it was still India's great heritage. I don't believe it is very prevalent now, but in any case, it is still there, and as I told you, it commands respect. And then, as I felt you in difficulty and as the outer conditions were not only veiling but spoiling the inner, well, on that day I wrote you a short note – I no longer recall when it was exactly, but I wrote you just a word or two, which I put in an envelope and sent you – I concentrated very strongly upon those few words and sent you something. I didn't note the date, I don't remember when it was, but it's likely that it happened as I wished when you were in Benares; and then you had this experience.

But when you returned the second time, from the Himalayas, you didn't have the same flame as when you returned the first time. And I understood that this kind of difficult karma still clung to you, that it had not been dissolved. I had hoped that your contact with the mountains – but in a true solitude (I don't mean that your body had to be all alone, but there should not have been all kinds of outer, superficial things) ... Anyway, it didn't happen. So it means that the time had not come.

But when here the difficulties returned – and because of their obstinacy, their appearance of an inevitable fatality – I concluded that it was a karma, although I knew it with certainty only now.

But I always had a presentiment of the true thing: that only a VERY COURAGEOUS act of self-giving could efface the thing – not courageous or difficult from the material point of view, not that ... There is a certain zone of the vital in you, a mentalized vital but still very material, which is very much under the influence of circumstances and which very much believes in the effectiveness of outer measures – this is what is resisting.

That is all I know.

Generally, when the hour has come for a karma to be overcome and absorbed in the Grace, the image or the knowledge or the experience of the exact facts that are the origin of the karma come to me, and I can then perform ... the cleansing action.

For the time being, it is not yet there.

Only, and this is what I wrote to you the other day which you did not understand: it is precisely at the most painful point, at the time when the suggestions are strongest, that one must hold on. Otherwise, it has always to be done all over again, always to be reconfronted. There comes a day, a moment, when it has to be done. And now, there is truly an opportunity on earth that is offered only once in thousands of years, a conscious help, with the necessary Power ...

But that's about all I know.

Still, I feel the need to do something – to do something.

TO DO something, yes, that's what has a hold on you.

I'm rotting on the spot.

Eh?

I'm ... I feel like I'm rotting ...

Rotting?

Falling apart. Everything is falling apart.

Yes, that's it ... (silence) That is the knot of karma: that sensation, that perception, that is the knot of karma.

My perception is that I have something to do, I don't know what, and only afterwards ...

But do you feel it as something to do physically?

Yes, I don't know, this project of the Belgian Congo,¹¹⁷ for example, it seemed to me ...

Pardon me, but that is childishness! ...

I don't know. That's not how I see it, in any case ... To live in the forest physically, an intense physical life where one is free, where one is pure, where one is far away ... Above all, to stop this thing from grinding on, finished with the head, and finished with thinking whatever it might be. If there is a yoga, it would be done spontaneously, naturally, physically, and without the least questioning from up there – above all, a complete cessation of that (the head).



November 26, 1958

(Extract from the last Wednesday class)

Basically, the vast majority of men are like prisoners with all the doors and all the windows shut, so they suffocate (which is quite natural), but they have with them the key that opens the doors and the windows, and they don't use it ... Certainly, there is a period when they don't know that they have the key, but even long after they do know it, long after they have been told, they hesitate to use it and doubt that it has the power to open the doors and windows, or even that it may be advisable to open them. And even once they feel that 'After all, it might be a good thing,' a fear pursues them: 'What is going to happen once all these doors and these windows open? ...' They become afraid – afraid of losing themselves in this light and in this freedom. They want to remain what they call 'themselves.' They love their falsehood and their slavery. Something in them loves it and remains clinging to it. They feel that without their limits, they would no longer exist.

That is why the journey is so long, so difficult. For if one would truly consent no longer to be, everything would become so easy, so swift, so luminous, so joyous – though perhaps not in the way men conceive of joy and ease. At heart, there are very few beings who are not enamored of struggle. There are very few who would consent to having no darkness or who can conceive of light as anything other than the opposite of obscurity: 'Without shadow, there would be no painting.'

¹¹⁷The disciple wanted to leave for the forest, the Congo, to do the most unlikely things there.

Without struggle, there would be no victory. Without suffering, there would be no joy.' That is what they think, and as long as they think like that, they are not yet born to the spirit.



November 27, 1958

(Concerning the disciple's karma and the tantric discipline that he is following to dissolve this karma, Mother wonders why She herself had not been able to dissolve it directly and why it was necessary to resort to intermediaries)

I am used to seeing the process or the working of things more from a spiritual point of view, something more universal, whereas this needs to be seen from a detailed, occult point of view.

For example, one thing had always appeared unimportant to me in action – intermediaries between the spiritualized individual being, the conscious soul, and the Supreme. According to my personal experience, it had always seemed to me that if one is exclusively turned towards the Supreme in all one's actions and expresses Him directly, whatever is to be done is done automatically. For example, if you are always open and if at each second you consciously want to express only what the Supreme Lord wants to be expressed, it is done automatically. But with all that I have learned about pujas, about certain scriptures and certain rituals as well, the necessity for a 'process' has become very clear to me. It's the same as in physical life; in physical life, everything needs a process, as we know, and it is the knowledge of processes that constitutes physical science. Similarly, in a more occult working, the knowledge and especially the RESPECT for the process seem to be much more important than I had first thought.

And when I studied this, when I looked at this science of processes, of intermediaries, suddenly I clearly understood the working of karma, which I had not understood before. I had worked and intervened quite often to change someone's karma, but sometimes I had to wait, without exactly knowing why – the result was not immediate. I simply used to wait without worrying about the reasons for this slowness or delay. That's how it was. And generally it ended, as I said, with the exact vision of the karma's source, its initial cause; and scarcely would I have this vision when the Power would come, and the thing would be dissolved. But I didn't bother about finding out why it was like that.

One day I had mentioned this to X¹¹⁸ when he was showing me or describing to me the different movements of the pujas, the procedure, the process of the puja. I said to him, 'Oh, I see! For the action to be immediate, for the result to be immediate, one must acknowledge, for example, the role or the participation of certain spirits or certain forces and enter into a friendly relationship or collaboration with these forces in order to obtain an immediate result, is it not so?' Then he told me, 'Yes, otherwise it leaves an indefinite time to the play of the forces, and you don't know when you will get the result of your puja.'

That interested me very much. Because one of the obstacles I had felt was that although the

118The disciple's tantric guru.

Force was acting well, there was a time lag that appeared inevitable, a time element in the work which seemed unavoidable – a play left to the forces of Nature. But with their knowledge of the processes, the tantrics can dispense with all that. So I understood why those who have studied, who are initiated and follow the prescribed methods are apparently more powerful – more powerful even than those who are conscious in the highest consciousness.

What interested me is that in their case (those who follow tantric or other initiations), what is doubtful is whether or not they can succeed in receiving the response of the true Power, the divine power, the supreme power; they do everything they can, but this question still remains. Whereas for me, it is the opposite situation: the Power is there, I have it, but how can I make it act here in matter? The process for making it act immediately was missing – though not totally; I know from the psychological standpoint, but there is something other than the psychological power, there is the whole play of conscious, individualized forces that are everywhere in Nature and that have the right to exist. Since it was created this way, it must express something of the supreme Will, otherwise He wouldn't have made use of intermediaries – but in His plan, it is obvious that the intermediary has a legitimate place.

It is like the story X told me of his guru¹¹⁹ who could command the coming of Kali (something which seems quite natural to me when one is sufficiently developed); well, not only could he command the coming of Kali, but Kali with I don't know how many crores of her warriors! ... For me, Kali was Kali, after all, and she did her work; but in the universal organization, her action, the innumerable multiplicity of her action, is expressed by an innumerable multitude of conscious entities at work. It is this individualization, as it were, that gives to these forces a consciousness and a certain play of freedom, and this is what makes all the difference in action. It is in this respect that the occult system is an absolutely indispensable complement to spiritual action.

The spiritual action is direct, but it may not be immediate (anyway, that's my experience). Sri Aurobindo said that with the supramental presence, it becomes immediate – and I have experienced this. But this would then mean that the supramental Power automatically commands all these intermediaries, whereas if it's not present, even the highest spiritual power would need a specialized knowledge to act in this realm, a knowledge equivalent to an occult or initiatory knowledge of all these realms. This is why I told X, 'Well, you taught me many things while you were here.' There is always something to learn.

Of course, when the Supramental is here, it will be very different. I see it clearly: in moments when it is there, everything is turned inside out, and all this belongs to a world ... to the world of preparation. It is like a preparation, a long preparation.

It remains to be seen if all this has first to be mastered before there is even the possibility of holding the Supramental, of FIXING it in the manifestation. That is the great difference. For example, those with the power to materialize forces or beings lack the capacity to fix them, for these are fluid things which act and are then dissolved. That is the difference with the physical world where it is this condensation of energy that makes things ... (*Mother strikes the arms of her chair*) stable. All the things in the extraphysical realms are not stable, they are fluid – fluid and consequently uncertain.¹²⁰

119The deceased guru of the disciple's guru.

120A few days later, the disciple left on a journey, then Mother fell 'ill.' It was to be the first great turning in her yoga: the beginning of the yoga of the cells.



November 28, 1958

(Extract from the last Friday class)

As it is, the physical body is really only a very disfigured shadow of the eternal life of the Self, but this physical body is capable of a progressive development; the physical substance progresses through each individual formation, and one day it will be able to build a bridge between physical life as we know it and the supramental life that is to manifest.



November 30, 1958

(Letter from Mother to Satprem)

Sunday morning

Satprem,

Here is the wherewithal to go to Hyderabad. Whatever you may decide, I will always be with you, invariably, in the truth of your being.

Signed: Mother



December 1958

(This note was written by Mother in English. It concerns an attack of black magic that threatened her life and in the end completely changed her outer existence. A new stage begins.)

Two or three days after I retired to my room upstairs,¹²¹ early in the night I fell into a very heavy sleep and found myself out of the body much more materially than I do usually. This degree of density in which you can see the material surroundings exactly as they are. The part that was out seemed to be under a spell and only half conscious. When I found myself at the first floor where everything was absolutely black, I wanted to go up again, but then I discovered that my hand was held by a young girl whom I could not see in the darkness but whose contact was very familiar. She pulled me by the hand telling me laughingly, 'No, come, come down with me, we shall kill the young princess.' I could not understand what she meant by this 'young princess' and, rather unwillingly, I followed her to see what it was. Arriving in the anteroom which is at the top of the staircase leading to the ground floor, my attention was drawn in the midst of all this total obscurity to the white figure of Kamala (*A disciple*) standing in the middle of the passage between the hall and Sri Aurobindo's room. She was as it were in full light while everything else was black. Then I saw on her face such an expression of intense anxiety that to comfort her I said, 'I am coming back.' The sound of my voice shook off from me the semi-trance in which I was before and suddenly I thought, 'Where am I going?' and I pushed away from me the dark figure who was pulling me and in whom, while she was running down the steps, I recognized a young girl who lived with Sri Aurobindo and me for many years and died five years back. This girl during her life was under the most diabolical influence. And then I saw very distinctly (as through the walls of the staircase) down below a small black tent which could scarcely be perceived in the surrounding darkness and standing in the middle of the tent the figure of a man, head and face shaved (like the sannyasin or the Buddhist monks) covered from head to foot with a knitted outfit following tightly the form of his body which was tall and slim. No other cloth or garment could give an indication as to who he could be. He was standing in front of a black pot placed on a dark red fire which was throwing its reddish glow on him. He had his right arm stretched over the pot, holding between two fingers a thin gold chain which looked like one of mine and was unnaturally visible and bright. Shaking gently the chain he was chanting some words which translated in my mind, 'She must die the young princess, she must pay for all she has done, she must die the young princess'.

Then I suddenly realized that it was I the young Princess and as I burst into laughter, I found myself awake in my bed.

I did not like the idea of something or somebody having the power to pull me like that so materially out of my body without my previous consent. That is why I gave some importance to the experience.



121Mother withdrew on December 9. In fact, She had been unwell for already more than a month before withdrawing. On November 26, the last 'Wednesday class' took place at the playground; on November 28 the last 'Friday class', on December 6, the last 'Translation class'; on December 1, the end of Mother's tennis and the last visit to the playground. On December 9, She again went down for the meditation around the Samadhi. From December 10, Mother remained in her room for one month. A great period had come to an end. Henceforth, She would only go out of the Ashram building on rare occasions.

December 4, 1958

(*Letter to Mother from Satprem*)

Hyderabad, December 1958

Sweet Mother,

I had come to Hyderabad intending to prepare for a trip to Africa, but when it came to actually doing it, I simply could not. It is stronger than I; I cannot leave India, I cannot live without my soul.

Until these last days, I still thought I could count on some outer solution to resolve my problem, but now I am up against a wall; I see that nothing can be DONE and the only solution is what you said one day: 'Consent no longer to be.'

Mother, I have made many mistakes, I have often been rebellious and fallen into many holes. Help me to pick myself up, give me nonetheless a little of your Love. This has to change.

I do not want to remain in Hyderabad. This is not the atmosphere I need, although everything is very quiet here.

If you want, I can return to the Ashram and throw myself headlong into the work in order to forget all this. There is a lot of work with Herbert's things to correct, the revision of *The Synthesis of Yoga*, your old *Questions and Answers* and the *Dhammapada*, and perhaps you would accept to take up our work together again?

Otherwise, if you consider it preferable to wait, I could go join Swami in Rameswaram, discarding all my little personal reactions towards him. And I would try my best to find again the Light of the first time and return to you stronger. I don't know. I will do what you say. All this really has to change. I don't know, moreover, whether Swami wishes to have me.

Mother, I need you, I need you. Forgive me and tell me what I should do.

*Your child,
Signed: Satprem*

(*Mother's reply*)

12.8.58

My dear child,

I have just received your letter which I read with all my love, the love that understands and effaces. When you return here, you will always be very welcome, and we shall certainly take up our work together again. I shall be happy, and it is very much needed. But first of all, it will be good for you to go to Rameswaram. *I know that you will be welcome there.* Stay there as long as necessary to find and consolidate your experience. Afterwards, come back here, stronger and better armed, to face a new period of outer and inner work. At the end of the labor is the Victory.

With all my confident love.

Signed: Mother



December 15, 1958

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Rameswaram, Monday 12.15.58

Sweet Mother,

I have only now received your first letter which you had sent to Hyderabad. It arrived in time to do me some good, for I am living through critical moments.

Swami received me warmly and is doing all he can with all his heart. I am following his instructions to the letter for I believe that your grace is acting through him. Furthermore, he is totally devoted to you and spoke of you as no one ever has – he understands many things. I was unfair in my reactions towards him.

At the new moon, when I felt very down, he gave me the first tantric mantra – a mantra to Durga. For a period of 41 days, I must repeat it 125,000 times and go every morning to the Temple, stand before Parvati and recite this mantra within me for at least one hour. Then I must go to the sanctuary of Shiva and recite another mantra for half an hour. Practically speaking, I have to repeat constantly within me the mantra to Durga in a silent concentration, whatever I may be doing on the outside. In these conditions, it is difficult to think of you and this has created a slight conflict in me, but I believe that your Grace is acting through Swami and through Durga, whom I am invoking all the time – I remember what you told me about the necessity for ‘intermediaries’ and I am obeying Swami unreservedly.

Mother, things are far from being what they were the first time in Rameswaram, and I am living through certain moments that are hell – the enemy seems to have been unleashed with an extraordinary violence. It comes in waves, and after it recedes, I am literally SHATTERED – physically, mentally and vitally drained. This morning, while going to the temple, I lived through one of these moments. All this suffering that suddenly sweeps down upon me is horrible. Yes, I had the feeling of being BACKED UP AGAINST A WALL, exactly as in your vision – I was up against a wall. I was walking among these immense arcades of sculptured granite and I could see myself walking, very small, all alone, alone, ravaged with pain, filled with a nameless despair, for nowhere was there a way out. The sea was nearby and I could have thrown myself into it; otherwise, there was only the sanctuary of Parvati – but there was no more Africa to flee to, everything closed in all around me, and I kept repeating, ‘Why? Why?’ This much suffering was truly inhuman, as if my last twenty years of nightmare were crashing down upon me. I gritted my teeth and went to the sanctuary to say my mantra. The pain in me was so strong that I broke into a cold sweat and almost fainted. Then it subsided. Yet even now I feel completely battered.

I clearly see that the hour has come: either I will perish right here, or else I will emerge from this COMPLETELY changed. But something has to change. Mother, you are with me, I know, and you are protecting me, you love me – I have only you, only you, you are my Mother. If these moments of utter darkness return – and they are bound to return for everything to be exorcised and conquered – protect me in spite of myself. Mother, may your Grace not abandon me. I want to be done with all these old phantoms, I want to be born anew in your Light; it has to be – otherwise I can no longer go on.

Mother, I believe I understand something of all that you yourself are suffering, and the crucifixion of the Divine in Matter is a real crucifixion. In this moment of consciousness, I offer you all my trials and little sufferings. I would like to triumph so that it be your triumph, one weight less upon your heart.

Forgive me, Mother, for all the pain I may have thrown on you, but I am confident that with your Grace I will emerge from this victorious, your child unobscured, in all the fibers of my being. Oh Mother, how alone you are to bear all our suffering ... if only I could remember this in my moments of darkness.

I am at your feet. You are my Mother, my only support.

Signed: Satprem

Mother, may I not be swept away by one of these waves. Protect me. Love me! But EVERYTHING has to be faced NOW. I want to fight. I do not ask you to spare me, therefore, but to help me withstand the blow.

(Mother's reply)

12.17.58

My very dear child,

I have just received your letter of the 15th. Yes, I know that the hour is critical. It has been grave here as well. I had to stop everything, for the attack upon my body was too violent. Now it is better – but I have not yet resumed any of my outer activities, and I remain in my room upstairs. The battle continues in the invisible and I consider it decisive. You are a very intimate part of this battle. This is to tell you that I am *with you* in the most integral sense of these words. I know what you are suffering, *I feel it* – but *you must hold on*. The Grace is there, all-powerful. As soon as it is possible and without going through one minute more than needed to transform that which has to be transformed, the trial will reach its end and we shall emerge into the light and joy. So never forget that I am with you – in you – and that WE SHALL TRIUMPH:

With all that love can bring of solace and endurance,

Signed: Mother

Do not be troubled about my body – it is well on the way to recovery.

* * *

Thursday 17th

My very dear child, I am adding on to what I wrote you this morning to ask you to follow very scrupulously the indications given by Swami – he knows these things and has offered himself very sincerely as an instrument of action for my Grace.

When you invoke Durga, it is I you invoke through her, when you invoke Shiva, it is I you invoke through him – and in the final analysis, to the Supreme Lord go all prayers.

With all my love.

Signed: Mother



December 24, 1958

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Rameswaram, December 24, 1958

Sweet Mother,

Your last letter was a great comfort to me. If you were not there, with me, everything would be so absurd and impossible. I am again disturbing you because Swami tells me that you are worried and that I should write to you. Not much has changed, except that I am holding on and am confident. Yesterday, I again suffered an agonizing wave, in the temple, and I found just enough strength to repeat your name with each beat of my heart, like someone drowning. I remained as motionless as a pillar of stone before the sanctuary, with only your name (my mantra would not come out), then it cleared. It was brutal. I am confident that with each wave I am gaining in strength, and I know you are there. But I am aware that if the enemy is so violent it is because something in me responds, or has responded, something that has not made its 'surrender' – that is the critical point. Mother, may your grace help me to place everything in your hands, everything, without any shadow. I want so much to emerge into the Light, to be rid of all this once and for all.

I am following Swami's instructions to the letter. Sometimes it all seems to lack warmth and spontaneity, but I am holding on. I might add that we are living right next to the bazaar, amidst a great racket 20 hours a day, which does not make things easier. So I repeat my mantra as one pounds his fists against the walls of a prison. Sometimes it opens a little, you send me a little joy, and then everything becomes better again.

Swami told me that the mantra to Durga is intended to pierce through into the subconscious. To complement this work, he does his pujas to Kali, and finally one of his friends, X, the 'High Priest' of the temple in Rameswaram (who presided over my initiation and has great occult powers), has undertaken to say a 'very powerful' mantra over me daily, for a period of eight days, to extirpate the dark forces from my subconscious. The operation already began four days ago. While reciting his mantra, he holds a glass of water in his hand, then he makes me drink it. It seems that on the eighth day, if the enemy has been trapped, this water turns yellow – then the operation is over and the poisoned water is thrown out. (I tell you all this because I prefer that you know.) In any event, I like X very much, he is a very luminous, very good man. If I am not delivered after all this! ...

In truth, I believe only in the Grace. My mantra and all the rest seem to me only little tricks to try to win over your Grace.

Mother, love me. I have only you, I want to belong to you alone.

I am at your feet.

*Your child,
Signed: Satprem*

Have you recovered?

Happy New Year, Sweet Mother.

(Mother's reply)

Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry, 12.26.58

Happy New Year!

My dear child,

I have received your letter of the 24th. You did well to write, not because I was worried, but I like to receive news for it fixes my work by giving me useful material details. I am glad that X is doing something for you. I like this man and I was counting upon him. I hope he will succeed. Perhaps his work will be useful here, too – for I have serious reasons to believe that this time occult and even definite magic practices aimed directly against my body have been mixed in with the attacks. This has complicated things somewhat, so as yet I have not resumed any of my usual activities – I am still upstairs ‘resting,’ but in reality fighting. Yesterday, the Christmas distribution took place without me, and it is likely that it will be the same for January 1st. The work, too, has been completely interrupted. And I do not yet know how long this will last.

Keep me posted on the result of X’s action; it interests me very much ...

I love you, my child, and I am near you with confidence and tenderness.

Doubt not of the Victory, it is certain.

Signed: Mother



December 28, 1958

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Rameswaram, December 28, 1958

Sweet Mother,

One sentence in your letter prompted much reflection; you write that X’s action might ‘be useful here, too.’ After hesitating, I told Swami of the magic attack aimed directly against you.

If you wish, two things can be done to help your action: either X can undertake certain mantric operations upon you here in Rameswaram, or better still, he can immediately come to Pondicherry with Swami and do what is needed in front of you.

Sweet Mother, I indeed suspect that you want to endure, to bear this struggle all alone. Oh, I think I understand a number of things about the mechanism of these attacks and their connection with me, about the Divine Love that embraces all and takes into itself the suffering and the evil of men – all this overwhelms me with a sudden understanding. It seems to me that I am seeing and feeling all that you are facing, all that you are taking upon yourself for us. The suffering of the Divine in Matter has been an overwhelming revelation to me – Ah! I see, I want to fight, I want to be totally on your side; I am now and forever *determined*.

But you have enough to do with the higher beasts of prey without still having to fight the little scorpions. I beg of you, Sweet Mother, accept the help that is being offered to you, preserve your strength for the higher struggle. I quite understand that your Love can even go to the scorpions that are attacking you, but it is not forbidden to protect yourself from their venom. You have enough to

do on other planes.

X is at the summit of tantric initiation, and his power is not the fruit of a simple knowledge. He holds it directly from the Divine, and these things have been in his family traditionally from ten generations. No black magic can resist his power. His action is not brutal, he does not mechanically apply formulas, he holds this Science and knows how to apply it like an expert chemist, always in Light, Love and sweetness. If you agree that he come to see you, he will immediately know the source of these attacks upon you and will even be able to make the attacking force speak. He has this power. Of course, neither X nor Swami will divulge this to anyone, and everything will be kept secret. You have only to send word, or a telegram: 'No objection.'

The work can be done from here also, but naturally it will not be quite as effective. In that case, you would have to set a specific time to synchronize the action in Rameswaram and Pondicherry. Swami can also do something in his pujas. It is for you to decide, but I hope you will not want to prolong this battle unnecessarily.

On my side, within my little field, I am taking the bull by the horns and henceforth the enemy will no longer have my complicity. May all my being be turned solely towards your Light – and be your help, your instrument, your knight.

X has decided to continue his action upon me beyond the eight days foreseen, which doubtlessly corresponds to dosages that exceed my understanding.

Mother, I am fighting beside you, for you, for your Victory.

With all my Love, I am at your feet.

Signed: Satprem

It seems to me that everything has changed since I have understood that it is not a personal battle, and that I can *serve*. Your grace is everywhere, everywhere.

(Mother's reply)

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 12.30.58

My dear child,

I have just now received your letter of the 28th. On that day I definitely felt that there was a decisive change in the situation and I understood right away that you had spoken to Swami and also that what I had written to you gave you the opportunity to take a great step. I am very happy and can say with certitude that the worst is over. However, from several points of view, I infinitely appreciate X's offer. And although I do not think it necessary, or even desirable, that they both come here (it would create a veritable revolution and perhaps even a panic among the ashramites), I am sure that their intervention in Rameswaram itself would not only be useful but most effective ...

Yes, everything has changed since you now understand that your battle is not only a personal battle and that by winning it, it is a real service you are rendering to the Divine Work.

Happy New Year, my dear child! I am sure it will bring us a decisive victory.

I am near you with all my love.

Signed: Mother

P.S. I shall propose to Swami to enter into contact with them at 8:45 p.m., if this time suits them.



January 6, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Rameswaram, January 6, 1959

Sweet Mother,

This is to tell you that a knot has very perceptibly come undone in me, for no apparent reason; suddenly, I was breathing easily.

And it happened just as I was despairing of ever getting out of it. I seemed to be touching a kind of fundamental bedrock, so painful, so suffering, and full of revolt because of too much suffering. And I saw that all my efforts, all the meditations, aspirations, mantras, were only covering up this suffering bedrock without touching it. I saw this fundamental thing in me very clearly, a poignant knot, ever ready for an absolute negation. I saw it and I said to you, 'Mother, only your grace can remove this.' I said this to you in the temple that morning, in total despair. And then, the knot was undone. X's action contributed a lot, with your grace acting through him. But truly, I have traversed a veritable hell this last while.

X continues his work on me daily; it is to last 41 days in all. He told me that he wants to undo the things of several births. When it is over, he will explain it all to me. I do not know how to tell you how luminous and good this man is, he is a very great soul. He is also giving me Sanskrit lessons, and little by little, each evening, speaks to me of the Tantra.

His action upon you is to continue for another five days, after which he is positive that you will be entirely saved. According to him, it is indeed a magic attack originating in Pondicherry, and perhaps even from someone in the Ashram!! He told me that this evil person would finally be forced to appear before you ... I am learning many interesting things from him.

Mother, by way of expressing to you my gratitude, I want to work now to open myself totally to your Light and become truly an egoless instrument, your conscious instrument. Mother, you are the sole Reality.

With love and gratitude, I am your child.

Signed: Satprem

(Mother's reply)

Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry, 1.8.59

My dear child,

I was awaiting your letter impatiently and am very happy about what you write!

I have followed the vicissitudes of your struggle step by step and I know that it has been terrible, but my confidence in the outcome has not wavered – for I know you are in good hands. I am so happy that X is taking good care of you, teaching you Sanskrit, speaking to you of the Tantra. It is just what I wanted.

His action here has been very effective and really very interesting. I still do not know whether someone has really done black magic, and the 'villain' has yet to appear before me. But already several days ago the malefic influence completely disappeared without leaving any trace in the atmosphere. Also their mantric intervention did not stop at that, for it has had another most interesting result. I am preparing a long letter for Swami to explain all this to him ...

The pain on the left side has not entirely gone and there have been some complications which have delayed things. But I feel much better. In fact, I am rebuilding my health, and I am in no hurry

to resume the exhausting days as before. It is quiet upstairs for working, and I am going to take advantage of this to prepare the *Bulletin*¹²² at leisure. As I had not read over the pages on the message that we had prepared for the 315', I have revised and transformed them into an article. It will be the first one in the February issue. I am now going to choose the others. I will tell you which ones I have chosen and in what order I will put them.

Satprem, my child, I am truly with you and I love you.

Signed: Mother



January 14, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Rameswaram, January 14, 1959

Sweet Mother,

This morning, X told me that he would be most happy to continue his action upon you if it would help your work; he has continued it anyway, even after knowing that the malefic influence was expelled from the Ashram. By the way, X told me that this evil spirit is continuing to circle around the Ashram, but beyond its 'borders.' Therefore, if you agree, it would be necessary for him to come to Pondicherry one of these days to come to grips directly with the 'evil one' and finish him off in such a way that he can no longer come to disturb the sadhaks, or your work, upon the slightest pretext. Then X could force this spirit to appear before him, and thereby free the atmosphere from its influence. Anyway, this trip to Pondicherry would not take place in the near future, and it would be easy to give him an official excuse: seminars on the Tantra Shastra that will interest all the Sanskritists at the Ashram. Moreover, X's work would be done quietly in his room when he does his daily puja. From here, from Rameswaram, it is rather difficult to attract Pondicherry's atmosphere and do the work with precision. Of course, nothing will be done without your express consent. Swami is writing you on his own to tell you of the revelation that X received from his [deceased] guru concerning your experience and the schemings of certain Ashram members.

In this regard, perhaps you know that X is the tenth in the line of Bhaskaraya (my spelling of this name is perhaps not correct), the great Tantric of whom you had a vision, who could command the coming of Kali along with all her warriors. It is from X that Swami received his initiation.

Your last letter gave us great pleasure, knowing that you have finally recovered physically. But we deeply hope that you will not again take up the countless activities that formerly consumed all your time – so many people come to you egoistically, for prestige, to be able to say that they are on familiar terms with you. You know this, of course ...

122The *Bulletin of Physical Education*, which appeared quarterly.

As for myself, a step has definitely been taken, and I am no longer swept away by this painful torrent. Depressions and attacks still come, but no longer with the same violence as before. X told me that 2/3 of the work has been done and that everything would be purged in twelve days or so, then the ‘thing’ will be enclosed in a jar and buried somewhere or thrown into the sea, and he will explain it all to me. I will write and tell you about it.

As for the true tantric initiation, this is what X told me: *‘I will give you initiation. You are fit. You belong to that line. It will come soon, some months or some years. Shortly you shall reach the junction. When the time has come, you yourself will come and open a door in me and I shall give you initiation.’* And he made me understand that an important divine work was reserved for me in the future, a work for the Mother. The important practical point is that I have rapidly to develop my knowledge of Sanskrit. The mantra given to me seems to grow in power as I repeat it.

Sweet Mother, by what Grace have you guided and protected me through all these years? There are moments when I have the *vision* of this Grace, bringing me to the verge of tears. I see so clearly that you are doing everything, that you are all that is good in me, my aspiration and my strength. ‘Me’ is all that is bad, all that resists, ‘me’ is horribly false and falsifying. If your Grace withdraws for one second, I collapse, I am *helpless*.¹²³ You alone are my strength, the source of my life, the joy and fulfillment to which I aspire.

I am at your feet, your child eternally.

Signed: Satprem

(Mother’s reply)

1.1 6.59

My dear child,

This morning, I received your letter ... I am very happy about all that X is telling you and that he has found you fit to receive the tantric initiation. It was my feeling, I could say my conviction, to which he gives an enlightened confirmation. So all is well.

As for my health and the Ashram, I *infinitely* appreciate what he has done and what he would like to continue to do. His visit will make me very happy, and if he comes in about one month, a few days before the ‘darshan,’ there will be no need to find any excuse for his visit, for it will appear quite natural.

My health is progressing well, but I intend to be very prudent and not burden myself with occupations. Yesterday, I began the balcony darshan again, and it is all right. That is all for the moment.

I am taking advantage of this situation to work. I have chosen the articles for the Bulletin. They are as follows: 1) Message. 2) To keep silent. 3) Can there be intermediary states between man and super-man? 4) The Anti-Divine. 5) What is the role of the spirit? 6) Karma (I have touched this one up to make it less personal). 7) The Worship of the Supreme in Matter. Now I would like to prepare the first twelve Aphorisms¹²⁴ for printing. But as you have not yet revised the last two, I am sending them to you. Could you do them when you have finished what you are doing for the Bulletin? It is not urgent, take your time. Do not disturb your *real work* for this in any way. For, in my eyes, this work of inner liberation is much more important.

You will find in this letter a little money. I thought you might need it for your stamps, etc.

123Original English.

124The French translation of Sri Aurobindo’s *Thoughts and Aphorisms*.

I never leave you, and my love too is always with you.

Signed: Mother



January 21, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Rameswaram, January 21, 1959

Sweet Mother,

Here is what X told me: 'I have received a message from my guru.¹²⁵ In my vision, the Mother was there, next to my guru, and she was smiling. My guru told me that your present difficulties are a period of testing, but I could already give you the first stage of tantric initiation and that for you, the three stages of initiation could be done in an accelerated way.'

I will therefore give you initiation this Friday or Saturday, on the day of the full moon or the day before. This first stage will last three months during which you will have to repeat 1 lakh¹²⁶ times the mantra that I will give you. At the end of three months, I will come to see you in Pondicherry – or you will come here for a fortnight, and as soon as I have received the message from my guru, I will give you the second stage that will last three months as well. At the end of these three months, you will receive the full initiation.' X warned me that the first stage I am to receive provokes attacks and tests but that all this disappears with the second stage. Forewarned is forearmed. For what reason I do not know, but X told me that the particular nature of my initiation should remain secret and that he will say nothing about it to Swami, and he added (in speaking of the speed of the process), '*But you will not be less than the Swami.*' (!!) There, I wanted you to know – besides, you were present in X's vision. All this happened at a time when I was in the most desperate crisis I have ever known. Sweet Mother, there is no end to expressing my gratitude to you, and yet with the least trial, I am reduced to nothing. Why have you so much grace for me?

I would like very much to return to Pondicherry for the February Darshan and once again begin working for you. Today I am sending a second lot to Pavitra and tomorrow I will start on the Aphorisms, for I do not want to make you wait any longer. I will send a third and final lot to Pavitra by the end of the month, in time for printing. I am very touched, sweet Mother, by your attention and the money you are sending me.

Sweet Mother, may my entire life be at your service, may my entire being belong to you. I owe you everything.

125X's deceased guru.

126One lakh = one hundred thousand.

With love and gratitude, I am your child.

Signed: Satprem

Sweet Mother, do not waste time writing to me; you have so many things to do and I feel a little awkward disturbing you so often.

(Mother's reply)

Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry, 1.27.59

My dear child,

I was waiting to answer your letter of the 21st until the Friday and Saturday you mentioned had gone by. And then I felt that you were returning the Aphorisms, so I waited a bit more. I have just received them along with your letter of the 23rd, but I have not yet looked at them. Besides, if you intend returning for the February 'darshan,' I think it would be preferable for us to revise the whole book together. There will not be very much work on my side since the Wednesday and Friday classes were discontinued in the beginning of December, and I still do not know when they will resume.¹²⁷ Right now, I am translating the Aphorisms all alone and it seems to go quickly and well. This could also be revised and the book on the Dhammapada prepared for publication.

For the time being, I am going downstairs only in the mornings at 6 for the balcony darshan and I immediately come back up without seeing anyone – then in the afternoons, I go down once more at about 3 to take my bath and at 4:30 I come back up again. I do not yet know what will happen next month. I shall have to find some way to meet you so that we can work together – I am going to think it over.

I do not ask you to write me your news,¹²⁸ because I know that these are things it is better not to write about. But you know that it keenly interests me.

My love is always with you, enfolding and upholding you.

The blessings of the Grace are upon you.

Signed: Mother



January 27, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

¹²⁷They would never resume.

¹²⁸About the tantric initiation.

Rameswaram, January 27, 1959

Sweet Mother,

So X will do a special work for you for eleven days, and if at the end of this period the suffering still persists, he will send me to Pondicherry to deliver something directly into your hands. I, too, would like very much to do something to alleviate your suffering.

By a special grace, X gave me both stages of the tantric initiation at the same time, although they are normally separated by several years; then if all goes well, he will give me the full initiation in 6 months. I have thus received a mantra, along with the power of realizing it. X told me that a realization should come *at the beginning of the fifth month* if I repeat the mantra strictly according to his instructions, but he again told me that the hostile forces would do all they could to prevent me from saying my mantra: mental suggestions and even illness. X has understood that I have work at the Ashram, and he has exempted me from the outer forms (pujas and other rituals), but nevertheless I must repeat my mantra very accurately every day (3,333 times, that is, a little more than 3 hours uninterrupted in the mornings, and more than 2 hours in the evening). I must therefore organize myself in such a way as to get up very early in the morning in Pondicherry, for *in no case* will your work suffer.

Apart from this, he has not yet entirely finished the work of ‘purging’ that he has been doing on me for over a month, but I believe that everything will be completed in a short time from now.

Sweet Mother, I have a kind of fear that all these mantras are not bringing me nearer to you – I mean you in your physical body, for it is not upon you physically that I was told to concentrate. Also, I almost never see you in my dreams any longer, or else only very vaguely. Last night, I dreamed that I was offering you flowers (not very pretty ones), one of which was called ‘mantra,’ but I did not see you in my dream. Mother, I would like to be true, to do the right thing, to be as you want me to be.

I am your child. I belong to you alone.

Signed: Satprem

(Mother’s reply)

*Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Pondicherry, 1.29.59*

My dear child,

Your very interesting letter of the 27th has just arrived.

All is well – I am enthusiastic and you can count on my conscious help to overcome all the obstacles and all the bad will that may try to stop or delay your progress. It is a matter of being more obstinate, much more obstinate than the enemy, and whatever the cost, to reach the goal in time.

Since my last letter, I have thought about it and I see that I will be able to go down in the morning three times a week for one hour, from 10 to 11, to work with you, but you will have to do only the strict minimum in order to have as much free time as you need for the other things.¹²⁹

As I told you, I have resumed neither classes nor translations, and I still do not know when I will do so. So there is only the old work to finish up, but it will not take very long.

My body would also like to have a mantra to repeat. Those it has are not enough for it anymore. It would like to have one to hasten its transformation. It is ready to repeat it as many times as needed, provided that it does not have to be out loud, for it is very rarely alone and does not want to

129The tantric work.

speak of this to anyone. Truly, the Ashram atmosphere is not very favorable for this kind of thing. You will have to take precautions so as not to be disturbed or interrupted in an inopportune way. Domestic servants, curious people, so-called friends can all serve as instruments of the hostile forces to put a spoke in the wheels. I will do my best to protect you, but you will have a lot to do yourself and will have to be as firm as an iron rod.

I am not writing you all this to discourage you from coming. But *I want you to succeed*; for me that is more important than anything else, no matter what the price. So, know for certain that I am with you all the time and more so especially when you repeat your mantra ...

In constant communion in the effort towards victory; my love and my force never leave you.

Signed: Mother



January 31, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Rameswaram, January 31, 1959

Sweet Mother,

I have reflected for a long time on that passage in your letter where you say that your body needs a mantra to hasten its transformation. Certainly X can do something in this realm, but I have not yet spoken to him (and I shall not speak of this to Swami).

X knows very little about your true work and what Swami has been able to explain to him is rather inadequate, for I do not believe that he himself understands it very well. So I shall have to try to make myself understood quite clearly to X and tell him exactly and simply what it is you need. The word 'transformation' is too abstract. Each mantra has a very specific action – at least I believe so – and I must be able to tell X in a concrete way the exact powers or capacities you are now seeking, and the general goal or the particular results required. Then he will find the mantra or mantras that apply.

My explanations will have to be simple, for X speaks English with difficulty, thus subtleties are out of the question. (I am teaching him a little English while he is teaching me Sanskrit, and we manage to understand each other rather well all the same. He understands more than he can speak.)

I do not want to mention this to Swami, as X is not very happy about the way Swami seizes upon every occasion to appropriate things, and particularly mantras (I will explain this to you when we meet again). It is especially the way he says 'I'. Nothing very serious – it is Swami's bad side, though he has good ones too. You know that, however.

So I would like to speak to X knowledgeably, in a very precise way, and I am waiting only for you to tell me what I should say. The thing is too important to be approached lightly and vaguely.

....

As for my return to Pondicherry, I would like you yourself to decide. I am anxious to see you again, but I also think that it is not necessary to rush things, and the Darshan periods are heavy for you.

In principle, X will have finished his ‘purgung’ of me on February 6. So after that date I will do what you wish.

As for my mantra, I say it only partially now, but X will fix an ‘auspicious’ day to begin it really according to the rules when I am in Pondicherry, for theoretically, one should not move once the work has begun. The 12th of February is an auspicious day, if you decide that I should return by then (or a little before to get things ready); otherwise another date may be fixed later on.

Your letter, Sweet Mother, has filled me with strength and resolution. I want to be victorious and I want to serve you. I see very well that gradually I can be taught many useful things by X. The essential thing is first of all to lose this ego which falsifies everything. Finally, through your grace, I believe that I have passed a decisive turning point and that there is a beginning of real consecration – and I feel your Love, your Presence. Things are opening a little.

Sweet Mother, I love you and I want to serve you truly.

*Your child,
Signed: Satprem*

P.S. All the old *Questions and Answers* will also have to be revised with you, perhaps not in their entirety, but certain problems need clarification. What a grace to be able to work with you!

(Mother’s reply)

*Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Pondicherry, 2.2.59*

My dear child,

I have received your letter of the 31st. In a number of ways it confirms my experience of these past days. We shall speak of all this when you return.

I have reflected a great deal on a possible mantra, and I have also seen the difficulty of receiving something that does not have a *narrowing* effect ... One must at least have an idea of the possibility (at least) of the supermind to understand what I need ...

As for your arrival here, the day you mentioned is the Saraswati Puja – I will go downstairs to give blessings. If you arrive on the previous day, the 11th – I will arrange to see you at 10 o’clock, and then you can begin your mantra on the 12th.

Simply send me word to let me know if this is all right. Tell me also if you need money for your return, and how much, in time for me to send it.

As for the rest, we shall speak of it here.

So, until we meet soon.

Tell X that my body is on the way to complete recovery.

With my love and my blessings.

Signed: Mother



March 10, 1959

(The disciple returned to the Ashram, but as he was very quickly seized again by his mania for the road, the Agenda of 1959, alas, is strewn with great gaps and is almost nonexistent. The following conversation is in regard to one of Mother's commentaries on the Dhammapada: 'Evil')

I spent a night – a night of battle – when, for some reason or other, a multitude of vital formations of all kinds entered into the room: beings, things, embryos of beings, residues of beings – all kinds of things ... And it was a frightful assault, absolutely disgusting.

In this swarming mass, I noticed the presence of some slightly more conscious wills – wills of the vital plane – and I saw how they try to awaken a reaction in the consciousness of human beings to make them think or want, or if possible, do certain things.

For example, I saw one of them trying to incite anger in someone so that this person would deliver a blow – a spiritual blow. And this formation had a dagger in his hand (a vital dagger, you see, it was a vital being: gray and slimy, horrible), he was holding a very sharp dagger which he was flaunting, saying, ‘When a person has done something like that (pretending that someone had done an unforgivable thing), this is what he deserves ...’ and the scenario was complete: the being rushed forward, vitally, with his dagger.

I, who know the consequences of these things, stopped him just in time – I gave him a blow. Then I had enough of all this and it was over, I cleaned the place out. It was almost a physical cleaning, for I had my hands clasped together (I was in a semitrance) and I threw them apart in an abrupt movement, left and right, powerfully, as if to sweep something away, and frit! ... immediately everything was gone.

But had that not happened ... I was watching, not exactly with curiosity, but in order to learn – to learn what kind of atmosphere people live in! And it is ALWAYS like that! They are always pestered by HORDES of little formations that are absolutely swarming and disgusting, each one making its ... nasty little suggestion.

Take these movements of anger, for example, when someone is carried away by his passion and does things which, in his normal state, he would never do: *he is* not doing it, it is done by these little formations which are there, swarming in the atmosphere, just waiting for an occasion ... to rush in.

When you see them, oh! it's ... suffocating. When you're in contact with that ... Really, you wonder how anyone can breathe in such an atmosphere. And yet people CONSTANTLY live in that atmosphere! They live in it. Only when they rise above are they NOT in it. Or else there are those who are entirely below; but those are the toys of these things, and their reactions are sometimes not only unexpected but absolutely dreadful – because they are puppets in the hands of these things.

Those who rise above, who enter into a slightly intellectual region, can see all this from above; they can look down at it all, keep their heads above and breathe; but those who live in this realm ...

Sri Aurobindo calls this realm the ‘intermediate zone,’ a zone in which, he says, you can have all the experiences you wish if you enter into it. But it isn't (*laughing*) very advisable! – and I understand why! I had that experience because I had just read what Sri Aurobindo says on this subject in a letter in this latest book, *On Yoga*; I wanted to see for myself what it was. Ah, I understood!

And I express this in my own way when I say¹³⁰ that thoughts ‘come and go, flow in and out.’ But thoughts concerning material things are formations originating in that world, they are kinds of wills coming from the vital plane which try to express themselves, and most often they are truly deadly. If you are annoyed, for example, if someone says something unpleasant to you and you react ... It always happens in the same way; these little entities are there waiting, and when they feel it’s the right moment, they introduce their influence and their suggestions. This is what is vitally symbolized by the being with his dagger rushing forward to stab you – and in the back, at that! Not even face to face! This then expresses itself in the human consciousness by a movement of anger or rage or indignation: ‘How intolerable! How ... !’ And the other fellow says, ‘Yes! We shall put an end to it!’

It is quite interesting to watch it once, but it isn’t very pleasant.



March (?) 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry

Sweet Mother,

X has just left my house. He began by saying that he had your permission to speak to me about certain things concerning the black forces that attacked you. I asked him why he did not speak to you directly, because surely you would understand better and *more* than I. He replied in this way: ‘*Several times Mother asked about these black powers, and every time I felt in myself a “great confusion.” There (in your room) it is such a Place, Place of supreme Power, Place of Divinity, and I CANNOT talk about small matters. I CANNOT talk English. I have tried but it disturbs my “meditation.” Thus I have asked Mother permission to talk to you; with you I can talk of these matters.*’¹³¹ These were almost exactly his words. Sweet Mother, he said this in such a way, there was something so *sacred* when he spoke of you up in your room, that I felt like prostrating myself at his feet. (Ah, Sweet Mother, how inadequately we approach you! ...)

He began his story thus: ‘This girl in Mother’s entourage¹³² was, while she was alive, attacked by an extremely powerful mantric magician.

But the Protection was there, and finally the attack fell back on the mantric, who died from it.

130In this *Commentary on the Dhammapada*.

131X’s words are given in their original English when they appear in italics.

132A young woman very close to Mother and Sri Aurobindo who did a great deal of harm to Mother. She died a few years after Sri Aurobindo’s departure.

He died in a great rage and with a great will for revenge and began circling around the Ashram in the *Preta Loka* (I believe this corresponds to the vital world) seeking an opportunity to do harm, but there was such a purity, such a divine force that he could do nothing. When this girl died, he attacked her, and the two merged – he absorbed her. Then they continued wandering about the Ashram in search of a physical instrument to gain entry into the Ashram. They found an entryway through the intermediary of certain *black-minded people*. While doing my Puja, I *came to know seven of them*. All seven came, drawn by my Yantra.¹³³ Some of them are *people who have taken Mother's money and have been collecting money from their duty*. I learned this yesterday, and I began a special Puja to *turn their mind, put them again on the right path.*' (At this point, he said something that meant this would be easy.)

.....

Thereupon, X told me, 'That is all. I will tell you more on Friday, after the Puja. The work will be over.'

Here, the conversation on this subject came to an end. On the way back to his house, I said to him, 'It would be very useful for Mother to know the names of these people; it would help her own work.' And I suggested to him that he write down the names of the seven people and put them in a sealed envelope.

Thereupon, X began saying 'no' rather categorically. But I insisted, mentioning the help it could bring to your work and saying that apart from you, of course, no one would know since the names would be placed in an envelope. Then he said to me, '*All right, I shall try tomorrow and ask from the supreme Divinity the name of three of them, the chief ones.*'

We did not speak of the *living* magician who has been paid by a member of the Ashram (undoubtedly one of these 7) to get rid of you. If you like, I will ask him this question another time.

.....

That's all, Sweet Mother. Forgive me for all the times I have come to you with 'small matters.'

I pray that you deliver me from my smallness, that you place *clearly before my consciousness* all these very petty and ugly little things, and that I may always come to you with a wider heart, more capable of seeing you and of loving you better.

Your child,

Signed: Satprem



March (?) 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem concerning X's inquiry into who had practiced black magic on her)

133Yantra: A drawing, generally made up of geometric lines, that serves to invoke or materialize certain forces.

Sweet Mother,

I will be seeing you tomorrow, but I prefer to state things clearly now; if you wish, I can read you my letter when we meet. Here is what X told me:

'The message came this morning during the Puja; my guru spoke in the form of Sanskrit slokas and this is not easy to express in English. Normally, I might have waited rather long for the answer, but because of the greatness of the Mother, it came immediately. The message implicated not 7 people, but 25 to 50, all or almost all Gujaratis.' (Here, X said something I am not sure I grasped, but it was to the effect that either his guru did not seem to find it easy or did not feel like giving so many names, but were Mother to insist, it might be possible. I am not sure if I really understood this.) Then the message spoke of a rivalry between the Gujaratis and the Bengalis (to occupy the key positions in the Ashram); I put this in parentheses for it is more an interpretation on my part, what I 'felt.' Moreover, X did not exactly use the word 'rivalry' – which he probably doesn't know – but rather '*confusion between Gujarati and Bengali.*' However, the message explicitly implicated the Gujaratis of the '*Head-departments.*' I then asked X if he meant the *heads* of departments or the main departments. He answered, '*All Gujaratis,*' whereupon he caught himself and said, '75% of them.' At this point X told me, '*In the Ashram there are few, FEW people on a very high level, and plenty ...*' without completing his sentence. The message continued, stating explicitly that these Gujaratis are busy making money from Mother ('*making collection of money*'), while outwardly pretending to be serving the Ashram. Here, I thought I understood that there was a Bengali group which was seeking to overthrow the Gujaratis so that they could manage the business affairs as they please. Such was the substance of the message. I asked X if he could not write down the very concise Sanskrit slokas he had heard. He said yes, then he said that he would see about this after going to his house???

Then, X told me that he was going to do something to straighten all this out and to '*turn the mind of those people in the right path.*' But I cannot do it here, in Pondicherry. About two months will be needed. For two months, I will do a Puja on a special Yantra and when it is finished, I will send Mother this Yantra along with certain manuscripts for the library. Then Mother will have to keep this Yantra beside her to control all these bad elements, and it will help her, her own work.'

I asked X for details on at least those who had paid the magician. He told me he would speak about it tomorrow.

Finally, I read your letter to X. Regarding the globe of light, he at once said, 'I know; it is Mother's Shakti, her Power in a concentrated form (he did not use the word "concentrated," but said "collection"). This global, concentrated Shakti came back today; it is a very good sign.' Then he said something that meant it was a sign that '*the black Power*' was definitely conquered or controlled. (I will speak to you of a strange dream that I had last night, which seems related to this.¹³⁴) 'The Shakti had been dispersed by the black attack, but its Light was too powerful to be really touched. It has come back. Also, I saw from certain physical signs that Mother is better.'

Then X expressed the desire to meditate *sitting* in front of you and not standing: '*You see, this morning I was flying, I was not touching the floor – outside of the body.*' So he would be more comfortable sitting. Then he added, '*Every day a different action takes place. Mother knows, but I can tell you a little something because you are very close to me, YOU ARE MY HEART* (I was deeply touched when he told me that). *The first day my guruji was standing there, by my side, with his hand on my shoulder, blessing me. Another day I was growing, growing 10 feet instead of 5, and great, great Power came in me.*' This is approximate, I no longer remember exactly how he said it. All I know is that something very powerful came into him and afterwards he needed to rest. He did not elaborate, but only repeated, '*Mother knows.*'

¹³⁴In this 'dream,' we saw a titan in a gigantic airplane that crashed to the ground. However, this titan did not seem to be dead, or at least not completely dead.

So that is about all, Sweet Mother.

Each time he comes to see me, he ‘transmits’ something to me: there is a great force trying to go out of me which he seems to be pulling; it tries to climb up through the neck and to go out from the head. I don’t know exactly. Something is happening, that is all I know.

With love, I am your child.

Signed: Satprem



March (?) 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry

Sweet Mother,

I recounted my dream of the titan to X and told him that this titan in the plane crash was not, or seemingly not, dead. He immediately replied, ‘*Yes, tomorrow he will be killed.*’ It is the last day of his Puja.

I told X not to worry about the whole list of names, that you know them already, but that you had been intrigued by this reduced number of 7 people. He told me, ‘*They are the heads of departments.*’

.....

X (I forgot to tell you at the beginning of the letter) links the crashing of the titan to the fact that the globe of light has come back into your hands.

Sweet Mother, you have already reassured me several times on the subject, but this thought frequently recurs and DISTURBS me, as if there were something *not right* about the fact that you are here, you, Mother, with all that you mean to me, and the fact that I call X ‘guru’ and prostrate myself at his feet. It is delicate to speak of, because I really feel that X is the guru of a certain thing in me, and I prostrate myself at his feet very *spontaneously* because I feel that there is something of you in him. And yet it disturbs me, as though I were deceiving you or *removing an absolute* in my relationship with you. You know, like someone who plays a ‘double game’ – those voices are disgusting. Something keeps repeating, ‘There should be no one but Mother.’ Ah, I don’t know how to explain this to you, but it worries me! So, Sweet Mother, enlighten me or reassure me, or deliver me from what is not right.

I am your child.

Signed: Satprem



March 1959

(*Letter to Mother from Satprem*)

Pondicherry

Sweet Mother,

Just now I have left X; he sent me away from his house a few minutes after my arrival: ‘I do not like you to stay here NOW.’ And he added, ‘There is hard work.’ He was doing a *japa*¹³⁵ when I arrived at 5 o’clock.

X seems tired, and the child – who is very sensitive – does not seem well either.

This morning, X told me, ‘Last night I have been fighting like a lion.’ And apparently it is not over, although he just told me, ‘He [the titan] has “one.”’ I asked him if the titan was dead, and he told me, ‘Yes, yes, closed.’ – But I think he told me this mainly to avoid my questions, and it contradicts his ‘There is hard work.’

Then X told me, ‘He [the titan] has come to me fighting, but did not dare to come too close, and he asked me: – Why do you give me trouble? – Because it is my duty.’ That is all on this subject.

....

I forgot to tell you that this morning, X told me the following: ‘I would like to come back in Pondicherry after some time, for 15 days or so, and to give initiation to some people here in the Ashram, if Mother permits. Because here, there is need of strong people, some POLICE TO GUARD ...’ And he added, ‘There is no confusion (I think he meant ‘opposition’) between my tradition and the Ashram ...’ Then he added something that meant that the goal pursued was the same. Of course, all this will depend absolutely upon you and your wish (I very clearly perceived from all this that X was speaking as a member of the Ashram who wants to do his best to defend and protect it.)

Your child, with love.

Signed: Satprem

(*Mother’s reply*)

Undated

It is likely that X came to grips with the Titan who has been after this body since its birth and who attacks and tries to possess all those who draw near me. This Titan is *backed* by a very powerful asuric force.

The very small number of those in whom I can have full confidence would not submit to the discipline of initiation. Among the others, those who would accept would very probably do so out of ambition, and that would lead to misadventures even more unpleasant than Z’s.

135*Japa*: the systematic and more or less continuous repetition of a mantra.



March 26, 1959

(Concerning Satprem's most recent peregrinations and his fundamental rebelliousness, which periodically makes him take to the road)

Behind the Titan attacking us particularly now, there is something else. This Titan has been delegated by someone else. He has been there since my birth, was born with me. I felt him when I was very young, but only gradually, as I became conscious of myself, did I understand WHO he was and what was behind him.

This Titan has been specially sent to attack this body, but he can't do it directly, so he uses people in my entourage. It is something fated: all those around me, who are close to me, and especially those capable of love, have been attacked by him; a few have succumbed, such as that girl in my entourage who was absorbed by him. He follows me like a shadow, and each time there is the least little opening in someone near me, he is there.

The power of this Titan comes from an Asura. There are four Asuras. Two have already been converted, and the other two, the Lord of Death and the Lord of Falsehood, made an attempt at conversion by taking on a physical body – they have been intimately associated with my life. The story of these Asuras would be very interesting to recount ... The Lord of Death disappeared; he lost his physical body, and I don't know what has become of him.¹³⁶ As for the other, the Lord of Falsehood, the one who now rules over this earth, he tried hard to be converted, but he found it disgusting!

At times he calls himself the 'Lord of Nations.' It is he who sets all wars in motion, and only by thwarting his plans could the last war be won ... This one does not want to be converted, not at all. He wants neither the physical transformation nor the supramental world, for that would spell his end. Besides, he knows ... We talk to each other; beyond all this, we have our relationship. For after all, you see (*laughing*), I am his mother! One day he told me, 'I know you will destroy me, but meanwhile, I will create all the havoc possible.'

This Asura of Falsehood is the one who delegated the Titan that is always near me. He chose the most powerful Titan there is on earth and sent him specially to attack this body. So even if one manages to enchain or kill this Titan, it is likely that the Lord of Falsehood will delegate another form, and still another, and still another, in order to achieve his aim.

In the end, only the Supramental will have the power to destroy it. When the hour comes, all this will disappear, without any need to do anything.

136It was Theon.



March (?) 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry

Sweet Mother,

When coming out of your room, X told me, '*With Mother I have spoken my own mother tongue.*'

.....

X told me that in 6 months, he would come here to spend an entire month for the initiation and preparing for the initiation. He spoke to me of this in the street after having seen P, and in an enigmatic way he told me something along these lines: 'Yes, strong men are needed *here*. The Power is needed.' I did not clearly understand, for it was said with a lot of innuendo behind it.

I am your child, Sweet Mother.

Signed: Satprem



March (?) 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem concerning the tantric initiation that Mother wished to see X give to two other disciples at the Ashram)

Pondicherry

Sweet Mother,

I spoke to X about the initiations. He told me that he also had seen *only two* people (when he said 'seen,' I do not think he meant physically). He said that many people would be very *eager* but rare were those in whom you could have full trust – and perhaps they have reached a stage where it would be difficult for them to submit to the discipline of initiation.

I asked him his feeling about this morning's Darshan. He answered implying, 'I have already, in a few seconds, given my feeling to Mother.'

As you also wished to know his feelings about the playground meditation, I asked him. He told me roughly this: that the afternoon's Sanskrit recording¹³⁷ would be enough to 'set things right,' because there is a Power in it that should help the meditations.

.....

X came to my room a little while ago and something happened, I don't know what, but it was still this same force that he pulls from me with such great power. But mostly, I wanted to tell you that when I got up (I was at his feet), he was as handsome as a god, his look was divine, it really came from very high above.

Your child, with love.

Signed: Satprem



End March (?) 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry

Sweet Mother,

Your letter this morning *touched* me. I keep repeating now, several times a day, that it is an enemy, the enemy.

I am your child, Sweet Mother, and I want this crisis to be THE LAST.

With love.

Signed: Satprem



April 7, 1959

137A Sanskrit text by X which was to be played at the Ashram playground just prior to the collective meditation.

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, April 7, 1959

Sweet Mother,

I come to renew before you the resolution that I took this morning at the Samadhi.¹³⁸

Henceforth I refuse to be an accomplice to this force. It is my enemy. Whatever form it may take, or whatever supports it may find in my nature, I will refuse to yield to it and will cling to you. You are the only reality: that is my mantra. Anything that seeks to make me doubt you is my enemy. You are the only Reality.

And each time I feel the shadow approach, I will call to you, immediately.

May you never again suffer because of me. O Mother, purify me and open my heart.

Your child,

Signed: Satprem

P.S. Perhaps it would be good to tell you of the two supports that this force found in me during the most recent attack:

1) The fact that I am plagued by a lack of time and, occasionally, a certain repugnance for mental work. Then the ensuing suggestion: to have a hut in Rameswaram and devote myself exclusively to inner development.

2) I am very pulled – not constantly, but periodically – by the need to write (not mental things) and exasperated by the fact that this *Orpailleur* is not published because I have not taken the time to carry out certain corrections. When I am in a good mood, I offer all this to you (is it perhaps a hidden ambition? But I am not so sure; it is rather a need, I believe) and when I am not in a good mood, I ‘fume’ about not having the time to write something else.

Please, enlighten me, Sweet Mother.

Signed: Satprem

(Mother's reply)

Wednesday morning, 4.8.59

Satprem, my dear child,

Your resolution came straight to me. I sheltered it in the depths of my heart, and with my highest will, I said, ‘So be it.’

Just now, I received your letter confirming my experience. It is good.

I read your P.S. and I understand. This too confirms my feeling. I am not happy that you are plagued with work, and especially urgent work that has to be done quickly – it is contrary to the inner calm and concentration so indispensable for getting rid of one’s difficulties. I am going to do what is necessary to change this situation. Besides, this is why I have been telling you recently that my work is not urgent. But this work for the Bulletin should stop for the moment.

The other point also has its element of truth – we shall speak of it later.

With all my love, I envelope you, my child, and I tell you, ‘Have courage, the victory is certain’ – not a compromise or partial victory, but *integral*.

Signed: Mother

138Sri Aurobindo's tomb in the Ashram courtyard.



April 13, 1959

(*Letter to Mother from Satprem*)

Pondicherry, April 13, 1959

Sweet Mother

Here is the outline for the book on Sri Aurobindo for the *Éditions du Seuil*.¹³⁹

It is a rough sketch, and in the actual process of writing, the proposed sequence may change according to the inner necessity, but these are the themes to be developed. So now T would like to know what you feel and if you see anything to be changed, added or deleted.

Your child, with love.

Signed: Satprem



Undated 1959

(*On Anatole France and La Révolte des Anges*)

... These children don't understand [Sri Aurobindo's irony]. They read it prosaically (*gesture indicating the surface*). Strangely enough, it's the same phenomenon when they read Anatole France. And Anatole France, read without understanding his irony, is abominably commonplace.

They don't grasp the irony.

Sri Aurobindo had it. He understood the irony of Anatole France so well, he had this same thing – so subtle, so refined ...

'Very good,' he would say while reading *La Révolte des Anges* 'Yes, it is true, which of the two

139A French publishing house that had asked for a book on Sri Aurobindo to be included in their collection, 'Spiritual Masters.'

should we believe?'¹⁴⁰ (Mother *laughs*).



April 21, 1959

Above, beginning with the center between the eyebrows, the work has been done for a long time. There it is blank. For ages upon ages upon ages, the union with the Supreme has been realized and is constant.

Below this center is the body. And this body has indeed the concrete sensation of the Divine in each of its cells; but it needs to become universalized. That's the work to be done, center by center. I understand now what Sri Aurobindo meant when he repeatedly insisted, 'Widen yourself.' All this must be universalized; it is the condition, the basis, for the Supramental to descend into the body.

According to the ancient traditions, this universalization of the physical body was considered the supreme realization, but it is only a foundation, the base upon which the Supramental can come down without breaking everything.



April 23, 1959

(Letter from Mother to Satprem)

4.23.59, 7 p.m.

Satprem, my dear child,

I hope you wrote to X that it is agreed, that we expect him *with his family* early in the morning of the 30th, and that I am looking forward to our daily morning meditation during his stay.

.....

Do tell him that all is well, that we are awaiting his arrival and that I am looking forward to these meditations.

140Jehovah, or the rebellious Angel who wanted to take his place.

With you always, with love and care.

Signed: Mother



April 24, 1959

(Note sent by Mother to Satprem)

24 April 1959

The divine perfection is always there above us; but for man to become divine in consciousness and act and to live inwardly and outwardly the divine life is what is meant by spirituality; all lesser meanings given to the word are inadequate fumblings or impostures.¹⁴¹



Early May 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry

Sweet Mother,

I have just spoken for a few minutes with X. He came out of your room extremely ‘moved’ (in his deep way). ‘I was standing before Mother and I no longer knew where I was. At the end of fifteen minutes, I found myself there.’ And several times, he said,

‘Great Power, Great Power ... An Ocean. She ONLY can understand ...’ And as I expressed my surprise – for while going to your room, he had told me that he would begin this special ‘japa’ standing before you only tomorrow – he told me, ‘When I went into Mother’s room, I felt the Order

¹⁴¹This text by Sri Aurobindo (*The Human Cycle*, Cent. Ed. Vol. XV p. 247) was translated into French by Mother on the occasion of writing to Satprem.

come from above, and I began immediately.'

He told me that this japa with you should last 3 days in succession; consequently, that takes care of the question of interviews, as you will be occupied until Wednesday or Thursday. He told me that 10:15 would be better for him (that can also mean 10:20) because he only finishes the first part of his *puja* at about 10 o'clock, which is what made us late this morning (he was still 'sitting' when I went to fetch him). Furthermore, X is always 'unexpected' in his acts, and he has scarcely any notion of time. He told me, 'You understand, here I am in the house of Annapurna¹⁴² and I am so happy to be able to do my japa and my puja without being disturbed by my family worries. At last, here, I can live for That only. There is a great vibration everywhere.' So he forgets about time.

Your child,
Signed: Satprem

P.S. The divinity invoked in his *present* pujas is Durga.



May 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry

Sweet Mother,

He was even more overwhelmed today when he came down from your room than yesterday. It was physically visible. He said nothing, except again that you 'only' could understand.

.....

Then, suddenly looking at me with his third eye, he spoke of me, and said quite enigmatically, '*I don't know why THESE THOUGHTS come to me every time I think of you ...*' (I don't know what thoughts he is referring to) and he added, '*You will come TWO months to Rameswaram – I shall ask Mother – SUCH A THING is going to take place ... When the time comes I shall write to you, and you will stay with me.*' These are his exact words, which could mean just about anything.

This morning, just before going into your room, he hesitated uneasily, because he saw someone through the slightly ajar door of your antechamber. He asked me who it was, but I urged him towards you, telling him it was nothing. If such a thing could be avoided, it would be better.

Oh! How overwhelmed he was when he came down your stairway! It took him at least five minutes to pull himself together.

Your child,
Signed: Satprem

¹⁴²Annapurna: 'She who nourishes the world,' wife of Shiva, one of the aspects of the supreme Mother.



Early May 1959

(Letter from Mother to Satprem)

Thursday, 1 o'clock

Satprem, my dear child,

I have received your letter with the news.

Concerning Z, X himself told me that he had initiated him last evening (but he didn't say more). It seems that the kundalini was awakened and the current was so strong that Z's eyes became all red.

.....

Did X tell you anything of our meditation this morning? Do not ask him any questions. But if he speaks of it, I would be happy to know what he says.

Always with you, in love and light.

Signed: Mother



May 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, May 1959

Sweet Mother,

I read your letter to X.¹⁴³ He immediately said, 'I shall explain tomorrow.' Then he added this: 'Usually, before going to Mother I concentrate on the Divinity on which we are going to meditate,

¹⁴³In which Mother had asked about certain experiences that occurred during her meditations with X.

or by which we are going to get help. Thus, some Divinity (goddess) comes and with it the ceremony and ritual and colors. I shall explain more tomorrow.' As I am wary of his 'tomorrows,' I insisted, especially in regard to the luminous globe¹⁴⁴ and I asked if it were the same thing as the Shakti of the other experiences. He said it was not, that it was different, and he repeated '*more tomorrow.*' Then, by way of concluding, he said to me, '*It is very good, very good.*'

....

Tomorrow, I shall be there at 9:30 a.m.

I am at your feet, Sweet Mother, with gratitude. I am a hard case, but I love you all the same.

Signed: Satprem



May 7, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, May 7, 1959

Sweet Mother,

I spoke of your experience, but with all these people we scarcely have time to speak, so I was unable to give many details or to get any very clear explanation. X is well acquainted with this Light – these luminous bluish-violet waves with the white bar running through the center. He gave me his own description, which coincides exactly with yours ... In short, he wanted to say that perhaps this Light was the result of his concentrating upon you, even when he is in Rameswaram. I spoke to him of the universalization of your body. He nodded, like someone who understands, but without making any comment. As for the orange globe, this is what he said: '*Every time, before meditation with Mother, I utter some letters. And as you know, each letter has a color. There are 51 ways to combine letters, and there are 51 "paths," or 51 places in the body where the force can act. Thus the orange globe is probably the effect of some letters; it may be some protection for her body.*' In any case, he seemed to find it quite normal that your experiences of this bluish-violet light began approximately at the same time as your relationship, and in all the pujas there are these 'diagrams' or 'Yantras' that always have geometric forms. (One day he told me, '*Those diagrams are the stations for the goddesses to come down.*')

When I went to get D this evening, she told me that she was in the grip of some difficulties, as if this mantra had provoked a backlash. X immediately did some little operation, and she left all smiling.

For me, this is what he said: '*Tomorrow I shall give you another mantra of three letters. Now I am going to change the Power into a feminine form. After some time you will see a small girl*

144Another globe, or perhaps the same one, but this time orange colored.

appear in front of you, a girl of about 10, and SHE WILL COME TO HELP YOU. This mantra you will have to repeat 3 lakhs¹⁴⁵ for three months. And after three months, I shall give you FULL initiation.’ Then he explained to me that the sea could not be made to enter into a vase at one stroke; rather, the body had to become accustomed little by little and, precisely, the sadhana is meant to accustom the body more and more to receive the vastness of the Power (to put it very succinctly).

*Your child,
Signed: Satprem*



May 19, 1959

When you follow the ascending path, the work is relatively easy. I had already covered this path by the beginning of the century and had established a constant relationship with the Supreme – That which is beyond the Personal and the gods and all the outward expressions of the Divine, but also beyond the Absolute Impersonal. It’s something you cannot describe; you must experience it. And this is what must be brought down into Matter. Such is the descending path, the one I began with Sri Aurobindo; and there, the work is immense.

The thing can still be brought down as far as the mental and vital planes (although Sri Aurobindo said that thousands of lifetimes would be needed merely to bring it down to the mental plane, unless one practiced a perfect *surrender*¹⁴⁶). With Sri Aurobindo, we went down below Matter, right into the Subconscious and even into the Inconscient. But after the descent comes the transformation, and when you come down to the body, when you attempt to make it take one step forward – oh, not even a real step, just a little step! – everything starts grating; it’s like stepping on an anthill ... And yet the presence, the help of the supreme Mother, is there constantly; thus you realize that for ordinary men such a task is impossible, or else millions of lives would be needed – but in truth, unless the work is done for them and the sadhana of the body done for the entire earth consciousness, they will never achieve the physical transformation, or else it will be so remote that it is better not even to speak of it. But if they open themselves, if they give themselves over in an integral *surrender*, the work can be done for them – they have only to let it be done.

The path is difficult. And yet this body is full of good will; it is filled with the psychic in every one of its cells. It’s like a child. The other day, it cried out quite spontaneously, ‘O my Sweet Lord, give me the time to realize You!’ It did not ask to hasten the process, it did not ask to lighten its work; it only asked for enough TIME to do the work. ‘Give me the time!’

I could have begun this work on the body thirty years ago, but I was constantly caught up in this

145300,000 times.

146Original English.

harassing ashram life. It took this illness¹⁴⁷ to enable me truly to begin doing the sadhana of the body. It does not mean that thirty years were wasted, for it is likely that had I been able to start this work thirty years ago, it would have been premature. The consciousness of the others also had to develop – the two are linked, the individual progress and the collective progress, and one cannot advance if the other does not advance.

I have also come to realize that for this sadhana of the body, the mantra is essential. Sri Aurobindo gave none; he said that one should be able to do all the work without having to resort to external means. Had he reached the point where we are now, he would have seen that the purely psychological method is inadequate and that a japa is necessary, because only japa has a direct action on the body. So I had to find the method all alone, to find my mantra by myself. But now that things are ready, I have done ten years of work in a few months. That is the difficulty, it requires time ...

And I repeat my mantra constantly – when I am awake and even when I sleep. I say it even when I am getting dressed, when I eat, when I work, when I speak with others; it is there, just behind in the background, all the time, all the time.

In fact, you can immediately see the difference between those who have a mantra and those who don't. With those who have no mantra, even if they have a strong habit of meditation or concentration, something around them remains hazy and vague. Whereas the japa imparts to those who practice it a kind of precision, a kind of solidity: an armature. They become galvanized, as it were.



May 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, May 1959

Sweet Mother,

You have rid me of my headache in a spectacular way, not to mention the beginning of an infection in a wisdom tooth. So I am writing you.

.....

I was prompted to speak to X about the financial difficulties of the Ashram and I took the opportunity to tell him about the subtle 'détente' that has occurred. I told him that you had wondered whether he had not done something (I am putting all this *very succinctly*). He replied that as soon as he returned to Rameswaram, he made a special puja of gratitude to you for three days and prayed to his divinity to repay you a hundredfold (these are my words; I am translating freely

¹⁴⁷In December 1958, when Mother stopped the *Questions and Answers* at the playground and thereafter left the Ashram building only rarely.

what X meant). So I spoke to him of these men with their crores of rupees coming near the Ashram and of the money that is suddenly diverted in another direction by a hostile thrust. All this left him reflective. I will speak to him another time of what you are trying to realize here materially. He has felt something.

Your child, with love.

Signed: Satprem



May 25, 1959

(Letter from Mother to Satprem)

Tuesday, 1 o'clock

Satprem, my dear child,

I can only repeat the prayer that I made to the Supreme Lord this morning:

'May Your Will be done in all things and at every moment. And may Your Love manifest.'

As for you, I received your promise made very solemnly at a moment of clear consciousness, and I am sure you will not fail in it.

My love is with you.

Signed: Mother

(Satprem's reply)

May 27, 1959

Mother,

If it is to make me feel all my wrongs that you remind me of my 'solemn promise,' then I am ready to acknowledge all these wrongs. I am guilty, without any extenuating circumstances, and I expect no indulgence.

I can easily understand that your task on this earth is not particularly encouraging and you must find our human matter stupid and rebellious. I do not wish to throw upon you more bad things than you already receive, but I wish you could also understand certain things. I am not made for this withered life, not made for putting sentences together all day long, not made for living alone in my hole – friendless, loveless, with nothing but mantras, and waiting for a better that never comes. For three years I have wanted to leave and each time I yielded out of scruples that you needed me, though also because I am attached to you. But after the [book on] 'Sri Aurobindo,' there will be something else, there will always be something else that will make my departure look like a 'betrayal.' I am fed up with living in my head, always in my head, with paper and ink. It was not of

this that I dreamed when I was ten years old and ran with the wind over the untamed heaths. I am suffocating. You ask too much of me; or rather, I am not worth your expectation.

A love for you might have held me here. And indeed, for you I have devotion, veneration, respect, an attachment, but there has never been this marvelous thing, warm and full, that links one to a being in the same beating of a heart. Through love, I could do all, accept all, endure all, sacrifice all – but I do not feel this love. You cannot ‘give yourself’ with your head, through a mental decision, yet that is what I have been doing for five years. I have tried to serve you as best I could. But I am at the end of my rope. I am suffocating.

I have no illusions, and I do not at all suppose that elsewhere my life may at last be fulfilled. No, I know that this whole life is cursed, but it may as well be *truly* cursed. If the Divine does not want to give me his Love, may he give me his curse. But not this life between two worlds. Or if I am too hardened, may he break me. But not this tepidness, this approximation.

I am not really bad, Mother, but I can no longer bear this life without love. That is all.

There is someone here who could have saved me, whom I could have loved. Oh, it has nothing to do with all those things you might imagine! My soul loves her soul. It is something very serene. We have known each other for five years, and I had never even dreamed of calling it love. But all the outer circumstances are against us. And I do not want to turn anyone away from you. Anyway, if I sink into the depths of the pit, or so I tell myself, it is no reason to drag someone else along with me. So this too is one more reason for me to leave. I cannot continue suffocating all alone in my corner. (It is useless to ask her name, I will say *nothing*.)

You are imposing a new ordeal on me by asking me to go to Rameswaram. For you, I have accepted. But I shall go there sheathed in my sturdiest armor and I will not yield, because I know that it is always to be begun again. I do not want to become a ‘great Tantric’ or whatever else it may be. I want only to love. And since I cannot love, I am leaving. I will arrive in Rameswaram at 2 in the morning, and will leave again by the 11 o’clock train.

I want to go to New Caledonia. There, or elsewhere ... there are forests there. Africa is closing up. You must help me one last time by giving me the means to leave and try something else with a minimum of chance – although, at the point I’m at, I laugh in the face of ‘chance.’ I need 2,000 rupees, if that is possible for you. If you do not want to, or if you cannot, I will leave anyway, no matter where, no matter how.

And once again, you can judge me all you want, I acknowledge all my wrongs. I am guilty in a guilty and stupid world (which loves its stupidity, no doubt).

Signed: Satprem

The ‘aphorisms’ will be ready tomorrow.

I have nothing more to add.

(Mother’s reply)

5.28.59

Satprem, my dear child,

This morning, the problem and its solution appeared to me very clearly; but since, for quite obvious reasons, I am both the judge and the accused in this matter, I cannot make a decision; not that my judgment would necessarily be egoistic, but it would have no authority.

Only someone who loves you and has the knowledge can find the true solution to the problem. X¹⁴⁸ fulfills these conditions excellently. Go to him and simply be what you are, without blackening

148The disciple’s tantric guru.

nor embellishing, with the sincerity and simplicity of a child. He knows your soul and its aspiration; speak to him of your physical life and of your need for space, solitude, untamed nature, the simple and free life. He will understand and, in his wisdom, will see the best thing to do.

And what he decides will be done.

My love is unalterably with you.

Signed: Mother



May 28, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, May 28, 1959

Mother,

I do not want you to suffer because of me, for there is already too much suffering in this world. I shall do what you wish. I will go to Rameswaram and I will stay there as long as X wants. I have seen that there is no happy solution. So I bow before the circumstances.

If it is not too tiring for your eyes, I would like you to read what follows. I want to tell you what I have seen, very clearly.

After the wave of rebelliousness this morning, I was seized by a great sadness, a great bitterness, as though I were being confronted with a profound injustice.

There is a spiritual destiny in me, but there are *three* other destinies so intimately bound up with it that I cannot cut off any one without mutilating something of my living soul – which is why, periodically, these suppressed destinies awaken and call to me – and the dark forces seize upon these occasions to sow chaos within and drive me to ruin everything since I cannot really fulfill myself. And the problem is insoluble.

1) There is the destiny of the adventurer: it is the one in me that needs the sea or the forest and wide open spaces and struggles. This was the best part of my childhood. I can sit on it and tell myself that ‘the adventure is within,’ and it might ‘work’ for a while. But this untamed child in me continues to live all the same, and it is something very valuable in me. I cannot kill it through reasoning, even spiritual reasoning. And if I tell it that everything lies ‘within,’ not ‘without,’ it replies, ‘Then why was I born, why this manifestation in the outer world?’ In the end, it is not a question of reasoning. It is a fact, like the wind upon the heaths.

2) There is the destiny of the writer in me. And this too is linked to the best of my soul. It is also a profound need, like adventuring upon the heaths, because when I write certain things, I breathe in a certain way. But during the five years I have been here, I have had to bow to the fact that, materially, there is no time to write what I would like (I recall how I had to wrench out this *Orpailleur*, which I have not even had time to revise). This is not a reproach, Mother, for you do all

you can to help me. But I realize that to write, one must have *leisure*, and there are *too many* less personal and more serious things to do. So I can also sit on this and tell myself that I am going to write a ‘Sri Aurobindo’ – but this will not satisfy that other need in me, and periodically it awakens and sprouts up to tell me that it too needs to breathe.

3) There is also the destiny that feels human love as something divine, something that can be transfigured and become a very powerful driving force. I did not believe it possible, except in dreams, until the day I met someone here. But you do not believe in these things, so I shall not speak of it further. I can gag this also and tell myself that one day all will be filled in the inner divine love. But that does not prevent this other need in me from living and from finding that life is dry and from saying, ‘Why this outer manifestation if all life is in the inner realms?’ But neither can I stifle this with reasoning.

So there remains the pure spiritual destiny, pure interiorization. That is what I have been trying to do for the last five years, without much success. There are good periods of collaboration, because one part of my being can be happy in any condition. But in a certain way this achievement remains truncated, especially when you base spiritual life on a principle of integrality. And these three destinies in me have their own good reasons, which are true: they are not inferior, they are not incidental, they are woven from the very threads that created the spiritual life in me. My error is to open the door to revolt when I feel too poignantly one or the other being stifled.

So you see, all this is *insoluble*. I have only to bow before these unfortunate circumstances. I perceive an injustice somewhere, but I have only to remain silent.

.....

And I was also struck when you told me that I wanted to ‘kick up a row.’ You so clearly implied that I was leaving the Ashram in a ‘shoddy’ way. So that also froze me. I thought I had done my best and, in order to serve you, repressed as much as I could the others in me.

So there. I can find no solution. X will not understand, and I will not say anything to him. But I obey you because everything is futile and there is too much pain in this world, and also someone in me *needs you*, someone who loves you in his own way.

Signed: Satprem

(*Mother’s reply*)

Friday, 5.29.59

Satprem, my dear little one,

I have read your letter in its entirety and I remain convinced that one day all the parts of your being, without excluding any, will be fully satisfied. But we shall see about that later.

For the moment, I only want to tell you, from the bottom of my heart – which is so deeply touched – thank you.

With all my love.

Signed: Mother

I will see you tomorrow morning at ten o’clock and I hope that a few small misunderstandings may be clarified.

I am sending you forthwith the note that I had prepared for tomorrow morning.

(*Note from Mother to Satprem*)

I did not utter the words that you heard – I wanted to speak to you of my experience during the night, but I was paralyzed because I clearly felt that you no longer understood me. As soon as I

received your letter, I concentrated on you in an effort to help you, and when night fell, just at the hour I enter into contact with X, I called for his help – whereupon he sent me this little Kali whom he had already sent once before. So I went to your house, I took you in my arms and pressed you tightly to my heart to keep you as sheltered as possible from blows, and I let Kali do her warrior dance against this titan who is always trying to possess you, creating this rebelliousness in you. She must have at least partially succeeded in her work, because very early in the morning the titan went away somewhat discomfited, but while leaving, he flung this at me as he went by: ‘You will regret it, for you would have had less trouble if he had left.’ I flung his suggestion back in his face with a laugh and told him, ‘Take that, along with all the rest of your ugly person! I have no need of it!’ And the atmosphere cleared up.

I wanted to tell you all this, but I couldn’t because you were still far away from me and it would have seemed like boasting. Also the misunderstanding created by the distance made you hear other words than those I uttered.



June 3, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem, while travelling)

Rameswaram, June 3, 1959

Sweet Mother,

On your behalf, I told X that you had been worried about me. He, too, had felt that things were not going well and had ‘worked’ on his side. He told me to write you immediately to tell you that ‘*everything is all right.*’

.....

Also, I explained to him that a mantra had come to you which you were repeating between 5 and 6 in particular, and I told him about this culminating point where you wanted to express your gratitude, enthusiasm, etc., and about the French mantra. After explaining, I gave him your French and Sanskrit texts. He *felt* and understood very well what you wanted. His first reaction after reading it was to say, ‘*Great meaning, great power is there. It is all right.*’ I told him that apart from the meaning of the mantra, you wanted to know if it was all right from the ‘vibrational’ standpoint. He told me that he would take your text to his next puja and would repeat it himself to see. He should have done that this morning, but he has a fever (since his return from Madurai, he has not been well because of a cold and sunstroke). I will write you as soon as I know the result of his ‘test.’

Regarding me, this is more or less what he said: ‘*First of all, I want an agreement from you so that under any circumstances you never leave the Ashram. Whatever happens, even if Yama¹⁴⁹ comes to dance at your door, you should never leave the Ashram. At the critical moment, when the*

¹⁴⁹Yama: the god of Death in the Hindu pantheon.

attack is the strongest, you should throw everything into His hands, then and then only the thing can be removed (I no longer know whether he said 'removed' or destroyed). It is the only way. SARVAM MAMA BRAHMAN [Thou art my sole refuge]. Here in Rameswaram, we are going to meditate together for 45 days, and the Asuric-Shakti may come with full strength to attack, and I shall try my best not only to protect but to destroy, but for that, I need your determination. It is only by your own determination that I can get strength. If the force comes to make suggestions: lack of adventure, lack of Nature, lack of love, then think that I am the forest, think that I am the sea, think that I am the wife (!!)' Meanwhile, X has nearly doubled the number of repetitions of the mantra that I have to say every day (it is the same mantra he gave me in Pondicherry). X repeated to me again and again that I am not merely a 'disciple' to him, like the others, but as if his son.

This was a first, hasty conversation, and we did not discuss things at length. I said nothing. I have no confidence in my reactions when I am in the midst of my crises of complete negation. And truly speaking, at the time of my last crisis in Pondicherry, I do not know if it was really X's occult working that set things right, for personally (but perhaps it is an ignorant impression), I felt that it was thanks to Sujata and her childlike simplicity that I was able to get out of it.

In any event, since I left Pondicherry, I have been living like a kind of robot (it began in the train); I am empty, void of the least feeling for whomever it may be. I keep going by a kind of acquired momentum, but actually I feel completely anesthetized.

Excuse my handwriting. I am writing to you lying on the floor of the dharamshala¹⁵⁰ near X's house, for the 'hut' meant for me is not yet ready.

.....

Suddenly, last evening, X went furiously on the warpath against the Indian 'Congress'¹⁵¹ and with an irrefutable tone, like someone who knows, began making very interesting predictions.

Before five months are over (in September, October or November), Pakistan will attack India with the help or the complicity or the military resources of the United States. And at about the same time, China will attack India because of the Dalai Lama, under the pretext that India is supporting the Dalai Lama and that thousands of Tibetan refugees are escaping into India to carry on anti-Chinese activities. Then America will offer its support to India against China and then, said X, 'We shall see what will be the political policy of the Congress Party, which pretends to be unaligned with any bloc. If India accepts American aid, there will be no more Pakistan but rather American troops to prevent conflicts between Muslims and Hindus, and a single government for both countries.' I pointed out to X that this sounded very much like a world war ...

Then he made the following comparison: 'When you throw a pebble into a pond, there is just one center, one point where it falls, and everything radiates out from this center. There are two such centers in the world at present, two places where there are great vibrations: one is India and Pakistan, and that will radiate all over Asia. And the other is ... '

In any case, I had never heard him attacking the Congress as he did yesterday evening, almost violently.

That is all, Sweet Mother. In spite of my anesthesia, I think of you. (I am not blocked; on the contrary, it seems to me that the bond has been renewed since our last meeting, but I feel strangely empty.) I am unable to understand how you can love me. Oh Mother, I have truly to begin living, truly loving! Your child,

Signed: Satprem

150A caravansary, or Indian style shelter.

151Indian National Congress: the formative freedom organization against the British that became India's major political party under Jawaharlal Nehru after independence.

(Mother's reply)

6.4.59

My very dear child,

I received and read your very interesting letter.

As for the Sanskrit text and the mantra, I await your next letter.

For you, I fully approve of what he told you. Fervently, and with all my love, I pray that he will succeed in what he wants to do during these 45 days of meditation. This is really what I was counting on.

For what occurred here, I can say only one thing: when the Supreme Lord wants to save someone, He clothes his will in every appearance necessary.

As for the emptiness you feel (which perhaps is already better): to those who complained of this sensation of inner emptiness, Sri Aurobindo always said that it is a very good thing; it is the sign that they are going to be filled with something better and truer.

I have carefully noted X's predictions.

Certainly his political rage is not only understandable but justified. However, when one begins looking at things from the external viewpoint of the manifestation, they are not as simple as that. I cannot speak of all this in detail, but as an example I can tell you that here in Pondicherry, those who are maneuvering (and not without some hope) to oust the Congress are our worst enemies, the enemy of all that is disinterested and spiritual, and if they come to power, they would be capable of anything in their hate.

For all these world events, I always leave it to the Divine vision and wisdom, and I say to the Supreme: 'Lord, may Thy Will be done.'

I hope to hear from you soon.

My love is with you.

Signed: Mother



June 4, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Rameswaram, June 4, 1959

Sweet Mother,

.....

Regarding X's predictions which I mentioned in yesterday's letter, X said something

untranslatable which meant, '*Let us see Mother's reactions*' – for I told him that I had written it all to you. Then he said, '*There are several other secret matters which I shall tell you.*' And he added, by way of example, '*I shall tell WHERE the atomic bombs will be dropped.*' So if these things interest you, or if you see or feel anything, perhaps it would be good to express your interest in a letter to me which I would translate for X. Spontaneously, I emphasized to X that it would undoubtedly facilitate your work to have details. But it is better that these things *come from you*, should you see any use in it.

As for me, X said, '*Something will happen.*'

I need you, Sweet Mother.

Your child,
Signed: Satprem

(Mother's reply)

6.6.59

Satprem, my very dear child, yesterday evening I received your second letter dated the 4th,

Regarding my mantra, I began repeating it yesterday before receiving your letter, and I felt that it was all right. So if X makes no alterations, it is not necessary to send it back to me. I receive the force X gives me without paper.

I do not know if it is an illusion, but on several occasions I felt that if X says this mantra, it will cure his fever.

As for the predictions, I am *extremely interested*. Tell this to X, and also that details of this kind are a great help in my work, for they give physical clues enabling a greater precision in the action. Needless to say, I will be very grateful for any indications he may wish to give me.

For you, my dear child, it is true that 'something *must* happen and *will* happen.' Will you please tell X on my behalf that I will participate with all my power in what he wants to undertake. He will understand.

I am with you and wish to repeat to you: infinite is the Grace and invincible is the Love; be confident and will the victory, for this is what X means by your collaboration.

Signed: Mother



June 7, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Rameswaram, June 7, 1959

Sweet Mother,

I thought certain details from my conversations with X might interest you:

1) X spoke to me of the Vedic times when a single ‘emperor’ or sage ruled the entire world with the help of ‘governors’; then these governors gradually became independent kings, and conflicts were born. So I asked him what was going to happen after this next war and whether the world would be better. He replied as follows: *‘Yes, great sages like Sri Aurobindo who are wandering now in their subtle bodies will appear. Some sages may take the physical body of political leaders in the West. It will be the end of ignorant atomic machines and the beginning of a new age with great sages leading the world.’* So it seems that X’s vision links up with Sri Aurobindo’s prediction for 1967.

He did not give me any further details about this war, except to say that the countries which will suffer the most will be the countries of the North and the East, and he cited Burma, Japan, China and Russia. He said rather categorically that Russia would be swept away and that America would triumph.

2) X gave me certain details about his powers of prediction, but perhaps it would be better not to speak of this in a letter. On that occasion, he told me that he did not want to keep any secrets from me: *‘I want you to know everything. I want you to be chief disciple in my tradition. When the time comes, you will understand what I mean. With you I have full connection, not only connection in my mind, but in my blood and body.’*

On another occasion, he said to me, *‘I am ALWAYS taking care of you.’* And when I asked him why he was taking such trouble for me, he replied, *‘Because I have orders.’* This attention that comes to me from you and him surprises me, for I do not feel that I am good, and upon the least occasion I *know* that I am seriously prepared to quit everything because something in me is profoundly revolted by this *excess of suffering*, by a lack of love and flowering, by an excess of solitude. Yesterday evening, it was still fully there, *with all my approval*, and at such a time no one in the world can hold me back. It is this POINT OF SUFFERING that makes me want to turn my back on everything. Not to commit suicide: *to turn my back*.

X told me the story of my last three existences (rather grim), but I will write you about that in another letter.

3) X has not yet begun his work with me nor for you, as he has been unwell until today. One evening, he made a very beautiful reflection concerning you and your mantra, but it is inexpressible in words, it was above all the tone in which he said, *‘Who, who, is there a single person in the world who can repeat like that “TRIOMPHE À TOI ... MAHIMA ... MAHIMA”?’* etc. And three or four times he repeated your mantra with such an expression ...

He has not yet done what he plans to do with your mantra in his puja, for he has been unwell and had to interrupt his pujas. But now he is better.

.....

I have no other details to give you, except that I am not happy. The fact is that these last three years I have been tied down by my penury, otherwise I would be travelling along other roads, far from here – with no greater hope in my heart, but with space before me, at least. I am only here to render you service, but I do not know if I shall be able to repress my need for space much longer – it has already been going on too long. This is the undisguised truth. But what can I do? – I am tied down. If I truly loved, things would be different, but it seems I love no one, not even myself, and the only love of which I am capable, human love, is *forbidden* to me. So I can do nothing, not on any plane, and I have no hope in anything. Forgive me, I do not wish to pain you, but neither can I pretend any longer to be happy with my lot.

Signed: Satprem



June 8, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Rameswaram, June 8, 1959

Sweet Mother,

Even before receiving your second letter in which you say that the mantra is all right, X told me this morning that he had repeated your mantra during his puja and that it was very good, that there is nothing to be changed: '*The vibration is good.*'

Here are a few additional indications regarding the forthcoming events.

As I appeared to be doubting, X told me, '*There is no "suspicion" "[doubt], the war will take place in November*' (in fact, it is to occur some time between September and November), and for the rest of the talk, he had a tone of absolute certitude: '*The first atom bomb will fall in China. Russia will be crushed. It will be a victory for America. Not more than 2 or 3 atom bombs will be used. It will be very quick.*' And he repeated that the starting-point of the conflict would be situated in India due to the aggression of Pakistan, then of China.

The earthquake he mentioned promises to be a kind of 'pralaya' (as X put it), for not only Bombay will be touched. This is what he said: '*America supports Pakistan, but the gods do not support Pakistan, and Pakistan will be punished by the gods. HALF of western Pakistan, including Karachi, will go into the sea. The sea will enter into Rajasthan and touch India also ...*'

X then said that India would side with America against the Communist bloc (in spite of America's support to Pakistan), and furthermore, that the day India sides with America, America will cease supporting Pakistan. In any case, it will be the end of Pakistan.

After I translated your letter to him, X told me that he would give me more details in two or three days.

I should write you what X has revealed about my last three lives, but I have neither the courage nor the desire to again speak of myself.

*Your child,
Signed: Satprem*

P.S. X asked me questions about my family. I was prompted to speak to him of my mother (seeing her photo, you had said that you knew her very well, if you recall). He immediately said, '*You MUST go and see your mother. You will go in August and quickly come back by plane beginning September!*' Of course, I told him that all this seems like the highest fantasy to me, and that to begin with I had no money and would surely not ask you anything for that. He said, '*I shall ask my Mother. She will arrange everything.*'

(Mother's reply)

Satprem, my dear little one,

I have a world of things to tell you about all I have heard, seen and done concerning you these past days. New doors of understanding have opened – but all these things are impossible to write.

As for the mantra, since two days I am sure about it, and all is well.

I am extremely interested in everything X has revealed to you. But I cannot write about this either.

If X told you to go see your mother in August and return m early September, you must go. We shall manage. My finances are in an almost desperate state, but that cannot last. For what has to be done will be done.

....

You are constantly with me, and I am following all your inner movements with love and concern.

The great secret is to learn to give oneself ...

With all my tenderness.

Signed: Mother



June 9, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Rameswaram, June 9, 1959

Sweet Mother,

Forgive me for these last letters. I was suffering.

It seems to me that for months I have been far away from you. I no longer see you in my dreams, I no longer feel you. What, then is this path I am following?

In spite of all my revolts, I need you, I need truth, Light, and love. I feel I have already known all this, had all this, and that I have been dispossessed. Perhaps that is why I suffer.

Mother, lead me towards you, I am blind and without strength.

*Your child,
Signed: Satprem*

(Mother's reply)

Thursday, June 11, 1959

Satprem, my very dear child,

I have received your good letter of the 9th, It warms my heart.

All these things that you need – truth, light, love, my presence in you – you have had them and you still have them, they have not withdrawn from you, but something came to veil them from your perception, and this is why you became unhappy. They are waiting just there, near you, in you, anxious for the shadow to vanish and for you to realize that they have not left you.

With all my love.

Signed: Mother



June 11, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Rameswaram, June 11, 1959

Sweet Mother

As of yesterday evening I am a man delivered. It took only a very little word from X, and suddenly a weight seemed to have been lifted from me, and I knew at last that I would be fulfilled. All this is still so new, so improbable that I can scarcely believe it, and I wonder if by chance some evil blow is not still lurking in wait for me behind this promise of happiness; thus I shall be reassured only when I have told you everything, recounted all. But X has asked, me to wait a few more days before telling you this story, for he wants to give me certain additional details so that you may have all the elements, as accurately as possible.

But I did not want to wait any longer to express my gratitude. I am still not so sure how all this will turn out nor how this destiny that he predicts for me can be realized, but I want to repeat to you, with all my confidence: I am your child, may your will be done now and forever.

Signed: Satprem

P.S. X is also to give me certain details for you about the forthcoming war.



June 13, 1959

(*Letter to Mother from Satprem*)

Rameswaram, June 13, 1959

Sweet Mother,

I have received your last two letters of the 10th and 11th. I told X what you wrote about this trip to France and that your finances are in an ‘almost desperate’ state. He replied with perfect assurance, ‘*Soon it will increase, very soon it will change.*’ I am obviously hesitant to accept your generous offer and I do not know what I should do. I had never thought of returning to France, except in a distant future. I don’t know why X told me that I should return there, except perhaps because he felt who my mother is. I know that she is sad, that she believes me lost to her and thinks she will die without seeing me again. It would surely be a great joy to her. But other than that, I have no desire to go there, for each time I go to France, I feel like I am entering a prison. Naturally I would be happy for my mother’s joy; she is a great soul, but is this reason enough?

Sunday, 14th

X has decided that he wants to speak to you *himself* about my former existences and about what he has seen for the immediate future. He has therefore asked me to say nothing to you. Perhaps there are also elements he did not want to speak of to me. (X told me that now he feels capable of speaking in English with you.)

Another thing: we happened to talk of Sri Aurobindo and Lele.¹⁵² Concerning Lele, X told me, ‘*He was a devotee of the Bhaskaraya School; this is why there is close connection ...*’ I do not know if this is so, but X seemed to know.

For me, the inner things seem to have taken a better turn since X revealed certain things to me, but I prefer to say nothing. I dare not say anything since I know from experience that all this is as unstable as dynamite.

Your child,
Signed: Satprem



June 13, 1959

(*Letter from Mother to Satprem*)

¹⁵²Lele: the tantric guru whom Sri Aurobindo met in 1908 and who gave him mental silence and Nirvana.

Satprem, my dear child,

I repeat to you simply what I said to Sujata this morning:
 You are both my dear children,
 I love you and bless you.

Signed: Mother



June 17, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Rameswaram, June 17, 1959

Sweet Mother,

I have received your card of the 13th. I dare not write, for everything is too confused as concerns the immediate realities.

The only thing that affirms itself with a certitude and a greater and greater force is my soul. I cling to It with all my strength. It is my only refuge. If I did not have that, I would throw my life overboard, for the outer circumstances and the immediate future seem to me impossible, unlivable.

I was touched by your blessings for Sujata and myself. But there lies another impossibility.

These last days I have come to realize that to blame all my ‘crises’ on the hostile forces is perhaps to oversimplify things. I understand better and better, for in my suffering, my soul is all I have and I rely on that alone; otherwise I could never bear all that I have borne, all that I still bear. I understand, too, that there was also a truth in the force which periodically impelled me to leave, the truth of that destiny in me which is not fulfilled in the Ashram.

Mother, I have suffered so much and prayed so much this last while that I am sure my soul cannot but arrange circumstances in such a way that somehow I may live at last – that somehow EVERYTHING may *truly* become reconciled: not later on or ‘one of these days,’ but soon – for it cannot go on *any longer*; I am at my end.

Mother, I have prayed with so much truth in my heart that I am sure the gods will come to help me, and that you will help me, too. I think not only of Sujata, but of all these destinies that are being stifled within me.

*Your child,
 Signed: Satprem*

P.S. Yes, I too am sure that the ‘great secret is to give oneself,’ but perhaps this can be too easily misunderstood, and I do not believe that ‘to give oneself’ means to mutilate oneself. As for the rest,

well, my life *obviously* belongs to That and is meaningless except for That.

Would you please tell me whether I may really write to my mother that I am coming to see her?



June 25, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Rameswaram, June 25, 1959

Sweet Mother,

X told me to tell you what he has seen of my previous lives (but my impression is that he did not tell me everything and that there are elements about which he wants to speak to you personally).

To begin with, I must tell you a dream that I had here in Rameswaram a few days after my arrival. I was being pursued and I fled like an assassin – it is a dream I have had hundreds of times for years, but in this dream, there was a new element: while being pursued, I climbed a kind of stairway to try to escape when suddenly, in a flash, I *saw* a feminine form hurtling into a void. I saw only the lower half of her body (with a kind of mauve-colored saree), because she was already falling. And I had the horrible sensation of having pushed this woman into the void, and I fled. I climbed, I climbed these stairs with my pursuers close at my heels, and the image of this falling woman gave me a horrible feeling. When I reached the top of the ‘stairs,’ I tried to close a door behind me to stop my pursuers, but there they were, it was too late ... and I woke up.

The last time I was in Rameswaram, I had two other very poignant dreams, but I could not make out what they meant. In one dream I was strangling someone with my bare hands; it was an abominable feeling. And in the other, I *saw*, in a kind of nocturnal setting, a hanged man being taken down, with all kinds of people bustling about the corpse with lamps, and suddenly I knew that this hanged man ... was *me*.

I had said *nothing* to X about these various dreams before he told me the story of my last three existences: three times I committed suicide – the first by fire, the second by hanging, and the third by throwing myself into the void. During the first of these last three existences, I was married to a ‘very good’ woman, but for some reason I abandoned my wife ‘*and I was wandering here and there in search of something*.’ Then I met a sannyasi who wanted to make me his disciple, but I could not make up my mind, I was ‘*neither this side nor that side*,’ whereupon my wife came to me and pleaded with me to take her back. Apparently I rejected her – so she threw herself into the fire. Horror-stricken, I followed her, throwing myself into the fire in turn. That was when I created ‘*a connection*’ with certain beings [of the other worlds] and I fell under their power. For two other lives, under the influence of these beings, the same drama was repeated with a few variations.

During the second of these last three existences, I was married to the same woman whom I again abandoned under the influence of the same monk, and I again remained between two worlds wandering here and there. Again my wife came to plead with me and again I pushed her away. She

hung herself, and I hung myself in turn.

During my last existence, the monk succeeded in making me a sannyasi, and when my wife came to plead with me, I told her, '*Too late, now I am a sannyasi.*' So she threw herself into the void, and horror-stricken by the sudden revelation of all these dramas and of my wife's goodness (for it seems she was a great soul), I threw myself in turn into the void.

As for this last existence, you already know.

X told me, '*Now it is your last birth. I have received ORDER to deliver you.*' So be it. '*I shall give you a white cloth,*' he added, '*with my own hand.*'

X gave me a new mantra. My body is exhausted from too much nervous tension. I am living in a kind of cellar with four inches of filth on the floor and walls, and two openings, one onto the street of the bazaar the other onto a dilapidated courtyard with a well. On my right lives a madwoman who screams half the day. There is only my mantra which *burns* almost constantly in my heart, and who knows what hope that some day the future will be happy and reconciled. There is also Sujata and you.

*Your child,
Signed: Satprem*



July 9, 1959¹⁵³

7.9.59

Kalki



¹⁵³This handwritten note bore only this word and the date. Kalki is the name of the last Avatar who comes on a white winged horse to destroy the 'barbarians' (*yavan*) at the end of the Iron Age or the *Kali Yuga*, which is the period we are now passing through. His appearance marks the return of the Age of Truth, or the *Satya Yuga*.

July 10, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem, once again in Pondicherry)

Pondicherry, July 10, 1959

Mother,

Please excuse me, but I cannot come to meet you. My heart is broken. I would not know how to speak to you.

A moment ago I barely found the strength not to kill myself. Destiny has repeated itself once again, but this time it was not I who rejected her, as in past existences, it is she who rejected me: '*Too late.*' For a moment, I thought I was going to go crazy too, so much pain did I have – then finally I said, 'May Thy Will be done,' (that of the Supreme Lord) and I kept repeating, 'Thy Grace is there, even in the greatest suffering.' But I am broken, rather like a living dead man. So be happy, for I will never wear the white robe that Guruji gave me.

You will understand that I do not have the strength to come to see you. My only strength is not to rebel, my only strength is to believe in the Grace in the face of everything. I believe I have too much grief in my heart to rebel against anything at all. I seem to have a kind of great pity for this world.

Well, this time I shall remain silent.

Adieu, Mother.

Signed: Satprem



July 14, 1959

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

*Pondicherry, July 14, 1959
Tuesday evening*

Sweet Mother,

This is what I should have told you this morning, but I was afraid. For the last month I have been afraid of you, afraid that you might not understand. But I cannot leave with this weight on me. I beg of you to understand, Sweet Mother. I want nothing bad, nothing impure. I feel I have something to *create* with Sujata, I feel she is absolutely a part of something I have to achieve, that we have something to achieve together. For the five years we have known each other I have never had a single wrong thought – but suddenly she opened my heart, which had been so completely walled-off, and this was like a wonder in me and at the same time a fear. A fear, perhaps because

this love has been thwarted for so many lives.

...

Mother, I need Sujata like my very soul. It seems to me that she is a part of me, that she alone can help me break with this horrible past, that she alone can help me to love truly at last. I need peace so much, a quiet, PEACEFUL happiness – a base of happiness upon which I could use my strength to build, instead of always fighting, always destroying. Mother, I am not at all sure of what must be, but *I know* that Sujata is part of this realization.

That's all, Mother. Forgive me, but I am so afraid. For how is this possible in the Ashram? What would people say?

Mother, my whole soul writes you this. I swear there is in me a single great need of Love, beauty, nobility, purity. And we would work for you together in joy at last.¹⁵⁴

Your anxious child,

Signed: Satprem



July 24-25, 1959¹⁵⁵

First penetration of the supramental force into the body.

Sri Aurobindo alive in a concrete and permanent subtle physical body.



August 11, 1959

(Letter from Mother to Satprem, on the road)

¹⁵⁴Shortly afterwards, Satprem left on a journey and returned only two months later.

¹⁵⁵Note written by Mother in French regarding a crucial experience to which She will later refer a number of times

Satprem, my dear little one,

Now I can tell you that not for one hour have I left you; I have been constantly near you, hoping that your inner eyes would open and that you would see me, watching over you and enveloping you with my force and my love. It is within yourself that I want you to find the certitude, truth and joy.

Now I write you what I have wanted to tell you from the beginning: when you return to the Ashram, do not put on the orange robe¹⁵⁶ again, return with the clothing X has given you ...

And we shall leave the care of deciding about the details of the future to the Supreme Lord.

With all my love and blessings.

Signed: Mother



August 15, 1959

(Letter from Mother to Satprem)

... And now, today,¹⁵⁷ I am writing you again because it is the day of great amnesties, the day when all past errors are effaced ...

With all my unvarying and eternal love.



October 6, 1959

(Thus the bird flew back once more ...)

156The color worn by sannyasis.

157August 15th, Sri Aurobindo's birthday.

For the West, with all its outward development, a few centuries may be needed before the junction between the two worlds can be made. And yet these two worlds – the physical world and the world of Truth – are not distant from one another. They are as if superimposed. The world of Truth is there, close by, like a lining of the other.

Shortly before the 15th of August I had a unique experience that exemplifies all this.¹⁵⁸ For the first time the supramental light entered directly into my body, without passing through the inner beings. It entered through the feet (a red and gold color – marvelous, warm, intense), and it climbed up and up. And as it climbed, the fever also climbed because the body was not accustomed to this intensity. As all this light neared the head, I thought I would burst and that the experience would have to be stopped. But then, I very clearly received the indication to make the Calm and Peace descend, to widen all this body-consciousness and all these cells, so that they could contain the supramental light. So I widened, and as the light was ascending, I brought down the vastness and an unshakable peace. And suddenly, there was a second of fainting.

I found myself in another world, but not far away (I was not in a total trance). This world was almost as substantial as the physical world. There were rooms – Sri Aurobindo's room with the bed he rests on – and he was living there, he was there all the time: it was his abode. Even my room was there, with a large mirror like the one I have here, combs, all kinds of things. And the substance of these objects was almost as dense as in the physical world, but they shone with their own light. It was not translucent, not transparent, not radiant, but self-luminous. The various objects and the material of the rooms did not have this same opacity as the physical objects here, they were not dry and hard as in the physical world we know.

And Sri Aurobindo was there, with a majesty, a magnificent beauty. He had all his beautiful hair as before. It was all so concrete, so substantial – he was even being served some kind of food. I remained there for one hour (I had looked at my watch before and I looked at it afterwards). I spoke to Sri Aurobindo, for I had some important questions to ask him about the way certain things are to be realized. He said nothing. He listened to me quietly and looked at me as if all my words were useless: he understood everything at once. And he answered me with a gesture and two expressions on his face, an unexpected gesture that did not at all correspond to any thought of mine; for example, he picked up three combs that were lying near the mirror (combs similar to those I use here, but larger) and he put them in his hair. He planted one comb in the middle of his head and the two others on each side, as if to gather all his hair over his temples. He was literally COIFFED with these three combs, which gave him a kind of crown. And I immediately understood that by this he meant that he was adopting my conception: 'You see, I embrace your conception of things, and I coif myself with it; it is my will.' Anyway, I remained there for one hour.

And when I awoke, I didn't have this feeling of returning from afar and of having to re-enter my body, as I usually do. No, it was simply as though I were in this other world, then I took a step backwards and found myself here again. It took me a good half an hour to understand that this world here existed as much as the other and that I was no longer on the other side but here, in the world of falsehood. I had forgotten everything – people, things, what I had to do; everything had gone, as if it had no reality at all.

You see, it's not as if this world of Truth had to be created from nothing: it is fully ready, it is there, like a lining of our own present world. Everything is there, EVERYTHING is there.

I remained in that state for two full days, two days of absolute felicity. And Sri Aurobindo was with me the whole time, the whole time – when I walked, he walked with me, when I sat down, he sat next to me. On the day of August 15th, too, he remained there constantly during the darshan. But who was aware of it? A few – one or two – felt something. But who saw? – No one.

And I showed all these people to Sri Aurobindo, this whole field of work, and asked him WHEN this other world, the real one that is there, so near, would come to take the place of our

158See July 24-25.

world of falsehood. *Not ready*. That was all he replied. *Not ready*.

Sri Aurobindo gave me two days of this – total bliss. But all the same, by the end of the second day I realized that I could not continue to remain there, for the work was not advancing. The work must be done in the body; the realization must be attained here in this physical world, for otherwise it is not complete. So I withdrew from that world and set to work here again.

And yet, it would take little, very little, to pass from this world to the other, or for the other to become the real world. A little click would be enough, or rather a little reversal in the inner attitude. How should I put it? ... It is imperceptible to the ordinary consciousness; a very little inner shift would be enough, a change in quality.

It is similar with this japa: an imperceptible little change, and one can pass from a more or less mechanical, more or less efficient and real japa, to the true japa full of power and light. I even wondered if this difference is what the tantras call the ‘power’ of the japa. For example, the other day I was down with a cold. Each time I opened my mouth, there was a spasm in the throat and I coughed and coughed. Then a fever came. So I looked, I saw where it was coming from, and I decided that it had to stop. I got up to do my japa as usual, and I started walking back and forth in my room. I had to apply a certain will. Of course, I could do my japa in trance, I could walk in trance while repeating the japa, because then you feel nothing, none of all the body’s drawbacks. But the work has to be done in the body! So I got up and started doing my japa. Then, with each word pronounced – the Light, the full Power. A power that heals everything. I began the japa tired, ill, and I came out of it refreshed, rested, cured. So those who tell me they come out of it exhausted, contracted, emptied, it means that they are not doing it in the true way.

I understand why certain tantras advise saying the japa in the heart center. When one applies a certain enthusiasm, when each word is said with a warmth of aspiration, then everything changes. I could feel this difference in myself, in my own japa.

In fact, when I walk back and forth in my room, I don’t cut myself off from the rest of the world – although it would be so much more convenient! ... All kinds of things come to me – suggestions, wills, aspirations. But automatically I make a movement of offering: things come to me and just as they are about to touch my head, I turn them upwards and offer them to the Light. They don’t enter into me. For example, if someone speaks to me while I am saying my japa, I hear quite well what is being said, I may even answer, but the words remain a little outside, at a certain distance from the head. And yet sometimes, there are things that insist, more defined wills that present themselves to me, so then I have to do a little work, but all that without a pause in the japa. If that happens, there is sometimes a change in the quality of my japa, and instead of being fully the power, fully the light, it is certainly something that produces results, but results more or less sure, more or less long to fructify; it becomes uncertain, as with all things of this physical world. Yet the difference between the two japas is imperceptible; it’s not a difference between saying the japa in a more or less mechanical way and saying it consciously, because even while I work I remain fully conscious of the japa – I continue to repeat it putting the full meaning into each syllable. But nevertheless, there is a difference. One is the all-powerful japa; the other, an almost ordinary japa ... There is a difference in the inner attitude. Perhaps for the japa to become true, a kind of joy, an elation, a warmth of enthusiasm has to be added – but especially joy. Then everything changes.

Well, it is the same thing, the same imperceptible difference, when it comes to entering the world of Truth. On one side there is the falsehood, and on the other, close by, like the lining of this one, the true life. Only a little difference in the inner quality, a little reversal, is enough to pass to the other side, into the Truth and Light.

Perhaps simply to add joy would suffice.

I will have to look at this in my body since that is where it is happening, where things are being prepared.

This other world you speak of, this world of Truth, is it the supramental world?

My feeling is that this life which Sri Aurobindo is living right now is not the full satisfaction of the supramental life for him.

In this other world, there was infinity, majesty, perfect calm, eternity – all was there.

Perhaps it was joy that was missing.

Of course, Sri Aurobindo himself had joy. But I had the impression that it was not total and that this is why I had to continue the work. I felt that it could only be total when things here have changed.



October 15, 1959

(*Letter to Mother from Satprem*)

Rameswaram, October 15, 1959

Sweet Mother,

Here are two or three things that might interest you:

1) X spoke to me again of the war without my asking anything. He repeated, '*There will be war*,' and he again spoke of an attack on India by China ...

2) X spoke to me of the Ashram's financial difficulties and said '*I shall tell you the secret why there are such difficulties*.' I think he is going to speak to me today or tomorrow. In any case, he told me that he was working ('*I am preparing*' ...) to change these conditions, and he asked me if there had been any improvement as yet. I replied that I did not believe the situation had changed very much. He spoke as well of certain people in the Ashram, but I will tell you about this in person. He had a rather amusing way of speaking about people, '*people who pretend to worship the Mother but who keep their mind as a dustbin!*'

....

7) X wants to send me back to Pondicherry this Sunday (Sunday the 18th, arriving Monday the 19th morning). He says it is useless for me now to remain here any longer since his house is not ready and he can do nothing. But, he said, 'I will have you come to my house for 3 months *and I shall give you a training by which you can know Past, Present and Future, and have the same qualifications as me!*'

8) He gave me certain methods to follow, about which I shall speak to you in person.

Sweet Mother, I have such a yearning for everything in my consciousness to harmonize and for the tantric discipline, the japa, etc., not to separate me from you. I want to be your child, open to you, without any contradictions. I would like so much to find your *almost physical* Presence within me again, as before. May all be clear, pure, one.

I would wish to be like Sujata, completely transparent, your child with her at your feet. Mother, help me. I need you. Sujata is *healing* something that was very painful in me, as though it were

flayed or wounded, and which threw me into revolt. With this calming influence, I would like to begin a new life of self-giving. This change of residence is for me like the symbol of another change. Oh, Mother! may the painful road be over, and may all be achieved in the joy of your Will.

Your child,
Signed: Satprem



November 25, 1959

There is a difference between immortality and the deathless state. Sri Aurobindo has described it very well in *Savitri*.

The deathless state is what can be envisaged for the human physical body in the future: it is constant rebirth. Instead of again tumbling backwards and falling apart due to a lack of plasticity and an incapacity to adapt to the universal movement, the body is undone ‘futurewards,’ as it were.

There is one element that remains fixed: for each type of atom, the inner organization of the elements is different, which is what creates the difference in their substance. So perhaps similarly, each individual has a different, particular way of organizing the cells of his body, and it is this particular way that persists through all the outer changes. All the rest is undone and redone, but undone in a forward thrust towards the new instead of collapsing backwards into death, and redone in a constant aspiration to follow the progressive movement of the divine Truth.

But for that, the body – the body-consciousness – must first learn to widen itself. It is indispensable, for otherwise all the cells become a kind of boiling porridge under the pressure of the supramental light.

What usually happens is that when the body reaches its maximum intensity of aspiration or of ecstasy of Love, it is unable to contain it. It becomes flat, motionless. It falls back. Things settle down – you are enriched with a new vibration, but then everything resumes its course. So you must widen yourself in order to learn to bear unflinchingly the intensities of the supramental force, to go forward always, always with the ascending movement of the divine Truth, without falling backwards into the decrepitude of the body.

That is what Sri Aurobindo means when he speaks of an *intolerable ecstasy*¹⁵⁹; it is not an intolerable ecstasy: it is an unflinching ecstasy.



159 *Thoughts and Aphorisms*: ‘Cruelty transfigured becomes Love that is intolerable ecstasy ...’

Prayers of the Consciousness of the Cells (1951 - 1959)

September 21, 1951

<i>O</i>	<i>mon</i>	<i>doux</i>	<i>Seigneur,</i>
<i>suprême</i>		<i>Vérité</i>	
<i>j'aspire</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>ce</i>	<i>que</i>
<i>cette</i>	<i>nourriture</i>		<i>que</i>
<i>j'absorbe,</i>		<i>infuse</i>	
<i>dans</i>	<i>toutes</i>	<i>les</i>	<i>cellules</i>
<i>de</i>	<i>mon</i>		<i>corps</i>
<i>Ta</i>		<i>toute-connaissance,</i>	
<i>Ta</i>		<i>toute-puissance,</i>	
<i>Ta toute-bonté.</i>			

* * *

(translation)

<i>O</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>sweet</i>	<i>Lord</i>
<i>supreme</i>		<i>Truth,</i>	
<i>I</i>	<i>aspire</i>		<i>that</i>
<i>this</i>		<i>food</i>	
<i>I</i>		<i>take</i>	
<i>may</i>		<i>infuse</i>	
<i>into</i>	<i>all</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>cells</i>
<i>of</i>			<i>body</i>
<i>Your</i>		<i>all-knowledge,</i>	
<i>Your</i>		<i>all-power,</i>	
<i>Your all-kindness.</i>			



July 25, 1958

<i>O</i>	<i>mon</i>	<i>doux</i>	<i>Maître,</i>
<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Dieu</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>Bonté</i>
<i>et</i>		<i>de</i>	
			<i>Miséricorde.</i>
<i>Ce que tu veux qu'on sache, on le saura, ce que tu veux qu'on fasse, on le fera, ce que tu veux qu'on soit, on le sera – à jamais.</i>			

Om - namo - bhagavateh

Car c'est Toi qui es, qui vis, et qui sais – c'est Toi qui fais toute chose et qui es le résultat de toute action.

* * *

(translation)

O my sweet Master,
Lord God of Kindness
and Mercy.
What you want us to know, we shall know, what you want us to do, we shall do, what you want us to be, we shall be – forever.

Om - namo - bhagavateh

For it is You who is, who lives and who knows – it is You who does all things, You who is the result of every action.



July 25, 1958

O my Lord, my Lord!
What you want of me, let me be.
What you want me to do, let me do.¹⁶⁰



Prayers of the Consciousness of the Cells¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰Original English.

¹⁶¹All these prayers were written by Mother and this title was given by Her.

(The Stages of Mother's Japa) 1958-1959

October 3, 1958

*Et le corps dit au Seigneur Suprême:
'Ce que Tu veux que je sois, je le serai,
ce que Tu veux que je sache, je le saurai,
ce que Tu veux que je fasse, je le ferai.'*

* * *

(translation)

And the body says to the Supreme Lord:
'What You want me to be, I shall be,
What You want me to know, I shall know,
What you want me to do, I shall do.'



January 21, 1959

*OM
OM, Seigneur Suprême
Prends possession de ce corps
Manifeste-Toi en lui.*

* * *

(translation)

*OM
OM, Supreme Lord
Take possession of this body
Manifest Yourself in it.*



Undated

Ô Divine Lumière, Réalité supramentale,
avec cette nourriture, pénètre le corps
totalement, entre dans toutes les cellules,
installe-Toi tout et devienne atomes;
que tout ce parfaitement
sincère de à ta réceptif,
libre obstacle en somme qui fait
en ouvre à Toi toutes les manifestation,
de mon corps qui ne vent parties
déjà Toi-même.

* * *

(translation)

O Divine Light, Supramental Reality,
with this food into imbue the body
fully, enter into all all the cells,
come into every become atom;
may all perfectly receptive
sincere and that creates
free from all your manifestation
an obstacle to short
in unto Yourself all the parts
open of my body which are not
of already You.



January 1959

Invocation

Seigneur, Dieu de bonté et de miséricorde
 Seigneur, Dieu de Dieu d'unité souveraine,
 Seigneur, Dieu de beauté et d'harmonie,
 Seigneur, Dieu de puissance et de réalisation,
 Seigneur, Dieu d'amour et de compassion,
 Seigneur, Dieu de silence et de contemplation,
 Seigneur, Dieu de lumière et de connaissance,
 Seigneur, Dieu de vie et d'immortalité,
 Seigneur, Dieu de jeunesse et de progrès,
 Seigneur, Dieu d'abondance et de plénitude,
 Seigneur, Dieu de force et de santé,
 Seigneur, Dieu de paix et d'immensité,
 Seigneur, Dieu de pouvoir et d'invincibilité,
 Seigneur, Dieu de la Vérité victorieuse.
 Prends possession de ce corps,
 Manifeste-toi en lui.

* * *

(translation)

Lord, God of kindness and mercy,
 Lord, God of sovereign oneness,
 Lord, God of beauty and harmony,
 Lord, God of force and realization,
 Lord, God of love and compassion,
 Lord, God of silence and contemplation,
 Lord, God of light and knowledge,
 Lord, God of life and immortality,
 Lord, God of youth and progress,
 Lord, God of abundance and plenitude,
 Lord, God of strength and health,
 Lord, God of peace and vastness,
 Lord, God of power and invincibility,
 Lord, God of the victorious Truth.
 Take possession of this body,
 Manifest Yourself in it.



Undated 1959 (?)

<i>OM,</i> <i>Prends</i>	<i>Seigneur</i> <i>possession</i>	<i>de</i> <i>ces</i>	<i>Suprême</i> <i>cellules</i>
-----------------------------	--------------------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------------------

Prends	possession	de	ce	cerveau
Prends	possession	de	ces	nerfs
Prends	possession	de	ce	corps
Prends	possession	de	cette	matière
Prends	possession	de	ces	atomes
OM,		Seigneur		Suprême
Manifeste Ta Splendeur				

* * *

(translation)

OM,		Supreme		Lord
Take	possession	of	these	cells
Take	possession	of	this	brain
Take	possession	of	these	nerves
Take	possession	of	this	body
Take	possession	of	this	matter
Take	possession	of	these	atoms
OM,		Supreme		Lord
Manifest Your Splendor				



Undated 1959 (?)

Om,	Seigneur	Suprême,	Dieu	de	Vérité	et	de	Perfection.
Seigneur,	Dieu		Pureté		et	de	Perfection	
Dieu	de	Justice		et		de		Paix
Dieu d'Amour et de Félicité								

* * *

(translation)

Om,	Supreme	Lord,	God	of	Purity	Truth	and	Perfection.
Lord,	God	of				and		Perfection
God	of		Justice			and		Peace
God of Love and Felicity								



January 1959

I am am not a scholar
I am a creative force in action, that is all.
Everything depends on the Lord's Will.
If such is His will,
when I have to know, I know,
when I have to fight, I fight,
when I have to love, I love,
and always there is the need to love, to know and to fight.¹⁶²



January 1959

O mon doux Seigneur,
Toi seul, Tu es grand,
Toi seul, Tu vois grand,
Toi seul peux me conduire là où je veux aller.

* * *

(translation)

O my sweet Lord,
You alone, You vastly are,
You alone, You vastly see,
You alone can lead me there where I want to go.



162Original English.

January 1959

O seigneur, qu'il est doux d'avoir besoin de Toi! ...

*

(translation)

O Lord, how sweet it is to need You! ...



October 9, 1959

(Durga)

<i>Tu</i>	<i>es</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>Lumière,</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>Puissance</i>
<i>et</i>			<i>ma</i>		<i>Joie</i>
<i>Tu</i>	<i>es</i>		<i>ma</i>		<i>Réalisation</i>
<i>souveraine.</i>					

*

(translation)

You	are	my	Light,	my	Force
and			my		Joy
You	are		my		sovereign
Realization.					

* * *

*O Seigneur, Tu es ma paix, ma puissance et ma joie,
Tu es ma réalisation souveraine.*

*

(translation)

O Lord, You are my peace, my force and my joy,
You are my sovereign realization.

* * *

Om
Seigneur
Tu es ma Lumière, ma Suprême,
et ma Puissance
Tu es ma Réalisation souveraine. ma Joie

*

(translation)

Om
Supreme Lord,
You are my Light, my Force
and my Joy
You are my sovereign Realization.



Undated

OM

Om, Seigneur Suprême, Dieu de bonté et de miséricorde,
Om, Seigneur Suprême, Dieu d'amour et de compassion,
Om, Seigneur Suprême, prends possession de ces cellules,
Om, Seigneur Suprême, prends possession de ce cerveau,
Om, Seigneur Suprême, prends possession de ces nerfs,
Om, Seigneur Suprême, prends possession de cette pensée,
Om, Seigneur Suprême, prends possession de cette parole,
Om, Seigneur Suprême, prends possession de cette action,
Om, Seigneur Suprême, prends possession de ce corps,
Om, Seigneur Suprême, prends possession de ce cœur,
Om, Seigneur Suprême, prends possession de cette matière,
Om, Seigneur Suprême, prends possession de ces atomes,
Om, Seigneur Suprême, prends possession du subconscient,
Om, Seigneur Suprême, prends possession de l'inconscient.

Om, namo, bhagavateh

Om, Seigneur Suprême, Dieu de bonté et de miséricorde,
Om, Seigneur Suprême, Dieu d'amour et de félicité
Om, Seigneur Suprême, manifeste Ta Volonté
Om, Seigneur Suprême, manifeste Ta Vérité
Om, Seigneur Suprême, manifeste Ta Pureté
Om, Seigneur Suprême, manifeste Ta Perfection

<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ton</i>	<i>Unité</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ton</i>	<i>Éternité</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ton</i>	<i>Infinité</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ton</i>	<i>Immortalité</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ton</i>	<i>Silence</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ta</i>	<i>Paix</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ton</i>	<i>Existence</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ta</i>	<i>Conscience</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ta</i>	<i>Toute-Puissance</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ta</i>	<i>Félicité</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ta</i>	<i>Connaissance</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ton</i>	<i>Omniscience</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ta</i>	<i>Sagesse</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ton</i>	<i>Égalité</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ton</i>	<i>Intensité</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ta</i>	<i>Lumière</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ton</i>	<i>Harmonie</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ta</i>	<i>Compassion</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ta</i>	<i>Beauté</i>
<i>Om,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>Suprême,</i>	<i>manifeste</i>	<i>Ton</i>	<i>Amour</i>

Om, Seigneur Suprême, remporte Ta Victoire.

<i>Gloire</i>	à	<i>Toi,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>triomphateur</i>	<i>suprême</i>
<i>Gloire</i>	à	<i>Toi,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>triomphateur</i>	<i>suprême</i>
<i>Gloire</i>	à	<i>Toi,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>triomphateur</i>	<i>suprême</i>
<i>Gloire</i>	à	<i>Toi,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>triomphateur</i>	<i>suprême</i>
<i>Gloire</i>	à	<i>Toi,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>triomphateur</i>	<i>suprême</i>
<i>Gloire</i>	à	<i>Toi,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>triomphateur</i>	<i>suprême</i>
<i>Gloire</i>	à	<i>Toi,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>triomphateur</i>	<i>suprême</i>
<i>Gloire</i>	à	<i>Toi,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>triomphateur</i>	<i>suprême</i>
<i>Gloire</i>	à	<i>Toi,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>triomphateur</i>	<i>suprême</i>
<i>Gloire</i>	à	<i>Toi,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>triomphateur</i>	<i>suprême</i>
<i>Gloire</i>	à	<i>Toi,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>triomphateur</i>	<i>suprême</i>
<i>Gloire</i>	à	<i>Toi,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>triomphateur</i>	<i>suprême</i>
<i>Gloire</i>	à	<i>Toi,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>triomphateur</i>	<i>suprême</i>
<i>Gloire</i>	à	<i>Toi,</i>	<i>Seigneur</i>	<i>triomphateur</i>	<i>suprême</i>

Gloire à Toi, Seigneur triomphateur suprême

<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i> ¹⁶³
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
<i>Mahima</i>	<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
<i>Mahima</i>	<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
<i>Mahima</i>	<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
<i>Mahima</i>	<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
<i>Mahima</i>	<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
<i>Mahima</i>	<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>

163These lines were written by Mother in Sanskrit.

	<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
	<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
	<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
	<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
	<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
	<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
	<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
	<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
	<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
	<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>		<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
	<i>Om,</i>		<i>Tat</i>		<i>Sat</i>
	<i>Om</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Chittapas</i>		<i>Ananda</i>
	<i>Om</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
	<i>Om</i>	<i>mon</i>	<i>doux</i>		<i>Seigneur</i>
	<i>OM, mon Bien-Aimé</i>				

* * *

(translation)

OM

Om, Supreme Lord, God of kindness and mercy,
 Om, Supreme Lord, God of love and compassion,
 Om, Supreme Lord, take possession of these cells,
 Om, Supreme Lord, take possession of this brain,
 Om, Supreme Lord, take possession of these nerves,
 Om, Supreme Lord, take possession of this mind,
 Om, Supreme Lord, take possession of this speech,
 Om, Supreme Lord, take possession of this action,
 Om, Supreme Lord, take possession of this body,
 Om, Supreme Lord, take possession of this heart,
 Om, Supreme Lord, take possession of this matter,
 Om, Supreme Lord, take possession of these atoms,
 Om, Supreme Lord, take possession of the subconscious,
 Om, Supreme Lord, take possession of the inconscient.

Om namo bhagavateh

Om,	Supreme	Lord,	God	of	kindness	and	mercy
Om,	Supreme	Lord,	God	of	love	and	felicity
Om,	Supreme	Lord,		manifest		Your	Will
Om,	Supreme	Lord,		manifest		Your	Truth
Om,	Supreme	Lord,		manifest		Your	Purity
Om,	Supreme	Lord,		manifest		Your	Perfection
Om,	Supreme	Lord,		manifest		Your	Oneness
Om,	Supreme	Lord,		manifest		Your	Eternity
Om,	Supreme	Lord,		manifest		Your	Infinity
Om,	Supreme	Lord,		manifest		Your	Immortality
Om,	Supreme	Lord,		manifest		Your	Silence
Om,	Supreme	Lord,		manifest		Your	Peace
Om,	Supreme	Lord,		manifest		Your	Existence
Om,	Supreme	Lord,		manifest		Your	Consciousness

Om,	Supreme	Lord,	manifest	Your	Omnipotence
Om,	Supreme	Lord,	manifest	Your	Felicity
Om,	Supreme	Lord,	manifest	Your	Knowledge
Om,	Supreme	Lord,	manifest	Your	Omniscience
Om,	Supreme	Lord,	manifest	Your	Wisdom
Om,	Supreme	Lord,	manifest	Your	Equality
Om,	Supreme	Lord,	manifest	Your	Intensity
Om,	Supreme	Lord,	manifest	Your	Light
Om,	Supreme	Lord,	manifest	Your	Harmony
Om,	Supreme	Lord,	manifest	Compassion	
Om,	Supreme	Lord,	manifest	Your	Beauty
Om,	Supreme	Lord,	manifest	Your	Love

Om, Supreme Lord, win Your Victory.

Glory	to	You,	Lord	supreme	conqueror
Glory	to	You,	Lord	supreme	conqueror
Glory	to	You,	Lord	supreme	conqueror
Glory	to	You,	Lord	supreme	conqueror
Glory	to	You,	Lord	supreme	conqueror
Glory	to	You,	Lord	supreme	conqueror
Glory	to	You,	Lord	supreme	conqueror
Glory	to	You,	Lord	supreme	conqueror
Glory	to	You,	Lord	supreme	conqueror
Glory	to	You,	Lord	supreme	conqueror
Glory	to	You,	Lord	supreme	conqueror
Glory	to	You,	Lord	supreme	conqueror
Glory	to	You,	Lord	supreme	conqueror
Glory	to	You,	Lord	supreme	conqueror
Glory	to	You,	Lord	supreme	conqueror

Glory to You, Lord supreme conqueror

Mahima	Tawaiwa	prabho	parama	jitwara ¹⁶⁴	
Mahima	Tawaiwa	prabho	parama	jitwara	
Mahima	Tawaiwa	prabho	parama	jitwara	
Mahima	Tawaiwa	prabho	parama	jitwara	
Om,	namo		bhagavateh ¹⁶⁵		
Mahima	Tawaiwa	prabho	parama	jitwara	
Om,		namo		bhagavateh	
Mahima	Tawaiwa	prabho	parama	jitwara	
Om,		namo		bhagavateh	
Mahima	Tawaiwa	prabho	parama	jitwara	
Om,		namo		bhagavateh	
Mahima	Tawaiwa	prabho	parama	jitwara	
Om,		namo		bhagavateh	
Mahima	Tawaiwa	prabho	parama	jitwara	
Om,		namo		bhagavateh	
Mahima	Tawaiwa	prabho	parama	jitwara	
Om,		namo		bhagavateh	
Mahima	Tawaiwa	prabho	parama	jitwara	
Om,		namo		bhagavateh	
Mahima	Tawaiwa	prabho	parama	jitwara	
Om,		namo		bhagavateh	
Mahima	Tawaiwa	prabho	parama	jitwara	
Om,		namo		bhagavateh	

164 Glory to You, Lord supreme conqueror. These lines were written by Mother in Sanskrit.

165 Om, I salute the Supreme Lord.

<i>Mahima</i>	<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>	<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>	<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
<i>Om,</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Mahima</i>	<i>Tawaiwa</i>	<i>prabho</i>	<i>parama</i>	<i>jitwara</i>
<i>Om</i>		<i>Tat</i>	<i>Sat</i>	
<i>Om</i>	<i>Sat</i>			<i>Ananda</i> ¹⁶⁶
<i>Om</i>		<i>namo</i>		<i>bhagavateh</i>
<i>Om</i>	<i>my</i>		<i>sweet</i>	<i>Lord</i>
OM, my Beloved				



166The supreme principles of Being: *Tat* (the Absolute, That), *Sat* (Existence), *Chit* (Consciousness), *Tapas* (Energy), *Ananda* (Bliss).

January 28, 1960

All these repetitions of the mantra, these hours of japa I have to do every day, seem to have increased the difficulties, as if they were raising up or aggravating all the resistances.

To the most stubborn goes the victory.

When I started my japa one year ago, I had to struggle with every possible difficulty, every contradiction, prejudice and opposition that fills the air. And even when this poor body began walking back and forth for japa, it used to knock against things, it would start breathing all wrong, coughing; it was attacked from all sides until the day I caught the Enemy and said, 'Listen carefully. You can do whatever you want, but I'm going right to the end and nothing will stop me, even if I have to repeat this mantra ten crore¹⁶⁷ times.' The result was really miraculous, like a cloud of bats flying up into the light all at once. From that moment on, things started going better.

You have no idea what an irresistible effect a well-determined will can have.

Some difficulties remained, of course, but they stemmed more from what had to change within.

Actually, difficulties come from very small things; they may seem quite commonplace, totally uninteresting, but they block the way. They come for no earthly reason – some detail, a word that comes rubbing against a sensitive spot, an illness in someone close to me, anything at all, and suddenly something in me contracts. Then all the work has to be started afresh as though nothing had been done.

Of all forms of ego, you might think that the physical ego is the most difficult to conquer (or rather, the body ego, because the work was already done long ago on the physical ego). It might be thought that the form of the body is a point of concentration, and that without this concentration or hardness, physical life would not be possible. But that's not true. The body is really a wonderful instrument; it's capable of widening and of becoming vast in such a way that everything, everything – the slightest gesture, the least little task – is done in a wonderful harmony and with a remarkable plasticity. Then all of a sudden, for something quite stupid, a draft, a mere nothing, it forgets – it shrinks back into itself, it gets afraid of disappearing, afraid of not being. And everything has to be started again from scratch. So in the yoga of matter you start realizing how much endurance is needed. I calculated it would take 200 years to say ten crore of my japa. Well, I'm ready to struggle 200 years if necessary, but the work will be done.

Sri Aurobindo had made it clear to me when I was still in France that this yoga in matter is the most difficult of all. For the other yogas, the paths have been well laid, you know where to tread, how to proceed, what to do in such-and-such a case. But for the yoga of matter, nothing has ever been done, never, so at each moment everything has to be invented.

Of course, things are now going better, especially since Sri Aurobindo became established in the subtle physical, an almost material subtle physical.¹⁶⁸ But there are still plenty of question marks ... The body understands once, and then it forgets. The Enemy's opposition is nothing, for I can see clearly that it comes from outside and that it's hostile, so I do what's necessary. But where the difficulty lies is in all the small things of daily material life – suddenly the body no longer understands, it forgets.

Yet it's HAPPY. It loves doing the work, it lives only for that – to change, to transform itself is its reason for being. And it's such a docile instrument, so full of good will! Once it even started wailing like a baby: 'O Lord, give me the time, the time to be transformed ...' It has such a simple

167One crore = 10 million.

168Experience of July 24-25, 1959, 'Sri Aurobindo's abode.'

fervor for the work, but it needs time – time, that's it. It wants to live only to conquer, to win the Lord's Victory.¹⁶⁹



January 31, 1960

(Letter from Mother to the disciple concerning her former commentaries on the 'Dhammapada' at the Playground)

... When I began the readings from the Dhammapada, I had hoped that my listeners would take enough interest in the 'practical' spiritual side for me to read only one verse at a time. But quite quickly, I saw they found this very boring and were making no effort to benefit from the meditation. The only solution then was to treat the matter as an intellectual study, which is why I started reading chapter by chapter.



March 3, 1960

Experiences are coming at a furious pace – fabulous experiences. If I were to speak now, it's certain that I would not at all speak as I used to. That's why we must date all these *Questions and Answers*, at least all which come before the [Supramental] Manifestation of February 1956, so that there will be a clear cut between those before and those after.

Only a few days ago, on the morning of the 29th, I had one of those experiences that mark one's life. It happened upstairs in my room. I was doing my japa, walking up and down with my eyes wide open, when suddenly Krishna came – a gold Krishna, all golden, in a golden light that filled the whole room. I was walking, but I could not even see the windows or the rug any longer, for this golden light was everywhere with Krishna at its center. And it must have lasted at least fifteen minutes. He was dressed in those same clothes in which he is normally portrayed when he dances.

¹⁶⁹As a matter of fact, Mother had ended upon this sentence: 'It wants to live only to conquer.' Then the next day, Mother sent the following note to the disciple: 'Friday, 1.29.60 – yesterday, when I left you, the experience was there, but in my hurry to leave, the words did not come correctly, or rather they were incomplete (I had said, 'to live only to conquer'). What my body was experiencing was, 'Live to win the Lord's Victory.'

He was all light, all dancing: ‘You see, I will be there this evening during the Darshan.¹⁷⁰’ And suddenly, the chair I use for darshan came into the room! Krishna climbed up onto it, and his eyes twinkled mischievously, as if to say, ‘I will be there, you see, and there’ll be no room for you.’

When I came down that evening for distribution,¹⁷¹ at first I was annoyed. I had said that I didn’t want anybody in the hall, precisely because I wanted to establish an atmosphere of concentration, the immobility of the Spirit – but there were at least thirty people in there, those who had decorated the hall, thirty of them stirring, stirring about, a mass of little vibrations. And before I could even say ‘scat’ – I had hardly taken my seat – someone put the tray of medals on my lap and they started filing past.

But what is surprising is that in a flash, no one was there any longer. No one, you understand – I was gone. Perhaps I was everywhere (but in fact I am always everywhere, I am always conscious of being everywhere at the same time), though normally there is the sense of the body, a physical center, but that evening there was no more center! Nothing, no one, not even the sense that there was no one – nothing. I was gone. There was indeed something handing out the medals which felt the joy of giving the medal, the joy of receiving it, the joy of mutually looking at each other. It was simply the joy of the action taking place, the joy of looking, this joy everywhere, but me? – Nothing, no one, gone. Only later, afterwards, did I see what had happened, for everything had disappeared, even the higher mind that understands and organizes things (by ‘understand’ I mean contain, which ‘contains’ things). That also was gone. And this lasted the entire distribution. Only when that [the body] had gone back upstairs to the room did the consciousness of what is me return.

There is a line by Sri Aurobindo in *Savitri* which expresses this very well: to annul oneself so that only the Supreme Lord may be.

And there are many, many experiences like this. It is only a small, a very small beginning. This one in particular came to mark the new stage: four years have elapsed, and now four years to come. Because everything has focused on this body to prepare it, everything has concentrated on it – Nature, the Master of the Yoga, the Supreme, everything ... So only when it’s over, not before, will it really be interesting to speak of all this. But maybe it will never be over, after all. It’s a small beginning, very small.



March 7, 1960

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, March 7, 1960

170The Darshan on February 29, 1960, the first anniversary of the Supramental Manifestation.

171On this first anniversary of the Supramental Manifestation, Mother distributed medals commemorating the occasion to the disciples filing past.

Mother,

Here is the letter from the publisher. *All* comes from you, all is *yours*.

May I always serve you.

With love.

*Your child,
Signed: Satprem*

ÉDITIONS DU SEUIL

Paris, March 1, 1960

Dear Satprem,

Publisher and friend are here one in telling you that *L'Orpailleur* is a beautiful book whose richness and force have struck me even more this time than before when I read the first version. I cannot tell you how much your Job is my brother – in his darkness as in his light. The joy, the wild, irrepressible joy that furtively yearns and at times bursts forth, embracing all, this joy at the heart of the book burns the reader – for a few, in any case, who are prepared to be inflamed. In the end, I can't say if *L'Orpailleur* will or will not be noticed, if the critics will or will not bestow an article, a comment, an echo upon it, if bookstores will or will not 'sell' it (poor orpailleur!). But what I know is that for a few readers – 2, 3, 10 perhaps – your book will be the cry that will rip them from their sleep forever. To your song, another song in themselves will respond. Where, how shall this concert finish? Who knows – anything is possible!

My words are a bit disjointed – but I'm not in the mood to give an articulate discourse. Which is a way of saying, once again, how happy I am – and grateful.

With my warmest regards,

Signed: M.C.



April 7, 1960

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Hyderabad, April 7, 1960

Sweet Mother,

A few lines to tell you that I miss you. I truly realize more and more that I shall never be happy until I have disappeared in you entirely. There must be nothing left *but* That. I understand well enough, but I'm so blocked, so thick. In any case, I 'think' of you a lot and I really only live by this something that pulls me deep within. If that were not there, it would all be so absurd.

I've booked my ticket to Rameswaram for the evening of the 13th, so I will probably reach there on the 15th.

I brought some work with me (revision of *The Human Cycle*), and that helps me to live. I still don't clearly see the meaning of this trip. Just before I left, I received word from the publisher in Paris that 'my' book will come out in September.

There are moments when I feel you so close to me – could you not help me be more conscious of your presence (not as an impersonal force, but you)?

I love you, sweet Mother. You are truly my Mother, and I need you so much.

With all my love, I am at your feet.

Signed: Satprem

Things are better physically. But it's always a terrible physical shock for me to take the train.

(Mother's reply)

4.12.60

My dear little one,

Your good letter of the 7th has arrived.

This inner fusion you speak of as a truth to be realized is already accomplished, absolutely perceptible to me. For long I have felt you as an integral part of my being; it seems to me that only some surface eddies prevent you also from feeling and living it.

But I am convinced it will come. Meanwhile, I am trying to make you feel my presence not as an 'impersonal force' but as a real and concrete presence, and I am happy to have succeeded in part.

....

Send me news of yourself, for I am always happy to hear from you.

I am with you, in love and joy.

Signed: Mother

As regards *L'Orpailleur*, it's good. I keep feeling that everything is going to turn out well.



April 13, 1960

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Hyderabad, April 13, 1960

Sweet Mother,

My friend here gave me the book *Templier et Alchimiste* [Templar and Alchemist] to read; it's published by the group he is going to join in France. They too speak of the transmutation of matter and proclaim the end of 'homo sapiens' and the birth of the superman.

I long to be with you and work on the book on Sri Aurobindo – I want to put all my soul into it and, with your grace, create something inflaming.

Sweet Mother, I am your child. I want to belong to you more and more completely.

With love.

Signed: Satprem

(Mother's reply)

4.18.60

My dear little one,

I received your letter of April 13 only yesterday. Letters from Hyderabad are taking long to come.

You spoke of the book on Sri Aurobindo; I too am happy that we shall do this work together.

Yesterday was distribution. I am putting six handkerchiefs in this envelope for you and to give to others if you wish. I am also enclosing the April 24 message.

Always with you, in love and joy.

Signed: Mother



April 14, 1960

(Letter to Pavitra from Satprem)

Hyderabad, April 14, 1960

Dear Pavitra,

The following passage, taken from the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of March 1960, was part of a course taught by Dimitri Manowilski in 1931 at the Lenin School of Political Warfare in Moscow:

'Our turn will come in twenty to thirty years. To win, we need an element of surprise. The bourgeoisie should be lulled to sleep. Therefore, we must first launch the most spectacular peace movement that has ever existed, replete with inspiring proposals and extraordinary concessions. The stupid and decadent capitalist countries will cooperate joyfully in their own destruction. They will jump at this new opportunity for friendship. As soon as their guard is down, we shall crush them beneath our closed fist.' (Quoted in the *Revue Militaire d'Information*, December 1959.)

What does Mother think of this?

Faternally,

Signed: Satprem

(*Pavitra's reply*)

4.16.60

Satprem,

I read Mother the extract from the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. This was her comment:

'It is quite possible that this is their original intention, I am aware of it. But they are wrong if they think it will turn out like that ... We shall see!'

Love,

Signed: Pavitra



April 20, 1960

(*Letter to Mother from Satprem*)

Rameswaram, April 20, 1960

Sweet Mother,

.....

I was *pained* and shocked upon reaching X's place to see him in such a horrible house – a train station in miniature (and not as nice) with little pastries in garish yellow cement. Cement everywhere – they even cemented the patio and uprooted the beautiful tree that was there. O Mother, it's vandalism, it's barbaric! You cannot imagine! Really, M has committed a terrible sin.

To compensate for that, however, I had the joy of finding your two letters. Yes, for some time I have been feeling your physical Presence more clearly. But then, why am I so blocked, where is the flaw? It constantly feels as though I am living at the outskirts of myself, or more precisely in a minuscule region of myself, and I'm unable to be conscious of the rest – a perpetual amnesic. It is unpleasant and quite stupid. What is it that will explode this shell?

I am anxious to return to you.

Your child, full of gratitude and love.

Signed: Satprem



April 24, 1960

(Letter from Mother to Satprem)

... It is to make you understand that whenever you are ill, something is ill in your being.



April 26, 1960

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Rameswaram, April 26, 1960

Sweet Mother,

There are days when everything is so simple, when I see and feel that all one needs is to let oneself be carried – and everything is light. I have really to be done with this ‘me’.

It will be a joy to be with you again and resume the work. Here, I am sparing as many hours as I can to correcting *The Human Cycle* ... I follow X perfectly in his inner life, unreservedly, but I have to force myself to follow him in his outer life.

Mother, I am at your feet, with my love and my gratitude.

*Your child,
Signed: Satprem*



May 6, 1960

At times I sense there's an extraordinary secret to discover, just there at my finger tips; I feel that I am going to catch the Thing, to know ...

Sometimes, for a second, I see the Secret; there is an opening, and again it closes. Then once again it is unveiled for a second and I come to know a little more. Yesterday the Secret was there completely clear, wide open. But it's not something that can be explained: words are silly, it must be experienced.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of this Secret almost everywhere, especially in his *Essays on the Gita*. He tells us that in the *Gita* itself one gets glimpses of this thing which is beyond the Impersonal, beyond even the Personal behind the Impersonal, beyond the Transcendent.

Well, I saw this Secret – I saw that the Supreme only becomes perfect in terrestrial matter, on earth.

'Becomes' is just a way of speaking, of course, for everything already is, and the Supreme is what He is. But we live in time, in a successive unfoldment, and it would be absurd to say that at present Matter is the expression of a perfect Divine.

I saw this Secret (which is getting more and more perceptible as the Supramental becomes clear), I saw it in the everyday, outer life, precisely in this very physical life which all spirituality rejects ... a kind of accuracy or exactitude right down to the atom.

I am not saying that the 'Divine' becomes perfect in Matter – the Divine is already there – but that THE SUPREME becomes perfect in Matter.



May 16, 1960

If there is one fundamental necessity, it is humility. To be humble. Not humble as it is normally understood, such as merely saying, 'I am so small, I'm nothing at all' – no, something else ... Because the pitfalls are innumerable, and the further you progress in yoga, the more subtle they become, and the more the ego masks itself behind marvelous and saintly appearances. So when somebody says, 'I no longer want to rely on anything but Him. I want to close my eyes and rest in Him alone,' this comfortable 'Him,' which is exactly what you want him to be, is the ego – or a formidable Asura, or a Titan (depending on each one's capacity). They're all over the earth, the earth is their domain. So the first thing to do is to pocket your ego – not preserve it, but get rid of it as soon as possible!

You can be sure that the God you've created is a God of the ego whenever something within you insists, 'This is what I feel, this is what I think, this is what I see; it's my way, my very own – it's my way of being, my way of understanding, my relationship with the Divine, etc.'

And then they say, ‘I want to close my eyes and see nothing but Him I want nothing more of the outer world.’ And they forget there’s Love! That is the great Secret, that which is behind the Existent and the Non-Existent, the Personal and the Impersonal – Love. Not a love between two things, two beings ... A love containing everything.

In the early part of the century, I wrote *Prayers and Meditations*, and I too spoke of ‘Him’; but I wrote that with all my aspiration, all my sincerity (at least with all the sincerity of the conscious parts of my being) and I locked it up in a drawer so that no one would see it. It was Sri Aurobindo who later asked me to publish it, for it could be useful ... If I knew then, fifty years ago, what I know now, I would have been crushed! ... All this ‘shame,’ all this ‘unworthiness’ ...

After all, it’s good to know gradually, good to have some illusions – not for the sake of illusions but as a necessary step along the way.

Everything comes at the right moment.

And what is wonderful is that at each moment the Grace, the Joy, the Light, the Love never cease pouring down in the very midst of all this – despite the ego, despite the shame, despite the unworthiness. To be humble ...

* * *

(soon afterwards)

I was sick two days ago with a cold and fever. I know why – a point to be transformed. The body may have put too much zeal into it, so it teetered a little. But thanks to that, I had an interesting experience. X¹⁷² had put his force on me to speed up the healing. And of course, according to each one’s nature, the force gets colored, so to speak – it clothes itself in a different color. In me, this was translated by a new physical experience which lasted from 4 in the morning till 6:30, when I had to start speaking with people and deal with outer things. It was a kind of eternity, a kind of absolute PHYSICAL immobility which contained no possibility of illness within it – as a matter of fact, nothing remained in this immobility, it was a sort of nirvana. But it did not keep me from going through all my usual motions of getting dressed.

I spent the whole day yesterday trying to understand this experience.

And in that kind of physical eternity (which lasted two and a half hours – it’s a long time for an experience), I was aware of something missing, something not there: the joy of the consciousness. Because throughout my life I have developed the habit of being conscious of everything, always, at each second. And the joy of the consciousness was not there. So I thanked the Grace that made me see that this kind of nirvana was quite simply physical tamas.¹⁷³

(silence)

X has the power of rendering things very material – that’s his great power, which is why things get upset when he comes here. Overnight, someone progressing well comes to grips with difficulties; money on the way stops coming; you fall sick, things break down – all because he has the power to give materiality to things from above. For, you see, you can go right to the height of your consciousness and from there sweep away the difficulties (at a certain moment of the sadhana, difficulties truly don’t exist, it’s only a matter of nabbing the undesirable vibration and it’s over, it’s reduced to dust). And everything is fine up above, but down below it’s swarming. When X comes, it’s precisely all this swarming that becomes tangible.

The mastery must be a TRUE mastery, a very humble and austere mastery which starts from the

172The tantric guru.

173Tamas: inertia. Later, Mother would discover that this is not tamas but something else.

very bottom and, step by step, establishes control. As a matter of fact, it is a battle against small, really tiny things: habits of being, ways of thinking, feeling and reacting.

When this mastery at the very bottom combines with the consciousness at the very top, then you can really begin doing some work – not only work on yourself but also the work for all.



May 21, 1960

What I call purity, the true purity, is not all those things morality teaches: it is non-ego.

There must be nothing but Him.

Him, not only because we have given Him everything and consecrated ourselves totally to Him (that is not enough), but Him because He has taken total possession of the human instrument.

At times, I feel that I'll never get over the difficulty. We are besieged by this enormous world of hostile forces – oceans of forces, churning and combining and submerging each other in gigantic pralayas,¹⁷⁴ then again regrouping and combining. When you see that, it feels as if you had to be the Divine Himself to get over the difficulty. Precisely so! (And it's the hostile forces who help you to see this, it's their role.) You have TO BE THE DIVINE, that is the solution, that is the true divine purity.

* * *

When X is here, I get the impression that things are going backwards instead of forwards. But once he's left, I suddenly leap ahead. And then I perceive that the progress is a real progress, that things won have really been won and they don't come undone again. That is X's true power, a very material power. For I often feel that things could come into being, they could be realized in the consciousness above (and the vision is there, the Power is there, I have it – the invisible power over the earth). But when you come down to the material plane, everything is uncertain. Whereas with X, once things have come down, they no longer dissipate. This is certainly why the Supreme put him on my path.

For example, there was one difficulty he helped me resolve. I have always been literally pestered, constantly, night and day, by all kinds of thoughts coming from people – all kinds of calls, questions, formations¹⁷⁵ that have naturally to be answered. For I have trained myself to be conscious of everything, always. But it disturbed me in the work, particularly when I needed absolute concentration – and I could never cut myself off from people or cut myself off from the world. I had to answer all these calls and these questions, I had to send the necessary force, the

¹⁷⁴Pralaya: apocalypse, end of a world.

¹⁷⁵Formations, in occult language, refer to all the psychological movements and impulses, conscious or unconscious, constantly emanating from the disciples and others, and which leave an imprint in the subtle atmosphere or a wandering entity seeking to fulfill itself.

necessary light, the healing power, I constantly had to purify all these formations, these thoughts, these wills, these false movements that were falling on me.

What was needed was to effect a shift, a sort of transference upwards, a lifting up of all these things that come to me – so that each one, each thing, each circumstance could directly and automatically receive the force from above, the light, the response from above, and I would be a mere intermediary and a channel of the Light and the Force.

Well, I tried hard but I couldn't really find the way. At times, I almost seemed to have it, a mere nothing would have been enough; it was just a matter of getting the knack (and at heart, this is what Power is all about – to get the knack, to suddenly seize upon the means, the right vibration, what in India is called *siddhi*). Well, after his departure, all of a sudden it came. It happened while I was doing my japa, while I was walking up and down my room ... As if I were holding all that in my arms – it was so concrete – and lifting it up towards the Light, along with this ascending OM, rising from the very depths, OM! – and I was carrying all these people, and it was spreading forth, PHYSICALLY spreading, and I was carrying the earth, I was carrying the whole universe, but in such a tangible, concrete way – all towards the Supreme Lord.

And this was not the invisible power: it was concrete, it was tangible, it was MATERIAL.



May 24, 1960

It happened last night. For approximately three hours, the physical ego disintegrated for the first time in such a total way.

Nothing remained but the Force, nothing remained but *Sat-Chit-Ananda*,¹⁷⁶ and not only in the consciousness but in the physical sensation – the divine Satchidananda spreading in a constant flood throughout the universe.

These experiences are always absolute, as long as they last; then, through certain signs that I know (I am accustomed to it), I notice that the body consciousness begins closing up again. Or rather, 'something' – evidently a Supreme Wisdom – decides it's sufficient for this time and that the body has had enough. It ought not to break, which is why certain precautions are taken. So this comes in several little stages that I know quite well. The final one is always a bit unpleasant because my body gets into rather peculiar positions as a result of the work. As it's only a sort of machine, towards the end I have some difficulty straightening my knees, for example, or opening my fingers – I think they even make a noise, like something forced into one position whose life has become purely spontaneous and mechanical. There are plenty of people like that, plenty, who enter into trance and then can no longer get out by themselves; they get themselves into a certain position and someone has to free them. This has never happened to me; I have always managed to extricate myself. But yesterday evening, the experience lasted a very long time. There was even a little cracking at the end, as when people have rheumatism.

And during all this time, approximately three hours, the consciousness was completely,

¹⁷⁶*Sat-Chit-Ananda*: the three Supreme Principles, Existence (*Sat*), Consciousness (*Chit*), and Bliss (*Ananda*).

completely different. It was here, however; it was not outside the earth, it was on earth, but it was completely different – even the body consciousness was different. And what remained was very mechanical; it was a body, but it could just as well have been anything. All this power of consciousness that for more than seventy years I've gradually pushed into each of the body's cells so that each cell could become conscious (and it goes on constantly, constantly), all this seemed to have withdrawn – there only remained one almost lifeless thing. However, I could raise myself up from my bed and even drink a glass of water, but it was all so ... bizarre. And when I went back to bed, it took nearly forty-five minutes for the body to regain its normal state. Only after I had entered into another type of *samadhi*¹⁷⁷ and again come out of it did my consciousness fully return. It is the first time I have had an experience of this kind.

During those three hours, there was nothing but the Supreme manifesting through the eternal Mother.

But there was no consciousness of being Mother, neither eternal nor whatever: it was a continuous and all-powerful flood, and so extraordinarily varied, of the Lord manifesting Himself.

It was as vast as the universe, a continuous movement – the movement of manifestation of something which was EVERYTHING at once, a single whole. There was no division. And such a variety of colors, vibrations, powers – extraordinary! It was one single thing, and everything was within it.

The three Supreme Principles were very clearly there: Existence, Consciousness (an active, realizing consciousness) and Ananda. A universal vastness that kept going on and on and on ...

It moves and it doesn't move. How can you explain that? It was in motion, a constant, unceasing motion, and yet there was no shifting of place. I had the perception, or rather there was the perception, of something which WAS forever, which never repeated itself, neither began nor ended, which didn't shift places yet was always in motion.

Words cannot express it. No translation, none, not even the most subtle mental translation can express this. It was ... Even now the memory I have of it is inexpressible. You have to be in it to feel it, otherwise ...

However, to the consciousness it was very, very clear. It was neither mysterious nor incomprehensible, it was absolutely obvious – though untranslatable to our mental consciousness. For they were contradictory, yet they existed simultaneously, indistinguishable: they were not stacked one upon another – it was all simultaneous. How can you explain that?! It's too difficult. It must be experienced.

You see, when something goes beyond thought, a sort of conception of it, or superconception rather, remains behind. But in this case, in my experience, there was no question of thought – it was a question of physical sensation. It was not beyond thought, it was beyond sensation. I was LIVING this thing. And there was no more 'I'. There was nothing but this thing, and yet there was a sensation. I can't explain it!

When I went back to bed, the transitional period lasted 45 minutes. During this time, I tried to locate the role of the individual consciousness on earth. In a flash, I understood its purpose. For you see, as long as the experience lasted, I did not feel any necessity at all of an individuality for this supreme flood to manifest. Then I understood, precisely, that the individuality served to put into contact, in this flood, all that reached out towards what is called 'I' – this individualized representation of the Divine – in order to receive help and support from it, and to be put into contact. I did not say 'put into contact WITH this flood' but 'put into contact IN this flood,' for it was not happening outside – nothing was outside this flood, nothing exists outside it.

And what was really very lovely was the ACCURACY and the power which directed the forces. I watched this for three quarters of an hour: for each thing that presented itself (it could have been

¹⁷⁷*Samadhi*: trance.

someone thinking, something taking place, anything at all), a special little concentration of this flood went exactly onto that point, like a special insistence.

And all this was absolutely egoless, without any personal reaction, nothing; there was nothing but the consciousness of the Supreme Action. It was the only thing existing.

And of course, the whole ordinary and higher mind (as well as the physical mind, it goes without saying, for that must be abolished before going into trance), everything here in the head, above the head, around the head – absolutely immobile.

After all that, towards the end of the night, at two in the morning, only a kind of faint suggestion was left: How can this state – which I knew in trance, in samadhi, and which necessitates lying down – become constant in a physical body which moves about? There is something to discover there. And what form will it take? For in my consciousness, you see, it is constantly like that, this universal flood, but the problem is IN THE BODY: it's the problem of the Force in its most material form.

And during the time my experience lasted, I had no feeling of anything exceptional, but rather simply the fact that after all its preparation, the body consciousness was ready for a total identification with That – in my consciousness it's always the same, a perpetual, constant and eternal state in that it never leaves me. It's like that, and it never varies. What diminishes the immensity of the Vibration are the limitations of the material consciousness which can color it and even sometimes change it by giving it a personal appearance. Thus, when I see someone and speak to him, for example, when my eyes concentrate on the person, I have almost the sensation of this flood flowing from me towards the person or of it passing through me to go onto the person. There is an awareness of the eyes, the body. And it is this which limits or even changes a little the immensity of the thing ... But already this feeling has almost disappeared; this immensity seems to be acting almost constantly. There are moments when I am less interiorized, when I am more on the surface, and it feels like it's passing through a body – moments when the body consciousness comes back a little. And this is what diminishes the thing.

This experience last night also enabled me to understand what X had felt during one of our meditations. He had explained his experience by way of saying that I was this mystic tree whose roots plunge into the Supreme and whose branches spread forth over the world,¹⁷⁸ and he said that one of these branches had entered into him – and it had been a unique experience. He had said, ‘this is the Mother.’

And now I understand that what he had seen and translated by this Vedic image was that kind of perpetual flood.

And you see, this experience he had, this contact between him and me, is just a point, a drop, it's nothing; it's merely something the consciousness puts into words, but the THING itself is universal. Last night it was universal; there was no room, no bed, no door – and it was concrete, concrete, so concrete, with such a splendor! There was all the Joy – this perpetual downpour in a limitless splendor.

I was reluctant to speak (because of this problem that remains hanging: to make it permanent, even in the active consciousness), and I said to myself that if I speak, it will create difficulties for me in finding the solution ... But it's all right. I shall simply have to make a still greater effort, because something always evaporates when you speak.

¹⁷⁸The Ashwatha Tree (*Katha Upanishad*, II, iii, 1).



May 28, 1960

K left his body. The operation had been extraordinarily, almost miraculously successful – one of those dreadful operations where they extract part of your body. He was quite all right for four days afterwards, then everything went wrong.

During the operation and just afterwards, I had simply put the Force on him, as I always do in such cases, so that everything would turn out for the best. Then a few days ago, during my japa, a kind of order came – a very clear order – to concentrate on him so that he would be conscious of his soul and able to leave under the best conditions. And I saw that the concentration worked wonderfully: it seems that during his last days he was ceaselessly repeating *Ma-Ma-Ma*¹⁷⁹ – even while he was in a semi-coma.

And the concentration grew stronger and stronger. The day before yesterday it became very, very powerful, and yesterday morning, around half past noon, it pulled me inward; he came to me in a kind of sleep, a conscious sleep, and I even said almost aloud, ‘Oh, K!’

It lasted fifteen minutes; I was completely within, inside, as if to receive him.

But there is something interesting: when I went down at 2 p.m., I found the family had come to inform me that they had been notified by telephone that he had died at 11:45 a.m. Myself, I saw him come at 12:30.

So you see, the outer signs ... It's not the first time I've noticed this – the doctors observe all the outer signs, then they declare you dead, but you're still in your body!

In other words, he was still in his body.

So it's probably during this period that people are ‘resuscitated,’ as they say. It must be during this period, for they have not left their bodies, they are not really dead, though the heart may give every appearance of having stopped. So K left his body at around half past noon, and officially it was at 11:45. Forty-five minutes later, in other words.

And it takes place very gently, very gently (when it's done right), very gently, very gently, smoothly, without any shock.

So this morning they're burning him.

When they're in too much of a hurry to burn them, sometimes they burn them alive! ... They should wait.

For there's a consciousness of the form, a life of the form. There's a consciousness, a consciousness in the form assumed by the cells. That takes SEVEN DAYS to come out. So sometimes the body makes abrupt movements when burned – people say it's mechanical. It's not mechanical, I know it's not.

I know it. I know that this consciousness of the form exists since I have actually gone out of it. Once, long back, I was in a so-called cataleptic state, and after awhile, while still in this state, the body began living again¹⁸⁰; that is, it was capable of speaking and even moving (it was Theon who gave me this training). The body managed to get up and move. And yet, everything had gone out of it!

179*Ma*: Mother, in the languages of India.

Once everything had gone out, it naturally became cold, but the body consciousness manages to draw a little energy from the air, from this or that ... And I spoke in that state. I spoke – I spoke very well, and besides, I recounted all I was seeing elsewhere.

So I don't like this habit of burning people very much.

I think they do it here (apart from entirely sanitary considerations in the case of people who have died from nasty diseases), here in India, mainly because they are very afraid of all these little entities that come from desires, impulses – things which are dispersed in the air and which make 'ghosts' and all kinds of things. All desires, all attachments, all those things are like pieces that break off (each one goes its own way, you see), then these pieces gain strength in the surrounding atmosphere, and when they can fasten on to someone, they vampirize him. Then they keep on trying to satisfy their desires.

The world, the terrestrial atmosphere, is full of filth.

And people here are much more sensitive than in Europe because they are much more interiorized, so they are conscious of all these little entities, and naturally they're afraid. And the more afraid they are, the more they're vampirized!

I think that many of these entities are dispersed by fire – that creates havoc.

I know one person, a boy who died here, who was burned before he had left! He had a weak heart, and not enough care was taken – that is, they probably should not have operated on him. He was our engineer. He died in the hospital. Not a serious operation, an appendicitis, but his heart could not take up its natural movement.

But as he was accustomed to going out of his body, he didn't know! He even used to make experiments – he would go out, circle around in his room, see his body from outside, observe the difference between the subtle physical and the material physical, etc. So he didn't know. And it's only when they burned his body ...

I tried to delay the moment, but he was in the hospital, so it was difficult. I was in my room when they burned his body, and then suddenly I saw him arrive – sobbing – saying, 'But ... But I'm dead. I DIDN'T WANT to die! Why am I dead, I DIDN'T WANT to die!' It was dreadful. So I kept him and held him against me to quiet him down.

He remained there for years.

And whenever we used to have meetings to decide on the construction of something or on repairs to be made, for example, I always felt him there and he influenced those who were present.

He wanted to live again; I managed to give him the opportunity. He was very conscious; the child isn't yet so.

But people are such fools, they are so ignorant! ...



180It was at Tlemcen, in Algeria. While Mother was in trance, Theon caused the thread which linked Mother to her body to break through a movement of anger. He was angry because Mother, who was in a region where she saw the 'mantra of life,' refused to tell him the mantra. Faced with the enormity of the result of his anger Theon got hold of himself, and it took all Mother's force and all Theon's occult science to get Mother back into her body – which created a kind of very painful friction at the moment of re-entry, perhaps the type of friction that makes new born children cry out.

Undated May (?) 1960

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry

Mother,

You sent me this flower, 'Vital Collaboration.' I am taking this opportunity to tell you something which has been weighing on my heart for years and which, naturally, comes back up whenever things go badly.

I have been here seven years and I can't count a single concrete experience, not a single vision (the only things that have ever happened were in Ceylon or Rameswaram). I haven't even managed to have a few slightly conscious nights.

Isn't this reason enough to be discouraged? In any case, these questions are stirring in me – and the vital is not happy [nor the mental, nor the physical].

Excuse me if I speak too frankly.

Signed: Satprem



June 3, 1960

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, June 3, 1960

Sweet Mother,

I'm a bit discouraged. Every night I slip into a black abyss from which I wake up in the morning *drained*. Not one second of conscious sleep. It takes me an hour to recuperate from my 'sleep'. In fact, I am constantly 'on edge' and the least thing exhausts my body.

But that's nothing. I would bear all the exhaustion quite willingly if there were at least a touch of something conscious. But nothing, as if I were as thick as a Paris concierge!

Mother, there is hardly an instant of my conscious life that I am not aspiring for 'more consciousness' – but there's still this abyss I slip into at night, as if nothing existed!

Pardon my "rumblings. If only at least I knew what I could do to change all this.

Your child,

Signed: Satprem

(Mother's reply)

Sunday afternoon

My dear child,

The best rest is to *enter into the inner silence* for a few moments.

Blessings.

Signed: Mother



June 4, 1960

(The disciple complains of his bad nights)

If you wake up tired in the morning, it is due to *tamas*, nothing else – a dreadful mass of *tamas*. I became aware of this when I started doing the yoga of the body. And it's inevitable as long as the body is not transformed.

Myself, I go to bed very early, at eight o'clock. It's still quite noisy everywhere, but I don't mind; at least I'm sure of no longer being disturbed. First you must stretch out flat and relax all your muscles, all your nerves – you can learn this easily – become like a 'dishrag' on the bed, as I call it; there should be nothing left. And if you can also do that with the mind, you get rid of a lot of idiotic dreams that make you more tired when you wake up than when you went to bed; they are the result of the cellular activity of the brain going on uncontrollably, which is very tiring. Therefore, relax fully, bring everything to a complete, tensionless calm in which everything has stopped. But this is only the beginning.

Once I'm relaxed, I have developed the habit of repeating my mantra. But it's very strange with these mantras – I don't know how it is for others; I'm speaking of my own mantra, the one I myself found – it came spontaneously. Depending on the occasion, the time, depending on what I might call the purpose for repeating it, it has quite different results. For example, I use it to establish the contact while walking back and forth in my room – my mantra is a mantra of evocation; I evoke the Supreme and establish the contact with the body.

This is the main reason for my japa. There's a power in the sound itself, and by forcing the body to repeat the sound, you force it to receive the vibration at the same time. But I've noticed that if something in the body's working gets disturbed (a pain or disorder, the onset of some illness) and I repeat my mantra in a certain way – still the same words, the same mantra, but said with a certain purpose and above all in a movement of *surrender*, surrender of the pain, the disorder, and a call, like an opening – it has a marvelous effect. The mantra acts in just the right way, in this way and in

no other. And after a while everything is put back in order. And simultaneously, of course, the precise knowledge of what lies behind the disorder and what I must do to set it right comes to me. But quite apart from this, the mantra acts directly upon the pain itself.

I also use my mantra to go into trance. After relaxing on the bed and making as total a self-offering as possible of everything, from top to bottom, and after removing as fully as possible all resistance of the ego, I start repeating the mantra.¹⁸¹ After repeating it two or three times, I am in trance (at the beginning it took longer). And from this trance I pass into sleep; the trance lasts as long as necessary and, quite naturally, spontaneously, I pass into sleep. And when I come back, I remember everything. The sleep was like a continuation of the trance. And essentially, the only reason for sleep is to allow the body to assimilate the results of the trance, then to allow these results to be accepted throughout and to let the body do its natural night's work of eliminating toxins. My periods of sleep practically don't exist – sometimes they are as short as half an hour or 15 minutes. But in the beginning, I had long periods of sleep, one or even two hours in succession. And when I woke up, I did not feel this residue of heaviness which comes from sleep – the effects of the trance continued.

It is even good for people who've never been in trance to repeat a mantra (or a word, a prayer) before going to sleep. But the words must have a life of their own – by this I don't mean an intellectual meaning, nothing of the kind, but rather a vibration. And this has an extraordinary effect on the body, it starts vibrating, vibrating, vibrating ... and so calm, you let yourself go, like falling off to sleep. And the body vibrates more and more, more and more, more and more, and you drift off.

Such is the cure for tamas.

It's tamas that gives you a bad sleep. There are two kinds of bad sleep – that which makes you heavy and leaden, as if the result of all your effort the day before were wasted, and that which exhausts you, as if you had spent the whole time fighting. And I've observed that if you cut your sleep up into sections (it becomes a habit), the nights get better. In other words, you must be able to come back to your normal consciousness and your normal aspiration at certain intervals, come back to the call of your consciousness ... But you must not use an alarm clock. When in trance, it's not good to be jolted.

Just as you are drifting off, you can make a formation and say, 'I shall wake up at such-and-such time' (children do it very easily).

You should count on at least three hours for the first part of your sleep; for the last part, one hour is enough. But the first should be a minimum of three hours. In fact, it is best to remain in bed for at least seven hours; with six, you don't have the time to do much (of course, I'm speaking from the standpoint of sadhana, to make the nights useful).

But for years together I only slept 2 1/2 hours a night in all. I mean that my night consisted of 2 1/2 hours. And I went straight to Sat-Chit-Ananda and then came back: 2 1/2 hours were spent like that. But the body was tired. That lasted more than five or six years while Sri Aurobindo was still in his body. And during the day, I was all the time going into trance for the least thing (it was trance, not sleep – I was conscious). But I clearly saw that the body was affected, for it had no time to burn its toxins.¹⁸²

... There would be many interesting things to tell about sleep, because it's one of the things I've studied the most – to speak of how I became conscious of my nights, for instance. (I learned this with Theon, and now that I know all these things of India, I realize that he knew a GREAT deal.)

¹⁸¹Mother added: 'Or any word that has a power for you, a word spontaneously springing from the heart, like a prayer which sums up your aspiration.'

¹⁸²Unfortunately, Mother had us cut many things from this text. We regret the fact.

But it bothers me a lot to say 'I' – I this, I that. I'd rather speak of these things in the form of a treatise or an essay on sleep, for example. Sri Aurobindo always spoke of his experiences but rarely did he say 'I' – it always sounds like boasting.

Sri Aurobindo said that the true or yogic reason for sleep is to put the consciousness back into contact with Sat-Chit-Ananda (I used to do this without knowing it). For some people the contact is established immediately, while for others it takes eight, nine, ten hours to do it. But really, normally you should not wake up till the contact has been established, and that's why it's very bad to wake up in an artificial way (with an alarm clock, for example), because then the night is wasted.

As for me, my night is now organized. I go to bed at 8 o'clock and get up at 4, which makes for a very long night, and it's sliced into three parts. And I get up punctually at 4 in the morning. But I'm always awake ten or fifteen minutes beforehand, and I review all that has happened during the night, the dreams, the various activities, etc., so that when I get up, I am fully active.

To make use of your nights is an excellent thing, for it has a double effect: a negative effect, in that it keeps you from falling backwards, from losing what you've gained (that is really painful); and a positive effect, in that you progress, you continue progressing. You make use of your nights, so there's no more residue of fatigue.

There are two things to avoid: falling into a stupor of unconsciousness, with all those things coming up from the subconscious and the unconscious that invade and penetrate you, and a vital and mental hyperactivity in which you pass your time literally fighting – terrible battles. People come out of that black and blue, as if they had been beaten – and they have been, it is not 'as if'! And I see only one way out – to change the nature of sleep.



Undated June 1960

(Letter from Mother to Satprem)

Monday morning

My dear little child,

I have something interesting to tell you that happened Friday night. It cannot be written down. I shall tell you tomorrow. But it seemed to me that you should feel a little better after that.

Tomorrow at 10.

My love watches over you.

Signed: Mother



June 7, 1960

... I have to see some fellow again whom I saw yesterday. But I told him to come at 11 o'clock. So if I leave here at 10:55, that will give me enough time.

They brought these people to 'Prosperity' to introduce them to me. You know, I had precisely the impression that they feed only on banknotes! (*Mother laughs*) It makes you gray, oh! ... And dry like dead wood.

They came to see their son (son, son-in-law, nephew ... anyway, it's the same person) about some business – some money matter. Then one of them asked to see me. I thought they would simply send some woman – not at all: the whole group, face to face and in a circle, and they began lecturing me on business! ... So I had some fun. Once they had their say (they weren't moving, they were planted there), I told them, 'Listen, since you are here, it must be for SOMETHING!' And then I gave them a lecture. But just imagine, one of them was so shaken that he asked to see me again this morning. The one who was shaken wore a handsome pink turban.

So I said, 'All right, let him come.'

There. Now, what do you have to say?

Me? I have come with some work ... To say? ...

It's not going so well?

(*the disciple grimaces*)

Are you sure? Believe it or not, but I'm not so sure.

You aren't sure of what?

That it's not going so well.

???

You look a little ... You were frowning at me at the balcony! (*Mother laughs*) But ...

No, it's about your nights.¹⁸³

I don't know ... (In a disgusted tone) Really ... I don't know. It feels like only some dynamite could make all that move.

Huh?

I feel that nothing but constant dynamiting could blow all that up. It doesn't move; it can't do anything, can't feel anything, can't see anything. It's ... it's all blocked.

183The disciple is still complaining about his nights.

(long silence)

Does it feel like a wall?

Myself, I ...

It feels like something I can't get across. I'm getting nowhere, I'm always turning in circles, the same groove ...

Yes.

... something has to break, PHYSICALLY break. It could keep on turning like that for centuries.

Hmm! ... But life is like that. Physical life is like that – for everyone. This feeling of it turning round and round and round and round – and it's the same for people, objects, countries, the whole world.

Something changes, of course, but it's so ... phew! I mean, at the speed it's going, it will take us millions of years to make any perceptible progress. We might just as well say it's not moving.

These days I've been feeling very clearly this thing that doesn't move.

But just now ... You see, when I am in contact with you – not when we're sitting together, but at the balcony or at the meditation or ... at any time at all – this contact is very good, very good, very luminous and clear. I wrote you that, and it's getting more and more tangible. But when we're HERE together, it feels as though it doesn't move ... Something is preventing it from taking place HERE. So when you spoke ... (it was when you made a face), I looked.

It gives me the impression of something like ... Yes, that's it, like a caveman – Oh (*Mother speaks mockingly*), surely one of the cave artists or poets or writers! The intellectual life of the caves, I mean! But the cave happens to be low and when you're in it, you are like this (*Mother stoops over*), but the whole time you want to stand up straight. That makes you furious. That's exactly the feeling it gives me – not a cave meant for a man standing on his two feet; it's a cave for a lion or for ... for any four-legged animal.

It's symbolic. I'm speaking symbolically.

And so ...

(silence)

Ah, that's what it is! Your cave ... it IS like that, it's really like that, I understand why you feel you have to blast it with dynamite! But if you go right to the end – right to the end – there's no more top to the cave, it's wide open to the stars. I can see it. Go to the very end. It's very dark. It's very dark and not very enticing, and it feels as if ... it may still be worse – but it won't be worse. Go right to the end, and suddenly you'll be able to stand up straight.

(long silence)

It looks like you are stubbornly trying to go through where you can't go through.

And it's suffocating and irritating and annoying and ... tiring and ...

(silence)

You're going to make a face again!

But that's how it is; I feel it is so ... (How can I put it?) There are always at least two ways of doing things. I have a very strong feeling – very strong – that you want me to take you by the hand and go together ...

Do you have that idea or not?

(no answer)

I'm talking about our relationship, nothing exterior or physical.

*It's strange, but I rarely 'see' you in a very physical way – you, just as you are.*¹⁸⁴

Do you only see me physically?

No, on the contrary, I have difficulty ...

But my little one, it's useless to 'see' me physically!

It's rather something which has no image that I call 'Mother.'

Yes, but that's so much better! Much better. That is the very obstacle for most people: they want to see me as I am – but as I am, as my body is, it's stupid. It's absolutely stupid.

No, no – that's not what I mean. I'm speaking of the relationship I have with you, the true one – what I was telling you about just a moment ago. Because, you see, I'm going to tell you everything! (*Mother laughs*) I have the impression that it would go much faster if I could pick you up, put you here (*Mother touches her heart*), carry you here and tell you, 'Calm yourself, listen!' But it's not possible (alas). You're always fast on your feet with your head touching this very low ceiling. Myself, I can't be like that. I'm not even sure (*laughing*) if my feet would get in!

Anyway, my child, it's not that I'm not trying – I am trying. And it's not that you can't – you can. That's the problem ... You know, it's as if you were stubbornly trying to turn the key the wrong way in the lock.

I don't know. I suppose it's the ego.

What do you mean, the ego?

The ego, the knot, I don't know. I don't know what movement to make.

(silence)

And just imagine! The other day, in the middle of the night, I suddenly found myself inside you. 'Ah, so that's what he's like,' I said. I woke up in the middle of the night with that. And right away I said to myself, 'But ... (*laughing*) but why is he like that!?' And this lasted ... perhaps one or two minutes, maybe more. I was ... I felt like kicking out in every direction ... in a kind of rage. And the next second, I thought, 'But why all this? My goodness, it's so easy; the remedy is simply to do this ...' and immediately (I did what I always do, you see – it's how I am constantly), quite simply, I melted into the Supreme. 'Enough of all this' – and the very next second, everything was all right.

So then I thought, 'This surely must have had some effect (*on the disciple*). What has happened?' I am ... I was literally in peace.

And that's really how it was ... Hmm, maybe that's what it's like for an infant shut up in his mother's womb, so he kicks about in every direction – and for a long time. He's had enough of being shut in.

It was a kind of rage against something that shuts you in.

But note that this is not something particular to you, for as I have told you, all physical life feels

¹⁸⁴The disciple means in meditation – to imagine Mother in her physical form or to use her physical form as an 'object' of meditation. In fact, he was very afraid of getting caught.

like that to me, as though people were confined in a kind of ... shell – this feeling of separation, isolation. This division everywhere, everywhere, everywhere. It's dreadful. Every encounter is a shock.

(silence)

(Mother looks at the disciple)

Good.

It's not a matter of something breaking – it shouldn't break (that makes even more pieces, we don't want more pieces), it should ... melt.

Something that melts.



June 11, 1960

When a question is put to me, the answer does not come from a will; what happens is that materials come which I then use to give shape to the answer, but it's only a shape. The thing itself is there, but it needs to be shaped. The difference between one and the other is rather like the difference between a picture and an apparition.

Sometimes the Force comes direct. And it picks up words, any words at all, that makes no difference; the nature of the words changes, and they become expressive BECAUSE of the power entering into them. This happens when I look directly at the thing.

But when a question is put to me, it comes coated with all the mental atmosphere of whoever is asking the question. And this coating is often a mere reflection – much of the life has been removed.

The same thing occurs, there is the same difference, when I say something and when I see it (for example, when I look at one of those essential problems that will be solved only when the world changes). When I look at that in silence, there is a power of life and truth – which evaporates when it's put into words. It becomes diminished, impoverished and of course distorted. When you write or speak, the experience disintegrates, it's inevitable.

We need a new language.

For instance, if I have a vision (not a vision with pictures, not that, but something without any form or sound or words or ... the THING itself, when I live the thing), and then later I speak of it to someone ... I have a very tangible feeling of having to pull something to make it visible, perceptible and communicable – the splendor goes.

We need new organs of expression ... It will come.



Undated, June 1960

(*Letter to Mother from Satprem*)

Pondicherry, June 1960

Sweet Mother,

This is to tell you that the proofs of *L'Orpailleur* are being sent off this morning at 11 o'clock ...

I don't have many pages of *The Synthesis* ready. Nevertheless, will I see you tomorrow as you planned?

*Your child,
Signed: Satprem*

P.S. Please protect 'my' Orpailleur!

(*Mother's reply*)

6.17.60

My dear little one,

I am with you, and what is needed shall be done.

Don't worry, all will go well.

In a confident peace and joy.

Signed: Mother



July 12, 1960

Last night something happened to me that I found quite amusing. I was awakened by a Voice, or rather it roused me from one trance to put me into another. It happened at about 11 o'clock. Not a human Voice. I don't exactly recall its words any longer, but it had to do with the Ashram – its protection, its success, its power. And what was interesting was that when I woke up, I was in a state in which this formation that is the Ashram and the Force that is condensed here to realize what

this Voice wanted, seemed a very tiny, tiny part of myself.

I heard the Voice and awoke with the feeling of this Power, this Light, this Force of realization concentrated here which sets everything in motion (as always, it is always the same, a Power in motion). It was a dazzling white light. But then, what I found funny was that there I was, quite in my natural state, and this, the Ashram, was a tiny, tiny part of myself. And throughout the whole experience, it remained like that – a very tiny part of myself. Everything else was ... I can't say deconcentrated, but an entirely general, overall activity, as it normally is every night. And I saw the Ashram quite clearly – it was something special, made for special reasons, but whereas I seemed to have an immense body, that was very small, very small. It went on for an hour. That's what I found amusing; the other things just happen, and they may be interesting, but this was so spontaneous; I was watching it (I don't know where my head was), I was looking down from above ... so tiny, so tiny.

What was me was up above, and the Ashram was ... It began just here (*the navel*) and went that way (*downwards*), and it was encircled, to show that it was a special formation – encircled in the unconsciousness of the terrestrial creation. And I was everything else, with the usual vibrations of power and light. And then one current and another current and another were passing into it, into this formation, and they kept going in and in and in, accumulating. They kept going in, and yet they did not come out, they did not leave. It was not an undulatory movement, but rather a pulsating movement – it had no beginning, it didn't go out, and yet it kept moving. It's very difficult to describe.

The formation represented by the Ashram was located approximately here, at the height of the navel in relation to what I was – but although the body was not delimited, it had certain attributes or undefined forms, each one of which was situated in relation to the other as though each represented one part of the body; each was symbolic of either an activity or a part of the world or a mode of manifestation. So the formation started from about here, near the navel, and went down towards the appendix ... Here, I'll draw you a sketch:



Its form was elongated, slanting downwards (it always has this form). At the top it looked like a head, then the lines disappeared down below. It had no openings. And then, it was surrounded by various dark sheaths, a very dark purple which is the color of protection. A sparkling light was entering into it – it kept entering, but without making any holes. It passed right through everything,

through the purple – through everything. It passed through and entered inside, where there were sparklings of every color, like a cascade. There are always these cascades of force – similar to a cascading stream whose waters neither flow on nor disappear, but accumulate: an accumulation of energies, a condensation. And they accumulate without taking up any more space through a kind of compression. And inside, it's moving, vibrating, vibrating, vibrating, it keeps coming and coming – you don't know where it comes from, but it keeps coming and accumulating.

It was a force with a sparkling white light at its center, the light which is the force of the Divine Mother, and as soon as it was well packed and concentrated inside, or condensed, it took on all the colors – vibrations of every color ... Like a materialization – these colors were like a materialization of the Divine Force when it enters matter. (Just as matter is a condensation of energy, well, this seemed to be a condensation of Divine Force. That's really the impression it gave.)

It reminded me of tantric things. I have seen tantric formations and how forces are systematically separated by them – each vibration, each color. It's very interesting. They are all one, and yet each is distinct. That is, they are separated in order to be distinguished and for each one to be used individually. Each one represents a particular action for obtaining something in particular. This is the special knowledge the tantras have, I believe. Or it's the reflection of their knowledge. And my impression is that when they do their pujas or say their mantras, what they are trying to do is recombine all that into the white light. I'm not sure. I know they use each one separately for a separate purpose, but when they speak of their puja 'succeeding,' it may mean that they have been able to recombine the light. But I say this very guardedly. For I would have to see X do his puja one day to really know – from afar I'm not so sure. It's merely an impression.

This is what I am constantly seeing now, but along with this Divine Force or this Divine Consciousness that Sri Aurobindo speaks of when he says, 'Mother's Force is with you.' When it comes, it is sparkling white, perfectly white and perfectly luminous. And as it accumulates inside, it makes living vibrations of every color. And it goes on and on and on. Sometimes it lasts half an hour, three-quarters of an hour, an hour – nothing goes out. And it keeps constantly entering. And it piles up. It's as if it is all being accumulated or compressed together.

So, the observing mind, the intelligence that watches, looked at all this – 'Ah, that's what it's like' (an intelligence that watches without interfering in the least). It's like a spectator talking to himself.

So in my vision, my body was as big as the universe, and that (*the Ashram*) was so tiny, so tiny.

* * *

(Soon afterwards, regarding an old 'Question and Answer')

Heaven and hell are at once true and false. They exist and don't exist. I've seen various people go to heavens or hells after their death, and it's very difficult to make them understand that it is not real. Once it took me more than a year to convince someone that his so-called hell was not hell, and to get him out of it.

But there is something else – the psychological condition that you yourself create, the asuric hell you live in when you cultivate an asuric nature within you.

* * *

If no vibrations ever disappear, then what happens with all these horrible things coming from every corner of the world? Don't they pile up? Don't the bad vibrations take on a more and more enormous volume in the end?

They are transformed. And at times they are transformed almost immediately.

You can't see it or feel it till you concretely live the fact that all is divine, that HE is everywhere, in everything, always, in all that happens.

The first reaction is always a kind of shrinking before things which seem horrible, but if you can overcome that and really have the experience, everything changes.

And there are hundreds and hundreds of little experiences like that, like so many little stones marking the way. Then you see that the two things are ALWAYS together: the destructive and the constructive. You can't see one without seeing the other. A time comes when the effort is to conquer the negative parts of creation and death (as at the end of *Savitri*), and when you have conquered that, then you're above. And then if you look at all these things, even those which seem the most opposed to the Divine, even acts of cruelty done for the pleasure of cruelty, you see the Presence – the Presence that annuls their effects. And it's absolutely marvelous.

I had a startling experience one day when X was doing his pujas to encircle the titans. He was in difficulty and I was about to intervene to help him when I was abruptly stopped. I was faced by a massive blackness (blacker than the blackest physical thing) and suddenly, right at its center, I saw the Divine Love shining with such a splendor – I had never seen it so splendid.

And now it has become constant; each time I hear or see something ugly or horrible, or each time something ugly or horrible happens, something which is a negation of the divine life ... just behind is this flame – so wonderful. And then the effect is annulled.

There is a magnificence of realization which could not have been had this evil, this horror and this negation not been.

Our consciousness shrinks from these things which belong to the past and which are no longer in their place, so we feel disgust and revulsion – because we are ignorant. But if we can raise ourselves above and be in contact with That – the supreme Light – which is ALWAYS just behind, then this Light seems all the more supreme because it is so much its own opposite.

Then you know.

You know, so there is no longer this uneasiness, this shrinking. You feel carried more and more by all that you reject; you are in a forward movement, further and further, higher, constantly further.



July 15, 1960

(Letter from Mother to Satprem)

7.15.60

My dear little one,

This is to tell you that I am seeing you more and more frequently during the night, and in the world where we meet together we have established a kind of companionship in work.

Although it is still in a region of the physical mind, it is a mind striving towards a luminous organization and clearly aspiring to rise towards the higher realms.

And last night especially I had a very positive impression (a sort of feeling) that I can *count on you*.

We'll see what can be done for the 'manuscripts' on Sunday.

With all my tender affection.

Signed: Mother



July 18, 1960

Of course, we're dating all these old *Questions and Answers*, but not everyone pays attention to dates. How can those old ones be mixed with the present things which are on an altogether different plane?

There is an experience in which one is entirely outside of time – that is, ahead, behind, above, below, all these things are one and the same. And at the very moment the identification takes place, there is no longer any past, present or future. And really, it's the only way to know.

As the experiences unfold, these old *Questions and Answers* give me the feeling of someone circling outside a garden while describing what's inside it. But a day comes when you enter the garden, and then you know a little better what's inside. And I'm starting to enter. I'm starting.



July 23, 1960

Something interesting happened last night exactly between ten and eleven. I was in some kind of vehicle. I didn't see the vehicle but I was in it. Someone in front of me was driving, though I could only see his back; I didn't bother about who it was – he was simply the one meant to do it.

It was as if the doors of destruction had been flung open. Floods – floods as vast as an ocean – were rushing down onto ... something ... the earth? A formidable current pouring down at an insane speed, with an unstoppable power. It was brackish water – not transparent, but brackish. And it was imperative to reach a certain spot BEFORE the water. Had the water reached there ahead of me,

nothing could have been done. Whereas if I got there first (I say 'I', but it was not I with this body), if I got to the other side before the water, I would be completely safe; and from this safe position, I would be able, I would have a chance to help those left behind.

And this vehicle was going faster than the flood (I saw and felt it by its motion) – a formidable flood, but the vehicle was going still faster. It was so wonderful. In places there were some especially difficult and dangerous spots, but I ALWAYS got there before the water, just before the water barred the way. And we kept going and going and going. Then, with a final effort (there was no effort, really, it was willed), with a final push, we made it to the other side – and the water came rushing just behind! It rushed down at a fantastic speed. We had made it. Then, just on the other side, it changed color. It was ... it changed in color to a predominant blue, this powerful blue which is the force, the organizing force in the most material world. So there we were, and the vehicle stopped. And then, after having been looking straight ahead the whole time we were speeding along, I turned around and said, 'Ah, now I can start helping those who are behind.'

Here, I'll draw you a little sketch:



The water was flowing off towards the right. From time to time there were these fissured dips or depressions along the vehicle's path where the water rushed through, and in fact it must have rushed through each one just as soon as I had sped past. It was most dangerous, for if you had reached there a second too late, the water would already have flooded in and you would no longer have been able to get across; it was such that with even only a few drops, you would no longer get across. Not that they were very wide, but ... And the water was pouring in ('pouring in' ... our words are very small), it was pouring in, and I could see it ahead, but then the vehicle would arrive at full speed and instead of stopping, in a wild roller coaster-like movement it would plunge through, vroom! – just in time, exactly like a roller coaster. I always arrived just in time to get through. And then again the same thing, broken here and there (in this way there were many fissures, though I've only drawn two; there were quite a few, five or six at least), and again we would dart across, then race on until we would reach the spot where I have drawn the water turning.

Right at the end, there was a place where the water had to turn to run down – this was the Great Passage. If you got caught in that, it was all over. You had to reach this spot and cross over before the water came. It was the only place you could get across. Then a last plunge, and like an arrow shot from a bow, full speed ahead, I crossed over and there I was.

And once on the other side, without even a rise in ground level (I don't know why), it was immediately safe. And the current went on and on, waves upon waves, on and on, as far as the eye could see, but it was canalized here at the Great Turning; and as soon as it went past this point, the

inundation was total, it spread out over something ... over the earth. And the current turned – it turned – but I was already on the other side. And down below, everything was finished, the water rushed down everywhere. Only, as soon as I was on the other side, it could not touch me – the water could not get across, it was stopped by something invisible, and it turned away.

Moreover, it seemed that everything had already been prepared, as if the way had been made to divert the water.

There, down below me, below the vehicle, I had the impression that it was the earth, it really seemed like the earth, and the water was rushing down towards it.

The vehicle's path was not on earth, but up above (probably in interstellar regions!), a special path for this vehicle. And I didn't know where the water was coming from; I couldn't see its origin, which was off beyond the horizon. But it came raging down in torrents – not precipitously like a waterfall, but rather like a rushing torrent. My path passed between the torrents of water and the earth below. And I saw the water before me, everywhere, in front and behind – it was so extraordinary, for it looked like ... it was everywhere, you see, except along my path (and even then, there was some seepage). Water speeding everywhere. But there was a kind of conscious will in this onrush, and I had to reach the Great Passage before this conscious will. This water resembled something physical, but there was a consciousness, a conscious will, and I had to ... it was like a battle between the will I represented and that will. And I passed each fissure just in time. Only when I reached the Great Turning did I see the will that impelled this water. And I reached there just before it. And passed through at a fantastic speed – like lightning. Even time ceased ... I crossed over like a flash of lightning. And then, suddenly, respite – and it was blue. A square.

At the time, I didn't know what it all meant. Then this morning, I thought, 'It must have something to do with the world situation.'

It had all the dimensions of something almost ... the earth seemed small in comparison, you see. It was similar to what happens here when water is unleashed on earth, during floods for instance, but on a much greater scale.

What was pleasing, and really quite interesting, was this tremendous speed, like an arrow, and I always arrived in time, just in time, just in time. Once I had crossed over to the other side (I clearly felt that nothing would be left, for it was such a powerful deluge), the danger was finished, there was no longer ANY possibility at all of being touched – this was the main feeling. Everything was stopped. Nothing could touch.

I turned around and saw all this water rushing down, and I thought, 'Now let's see if we can do something here.' There was someone behind who interested me, someone or something – it was still something; it was very likable and had something of the blue color that was here on the other side. Not really individuals, but more like beings representative of something that was following me quite closely. When I was there, it also was there, but it could not keep up, it kept losing ground – as my speed increased, its decreased. It could not keep up. But it interested me in a special way. 'Oh, he's so close (he or it); he might just make it,' I thought. And at that moment, I saw that all this destructive will with its instrument of water, symbolically water, had rushed past and was spreading out everywhere. But there was still a chance of saving all those who were along this path. And that's immediately what I thought of, it was my first wish: 'Let's see if they can still get across, if I can manage to get them across.' I remembered some especially dangerous spots (while speeding past, I had remarked, 'Oh, here we might still be able to do this, there that could still be done' – my consciousness moved at the same speed, and I noted everything along the way), and once I was firmly there on the other side, I started sending back messages.

Down below, the water was having a grand time; it was ... it was hopeless. But here, along this path, there was still a hope, even ... even after the water had passed; I probably had a certain power at my disposal to help others cross these fissured places. But because I woke up, I didn't see what it was. So that stopped everything. Probably because I woke up rather abruptly, I could not see what it meant.

All this is a translation in human language, actually, because really it was ...

And it happened quite early in the night – at such an early hour, they are not visions or things you observe: they are things you do.

I've been seeing for a long time that nights are actions. They are no longer images or symbols or representations – they are all actions. And they take place certainly not on a human scale.

Does that indicate war?

I don't feel any war.

S.M came the other day ... He's quite informed about events as only the government knows them. He brings me government news – not what they feed to the public. It doesn't look good. But as he has confidence, he wanted to know (so much confidence that he goes and tells Nehru and others, 'Oh, Mother said this, Mother said that.' And it turns out true, fortunately!). So after describing things at some length, he asked my opinion.

Logically, according to reason, war seems unavoidable. But as he asked, I looked – I looked at my nights, precisely, as well as other things. And then I said, 'I don't feel it. I don't feel any war.'

And again this morning, when I looked at this vision, I asked myself, 'Will there be war?' – I don't feel it will be like that ... It may be worse.

You see, it didn't seem human.

I remember wandering about one night some time ago. It's no longer very clear, but one thing has remained – I had gone out of India, and then when I returned to India, I found huge elephants installed EVERYWHERE – enormous elephants. At that time I was not at all aware that the Communists in India had adopted the elephant as their symbol; I only learned that later. 'What does this mean,' I said to myself. 'Does it signify the Indian army?' But they did not resemble war elephants. These elephants were like immense mammoths, and they looked like they were settling down with all the power of a tremendous inertia. That was the impression – something heavy in an inert and very tamasic way, forever immovable. I did not like this occupation. When I came back, I had a rather painful feeling, and for several days I wondered if it did not mean war. Then by chance, in a conversation, I learned that the Communists had selected the elephant as their symbol whereas the Congress had chosen the bullock ... In my vision, I was moving (as I always do), I was moving among them, and nothing moved. And if I needed room, some of them even tried to stir a little.

But when human beings are involved, I believe that visions take on a special form – it's a special image. Not an inundation like this. That was very, very impersonal. They were forces. A feeling of floodgates bursting open, of something being held back, retained or prevented, then suddenly ...

The vehicle and the forward movement are the sadhana, beyond the shadow of a doubt. I understood that the speed of sadhana was greater than the speed of the forces of destruction. And it ended in certain victory, there is not a shadow of doubt. This feeling of POWER once I was firmly grounded there [in the 'square'], enough power to help others.

These were universal forces. I can't say it means war. I've foreseen many wars – widespread wars, local wars, so many wars – and up to now they have never been presented to me in that form. They've always come as a fire – flames, flames, the home burning. Not as an inundation.

A cataclysm?

Ah, that, we've already had some. From all around, people are proclaiming that in 1962, there will be ... some people have even foreseen the end of the earth, but that's foolish! For the earth was built with a certain purpose, and before things are done, it will not disappear.

But there may be ... some changes.

(soon afterwards)

In fact, the Ashram's financial situation has never been so bad. We're living from day to day, minute to minute ... One day, it will crack – all these things are connected (*Mother is alluding to the vision of the flood She has just described*).

I myself am clearly seeing it from the other side; I see a black, muddy form – a black, black force. And I see the [Divine] Force acting on people and, miraculously, the money comes – and then ... it's like something armored¹⁸⁵ – it seeps in with difficulty, a thin trickle from day to day.

Provided the sadhana works, that's all that is needed.

And in fact, periodically, in one way or another, in one form or another, I receive a kind of assurance, a promise that it will all go well.

* * *

When I read what Sri Aurobindo writes in *The Synthesis*, how things should be and what they are now, when I see the two, that's when I feel we're turning in circles.

It's more and more a universal yoga – the whole earth – and it is like that day and night, when I walk and when I speak and when I eat. It's constantly like that. As if the whole earth were ... it's like kneading dough to make it rise.

But when I read his *Yoga of Self-Perfection* and see ... simply what we are ... phew! What yeast we would need to make all that rise!

But this is not true: HE alone is doing it, it's always He.

And sometimes things stagnate, they seem so absolutely obscure and stupid. And then, if you simply go like this (*gesture of offering*), simply, truly – do it, not think it – it's instantly like a shower of bliss ... A tiny point, something very small which looks stubbornly stupid and obstinate, if only you do this (and if you want, you can): 'Take, take!' Give it to Him, simply, like this, truly give it to Him: 'It's You, it's Yours, take it, do with it what You want.' And instantly, instead of this shrinking and this painful feeling – 'What in the world can I do with all this?' – a shower, it comes like a shower. Truly Ananda. Of course, if you are stupid enough to call back the difficulty, it returns. But if you remain quiet, if you keep your head quiet, it goes – finished, cured. But there are thousands and thousands and thousands of such points ...

With my japa, I've reached about seven lakhs¹⁸⁶. I repeat it 1,400 times a day. But you must be much further than I!¹⁸⁷

I don't see what effect it's having, in any case ...

No, but ... in the morning while walking, I see the difference. There is definitely a difference.

In the beginning, I said I'd do a crore,¹⁸⁸ and if that were not enough, I'd do ten crore. And one crore will take ... 20 years!

¹⁸⁵Mother means that the Ashramites themselves create the armor. See also X's reflections in an undated letter of May 1959.

¹⁸⁶One lakh = 100,000.

¹⁸⁷The disciple was doing about five hours of japa a day at this time, then later seven hours – until it cracked.

¹⁸⁸One crore = 10,000,000.

We shall see.

This also is quite enjoyable.

This feeling of something ... *everlasting*.¹⁸⁹ It's enjoyable. Quiet ... like floating in eternity.

You reach a point where there is no more worry, neither for yourself nor for the world nor anything. When you reach that, you are always smiling, you are always happy. And when something happens, it doesn't matter, you look at it with a smile, forever a smile.

So there you are, my child.



July 26, 1960

I woke up at three o'clock (what I mean is, I came out of my nightly activities). I had an hour ahead of me before getting up. So I concentrated and went within.

I came out of the concentration at 4:10 – quite late. For I was VERY busy! I was in some sort of small house similar to my room, but it was at the top of a tower, for you could see the landscape from above. It was similar to my room here, with large windows. And I was much taller than I actually am, for there was a ledge below each window (there was a cupboard below each window, as in my room), and this ledge came quite low on me; in my room, it comes up to my chest, whereas it was much lower in my vision. And from there ... oh, what beautiful landscapes! It was surrounded by such lovely countryside! ... There was a flowing river, woods, sunlight – oh, it was really lovely! And I was very busy looking up words in the dictionary!

I had taken out a dictionary. ‘There, it’s this one,’ I said. Someone was next to me, but this someone is always symbolic: each activity takes on a special form which may resemble someone or other. (The people around me for the work here are like families in those worlds there; they are types, that is – each person represents a type – so then I know that I’m in contact with all the people of this same type. If they were conscious, they would know that I was there telling them something in particular. But it’s not a person, it’s a type – and not a type of character, but a type of activity and relationship with me.)

I was with a certain ‘type,’ and I was looking for a word, I wanted to conjugate the verb *vaincre* [to conquer]: *je vaincs, tu vaincs, il vainc* – good, now *nous vainquons*, how do you spell that, *nous vainquons*? It was so funny! And I was looking it up in the dictionary – *vainquons*, how do you spell that?

And at the same time, I had the feeling of something completely arbitrary, and all this kind of knowledge seemed so unreal – a completely arbitrary convention corresponding to nothing luminous anywhere.

I was very ... oh, I was very, very anxious to know how *je vaincs, tu vaincs* goes ... *nous vainquons, vous vainquez*. And I woke up at 4:15 ... without having found it in the dictionary!

Then when I woke up, I immediately said to myself, ‘Hmm, it’s true – how would I spell that?’

189Original English.

It took me half a minute to remember. It was really funny!

Coming at the end of the night as it did, it means that it's an exploration in some part or another of a subconscious mental activity. And you can make so many discoveries there ... it is unbelievable! But it's lovely. And rarely unpleasant. There was a time when it was very unpleasant, oppressive, full of effort and resistance. I would want to go somewhere, but it would be impossible; I toiled and struggled, but everything would go wrong – the straight paths would suddenly plunge into an abyss, and I'd have to cross the abyss. For years it was like that. Just recently, I looked back over this whole period ... But now it is over. Now it's something ... it's lovely, it's enjoyable, it's a little ... it has a childlike simplicity.

However, it's not a personal subconscious, but a ... it's more than the Ashram. For me, the Ashram is not a separate individuality – except in that vision the other day,¹⁹⁰ which is what surprised me. It's hardly that. Rather, it is still this Movement of everything, of everything that is included. So it's like entering into the subconscious of the whole earth, and it takes on forms which are quite familiar images to me, but they are absolutely symbolic and very, very funny! It took a moment to see that *vainquons* is spelled q-u-o-n-s. And I wasn't sure! I meant to ask Pavitra for a dictionary which gives verb conjugations, for then if I'm stuck on something while writing, I can look it up.

The other day I wrote something – it was a letter I gave Pavitra to read. 'I think there's a spelling mistake,' he said. 'It's quite possible,' I answered, 'I make plenty of them.' He looked it up in a splendid dictionary and, as a matter of fact, it was a mistake. I meant to ask him for a dictionary this morning.

It's very simple, actually; it's a convention, a conventional construction somewhere in the subconscious brain, and you write automatically. But if you want to try to bring the light of a slightly higher reason into it, it's terrible. It becomes meaningless, and you forget everything.

You have to be inside this automatic convention to remember; it's very difficult (*Mother laughs*). So I make a lot of spelling mistakes ... (under *her breath, in a mischievous tone*) I think I'll ask him for his dictionary (*laughter*)!

Vaincre! ... I wanted to write to someone to proclaim the Victory. The idea was very clear, it was really lovely. Then, in a second, I was stopped – 'How do you spell *vainquons*? And how do you spell *vaincs*?' The person next to me didn't know a thing – nothing. 'It's spelled v-a-i-n,' he said. So I said, 'No, I don't think so!' (laughter) It went on like that, you know, it was so funny! ...

Are you good at spelling?

Oh, it depends. When I don't pay attention, it's all right. I usually don't make mistakes – not too many!

Yes, yes; it's quite automatic, a kind of convention somewhere. But if you have the misfortune to step out of that and to look at it, it's finished, you don't know anything any more.



190The vision of July 12, 1960.

August 10, 1960

(Concerning two teachers at the Ashram's Center of Education who wrote Mother asking if 'only' Sri Aurobindo should be studied. Pavitra was present during this conversation.)

An eight page letter – nothing but passion.

(Pavitra:) Yes, Mother.

It's all from up here *(Mother touches her forehead)*.

(Pavitra:) Passion and reactions.

Passion, passion – but this passion and these reactions are the same thing.

And then they stuff into it what they consider intellectual reasonings, but their intellectuality is not so terribly luminous – anyway ... *(Mother shows the letter)* Here, I'll read this to you for your edification (!).

'And finally, Sweet Mother, what I would really like to know is the purpose of our Center of Education. Is it to teach the works of Sri Aurobindo? And only these? All the works or some only? Or is it to prepare the students to read the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother? Is it to prepare them for the Ashram life or for 'outside' occupations as well? So many opinions are floating in the air, and even the old disciples from whom we expect some knowledge make so many contradictory statements ...

(Laughing, to Pavitra:) I suppose that's for you!

'that we no longer know what to believe nor on what to base ourselves. So what should be our foundation upon which to work in the absence of a true and certain knowledge? Please enlighten us, Mother.'

I answered. The letters must have left. I wrote (in English) that it's not so much a question of organization as of attitude – to begin with. Then I said, 'It seems to me that unless the teachers themselves get out of this ordinary intellectuality (!), they will never be able to fulfill their duty.' And this is what I wrote to Z *(Mother reads)*:

'It is not a question of preparing students to read these or some other works. It is a question of drawing all those who are capable of it out of the usual human routine of thought, feelings, action; of giving those who are here every opportunity to reject the slavery of the human way of thinking and acting; of teaching all those who want to listen that there is another, truer way of living, and that Sri Aurobindo taught us to become and to live the true being – and that the purpose of education here is to prepare the children for *this life* and to make them capable of it.

As for all the others, all those who want the human way of thinking and living, the world is vast and there is place there for everyone.

We do not want large numbers; we want a selection. We do not want brilliant students; we want living souls.'

Once I've drummed that into their heads long enough, they may end up understanding.

Then Z asks about languages: should they choose ONE language or ... I don't know. And then, if only ONE language, which language? ... She said, '*Should it be a common or international language, or their [the students'] vernacular?*' I answered her, '*If only ONE language is known [well], it is better (international or common).*'¹⁹¹

These are matters of common sense – I don't even know why they bring them up.

Then they asked some questions about teaching literature and poetry. I answered them. And then, at the bottom, I added this:

'If you carefully study what Sri Aurobindo has written on every subject ...

He wrote on EVERYTHING, there is not one subject on which he has not written! The point is to find it everywhere.

... a complete knowledge of the things of the world can be easily achieved.'

What I call 'studying' is to take Sri Aurobindo's books, where he quotes or speaks of one thing or another, then have the corresponding books – when he quotes something, you must take the book it corresponds to; when he speaks of something, you must study the writings on that subject. This is what I call 'studying.' Then, after having read the corresponding works, you compare them with what Sri Aurobindo has said, and in this way there may be a beginning of understanding. If someone is very studious, he can 'review' all that has ever been written or taught by going through Sri Aurobindo's books. I mean this for someone who loves working.

I SEE this state of mind, this mental attitude ... Oh! It's ... it's so repugnant. People are so afraid of taking sides, so afraid of appearing biased; they are so afraid of appearing to have faith, so afraid ... Oh, it's disgraceful.

And I will keep hammering that into your heads till I enter right into them.

* * *

(*Pavitra hands Mother a new French dictionary, the 'All-in-One'*)

Oh! French verbs! ...

(*Pavitra:*) Yes, Mother; in this dictionary each verb is shown – the category it is in, how it is conjugated ...

The verbs ...

... Take 'choyer' [coddle, pamper], for example ... (*Pavitra shows Mother*), it's conjugated like 'aboyer' [snarl, bark].

What a comparison! (*Mother laughs*) Oh, they have such psychological subtleties! But it's especially for the spelling of verbs. I believe I know how to conjugate!

(*Pavitra:*) It has everything – how to play bridge, how to play tennis, the art of carving a chicken ...

Fine.

(*Satprem:*) 'All-in-One,' it's rather like yoga!

¹⁹¹Original English.

* * *

(After Pavitra leaves)

I'm continuing *The Yoga of Self-Perfection*. It's really something ... I shall never tire of saying it's 'fabulous.' Everything, absolutely everything, in detail, everything is there. And he foresaw – foresaw, gave the remedy; foresaw, gave the remedy; foresaw, gave ...

Have you read it?

Long back.

What have you brought me?

I'll soon finish re-reading 'Essays on the Gita' ...

Ah!

... to prepare for the book.¹⁹² I haven't quite finished, but nearly. Everyday I force myself to read (well, not exactly 'force') ...

But that one also is ex-traor-dinary! ...

Yes, there are many things.

What is so interesting in it is this insistence on the divinity of man ... If that – this feeling of the inner divinity – could be established in oneself in a constant way (I've seen this for most people I know), so MANY things would ... There is no need for any effort at all, things fall away from you like dust.

There is no need to react against difficulties; you are immediately pulled out of them, as if you were taken out like this (*gesture of pulling someone out of a difficulty with her two fingers*).



August 16, 1960

(Letter from Mother to Satprem regarding the first copy of his first book, *L'Orpailleur*)

8.16.60

¹⁹²Sri Aurobindo and the Transformation of the World, an initial book on Sri Aurobindo by Satprem that was never published. It was meant to be part of a certain 'Series of Spiritual Masters,' but finally Sri Aurobindo never took part.

Satprem
A very beautiful book,
a great success
forerunner
opening the way
to other books
more beautiful still.

Signed: Mother



August 20, 1960

(*While filing various old papers, notes, etc., Mother happens upon the plan for a film studio at the lake¹⁹³*)

It's at the lake. The property belonged to the mission and at that time its manager was a very good friend of ours, even though he was a missionary. He said that he would arrange for us to have it. Everything was arranged, and I was to receive the money to buy it (they asked for more than fifty or sixty thousand rupees¹⁹⁴). But then the money didn't come and our missionary friend left. He's no longer there; he's been replaced by someone else.

(Mother looks at a piece of paper) 'Calling Antonin Raymond¹⁹⁵.' The architect for the construction.

Then there was also 'making ready temporary quarters for Z¹⁹⁶.' But then Z left; he died.

That's what happens – things change. It's not that the project stops, but it's forced to take other paths.

But this film project has been completely abandoned now, hasn't it?

No, no. You see, it wasn't a studio – it was a school, a school of photography, television and film. It's not at all buried.

But L has enlarged the program. (*Mother indicates the plan*) This is only a small part of his

193Some five miles from Pondicherry.

194About \$7,000.

195The architect who had already built 'Golconde,' the Ashram guest house.

196An American filmmaker.

extensive total program. He is planning to have a school of agriculture, a modern dairy with grazing land – there's a lot of agriculture, really a lot – fruit orchards, large rice fields, many things. And then a ceramics factory. My ceramics factory will be at the far end of the lake, so as to utilize the clay – the government has agreed; as they have to dig out the lake one day, we shall use the top soil for the fields. First we'll remove all the pebbles (you know, there are hills over there), which can be used for construction – it's a mine of pebbles. After removing the pebbles, there will be holes which then we'll fill with earth from the lake. And below this earth is a thick and compact layer of clay which is so hard it can't be used for farming – it's impossible – but it's wonderful for making ceramics. So right at the very end, in Indian territory,¹⁹⁷ we'll have a large ceramics industry. On the other side, we'll have a little factory for firing clay.

All this is huge. A tremendous program.¹⁹⁸

We can file it with the other things.

(Mother pauses at a note from February 10, 1956¹⁹⁹)

It was in the beginning of February 56 – it was formidable. It was really formidable. All the asuric forces of destruction descended upon me ... They tried their best.

And naturally, they make use of all those around me! – It's the only way of getting at my body.

I'm used to it.

* * *

(Mother looks at another note)

I no longer remember when this happened. Someone had put his hands on my shoulders – I was a bit surprised. This person imagined that I would feel extraordinary things. I must have made a face (I wasn't expecting it, after all). Then afterwards, someone asked me, 'What was your experience (!), what did you feel?' I didn't answer. Once I was alone, this is what I wrote:

Something like what
Christ must have experienced
when on his shoulders
he felt the weight
of the cross.

To this day I remember the experience. Truly, that's what I felt – I did not intellectualize it. Exactly the impression of what Christ must have experienced when he felt the weight of the cross. It was the weight of a whole world of darkness, unconsciousness, universal bad will, total incomprehension, something ... And it really felt like that ... as if I were carrying a frightful weight – which was frightful because of its darkness, not because of its weight. So I thought, 'Well, well. This must be how Christ felt when they laid the cross on him.'

There are plenty of them! *(Mother indicates a pile of various papers)* In another pile there must be as many again! It is a mania for collecting papers.

197Pondicherry was a French enclave, under French administration. The neighboring territory was the Indian state of Madras, or Tamil Nadu.

198Perhaps it was the beginning of Auroville.

199This note has disappeared.

Oh no, sweet Mother! Fortunately they have been kept.

Oh! I have plenty of them, plenty. There must be many more boxes full.

* * *

(Soon afterwards, in regard to the filing of these notes)

With a lot of patience and time, it could all be organized, but I'd have to be convinced that it's worth the trouble. All these old papers are like dead leaves. We should make a *bonfire*.²⁰⁰

Oh, no!

YOU people may have this opinion, but it's not mine. I'll tell you exactly the effect it has on me: whenever someone has wanted to arrange things, I've always thought, 'Yes, it will be quite useful to arrange these things ... after my death!'

But then I'd rather not die ... if possible. And if I don't die, it will be perfectly useless, because that would then be the obvious proof of an uninterrupted ascent; consequently, what there will be at the very end will be much more interesting.

You alone have convinced me that the 'history' of the way might be of some interest, so I'm letting you do it ... I've taken a very, very handsome file upstairs with all your notes in it.²⁰¹ It's filling up; it's going to be formidable! (*Mother laughs*) ... a frightful documentation.

Not at all!

Anyway ... I am doing it very conscientiously. I'm gathering everything and putting it all together.

You know, someone who appreciates this work tremendously is Nolini. Once he timidly asked me, 'Could I have a copy'²⁰² ?' 'Fine,' I said. Oh, he really appreciates it. And when I have something amusing like these most recent notes, I give him a copy. With that, he's happy. So he blesses you! (*Mother laughs*) Oh! Without you, this would never have been done – you can be quite sure. Never.

* * *

(Getting up to leave, Mother holds in her hands the first copy of L'Orpailleur which the disciple has just received from France and offered to Her)

Shall I take your book or ... ? Don't you want it?

I don't need it.

Don't you want it? I like it very much, very much. It's a very good friend (*Mother holds the book against her heart*). Oh, I must write a few letters here and there, to France (*to announce the*

200Original English.

201The future *Agenda*.

202Of these conversations that make up the *Agenda*.

publication of the book). I already wrote to A, but I must write him again. Though I suppose he knows that it has come out – he should know. I told him to follow it with ...

I don't know if the book has come out yet. I believe it's to appear in early September.

Oh, so this was only the harbinger.

I think so. That was their plan, in any case.²⁰³

Did you tell them that you've received it?

Yes, I sent them a note.

Did you tell them you were happy?

Yes, yes.

(Mischievously) Did you tell them Mother was happy? – They couldn't care less! (Mother laughs)

(Unruffled) They don't exactly know who 'Mother' is.

No, fortunately not! Fortunately, my child! Fortunately.

(Just at the doorstep, as She is leaving, Mother tells the disciple that She had seen three books, a trilogy, and the third one would be about Her. And She adds:)

Sri Aurobindo came during my japa to tell me, 'I will help him all through.'



August 27, 1960

I would like to see you much more often, perhaps three or four times a week, every other day – if people would ...

It's the same with the letters.

They assassinate me with their letters.

The little basket I put them in can no longer close! I take 45 minutes every morning upstairs to write letters. And I receive six, seven, eight, ten letters a day, so how can I manage? In the end, Sri Aurobindo spent the whole night writing letters – till he went blind.

Myself, I can't afford to do that, I have other things to do. And I'm not keen on going blind either. I need my eyes, they are my work instruments.

²⁰³The French publishers, *Éditions du Seuil*.

On top of that, there are all the people who want to see me. Now everyone wants to see me! And since they are happy after coming once, they ask to come again! If I were very disagreeable and told them ... (*Mother laughs*) but that can't be done.

... We should not allow all this to upset us. There is but one thing to do – remain in a state of constant peace, constant equanimity, for things are not ... they are not very pleasant. Oh, if you only knew all the letters they write me ... if you knew, first of all, the tremendous pile of stupidities that need never be written at all; then, added to that, such a display of ignorance, egoism, bad will, total incomprehension and unequalled ingratitude, and all this ... so candid, my child! They heap all this on me daily, you know, and it comes from the most unexpected quarters.

If this were to affect me (*Mother laughs*), I would long ago have been ... who knows where. I don't care at all, not at all, really not at all – it doesn't bother me, it makes me smile.

(silence)

So don't let yourself be upset ... I often think of you, for I know how very sensitive you are to all this. It is ... it is really ugly. A whole realm of human intelligence (it's too great a compliment to call that intelligence), of the human mind, that is very, very ... repugnant. We must come out of that. It doesn't touch us. WE are elsewhere – elsewhere. We are NOT in that rut! We are elsewhere, automatically.

Our head is above.

I myself see you outside, I feel you outside, I always meet you there.



September 2, 1960

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

Pondicherry, September 2, 1960

Sweet Mother,

After leaving your room, X kept repeating, 'Very wonderful.' Then he explained to me that 'white rays' were 'vibrating everywhere' – along the whole length of the Kundalini, white, yellow and blue, but especially white (he indicated the forehead in particular).

He looked quite ecstatic while speaking of his experience.

In conclusion, he said, 'Where is the Mother and where is X?' meaning, I suppose, that all separation had disappeared.

With love.

Signed: Satprem



September 20, 1960

X has spoken to me several times of his lack of esteem for most people in the Ashram: 'Why does Mother keep all these empty pots?' he says.

If he imagines for one moment that I believe all the people here are doing sadhana, he is grossly mistaken!

The idea is that the earth as a whole must be prepared in all its forms, including even those least ready for the transformation. There must be a symbolic representation of all the elements on earth upon which we can work to establish the link.²⁰⁴ The earth is a symbolic representation of the universe, and the group is a symbolic representation of the earth.

Sri Aurobindo and I had discussed the matter in 1914 (quite a long time ago), for we had seen two possibilities: what we are now doing, or to withdraw into solitude and isolation until we had not only attained the Supermind, but begun the material transformation as well. And Sri Aurobindo rightfully said that we could not isolate ourselves, for as you progress, you become more and more universalized, and consequently ... you *take the burden upon yourself*²⁰⁵ in any case.

And life itself has responded by bringing people forward to form a nucleus. Of course, we clearly saw that this would make the work a bit more complex and difficult (it gives me a heavy responsibility, an enormous material work), but from the overall point of view – for the Work – it's indispensable and even inevitable. And in any case, as we were later able to verify, each one represents simultaneously a possibility and a special difficulty to resolve. I have even said, I believe, that each one here is an impossibility.²⁰⁶

But this way of seeing is too far removed from the state of mind and spiritual education in which X has lived,²⁰⁷ of course, for him to understand. Nor am I in favor of proselytizing (*to convince X*); it would disturb him quite needlessly. He has not come here for that. He came here for something special, something I wanted which he brought, and I have learnt it. Now it's excellent, he is a part of the group in his own fashion, that's all. And in a certain way, his presence here is having a very good effect on a whole category of people who had not been touched but who are now becoming more and more favorably inclined. It was difficult to reach all the traditionalists, for example, the people attached to the old spiritual forms; well, they seem now to have been touched by something.

204With the Supramental World.

205Original English.

206'Each one here represents an impossibility to be resolved'; *Words of the Mother*, p. 14 (January 15, 1933).

207Traditional tantra.

When Amrita,²⁰⁸ seized with zeal, wanted to make him understand what we were doing here and what Sri Aurobindo had wanted, it almost erupted into an unpleasant situation. So after that, I decided to identify myself with him to see – I had never done this, because normally I only do it when I am responsible for someone, in order to truly help someone, and I've never felt any responsibility in regard to X. So I wanted to see his inner situation, what could and could not be done. That was the day you saw him coming down from our meditation in an ecstatic state, when he told you that all separation between him and me had dropped away – it was to be expected, I anticipated as much!

But when I did that, I saw what X wanted to do for me. As a matter of fact, I recalled that when we first met I had told him that everything was all right up to this point (*Mother indicates the region above the head*), but below that, in the outer being, I wanted to hasten the transformation, and things there were difficult to handle.

When Sri Aurobindo was here, I never bothered about all this; I was constantly up above and I did what the *Gita* and the traditional writings advise – I left it to Nature's care. In fact I left it to Sri Aurobindo's care. 'He is making the best use of it,' I would say. 'He will manage it, he will do with it what he wants.' And I was constantly up above. And from up there I worked, leaving the instrument as it was because I knew that he would see to it.

Actually, it was very different at that time because I was not even aware of any resistance or any difficulty in the outer being; it was automatic, the work was done automatically. Later on, when I had to do both things – what he had been doing as well as what I was doing – it became rather complicated and I realized there were many ... what we could call 'gaps' – things which had to be worked out, transformed, set right before the total work could be done without hindrance. So then I began. And several times I thought how unfortunate it was that I had never studied or pursued certain ancient Indian disciplines. Because, for example, when Sri Aurobindo and I were working to bring down the supramental forces, a descent from the mental plane to the vital plane, he was always telling me that everything I did (when we 'meditated' together, when we worked) – all my movements, all my gestures, all my postures, all my reactions – was absolutely tantric, as if I had pursued a tantric discipline. But it was spontaneous, it did not correspond to any knowledge, any idea, any will, nothing, and I thought it was like that simply because, as He knew, naturally I followed.

Later on, when Sri Aurobindo left his body, I said to myself, 'If only I knew what he had known, it would be easier!' So when Swami and later X came, I thought, 'I am going to take advantage of this opportunity.' I had written to Swami that I was working on transforming the cells of the body and that I had noticed the work was going faster with X's influence. So it was understood that X would help when he came – that's how things began, and this idea has remained with X. But I have raced on – I don't wait. I've raced on, I've gone like wildfire. And now the situation is reversed. What I wanted to find out, I found out. I experienced what I wanted to experience, but he is still ... He is very kind, actually, he wants really to help me. So, when I identified with him the other day during our meditation, I realized that he wanted to give silence, control and perfect peace to the physical mind. My own 'trick,' if you will, is to have as little relationship with the physical mind as possible, to go up above and stay there – this (*Mother indicates her forehead*), silent, motionless, turned upwards, while That (*gesture above the head*) sees, acts, knows, decides – all is done from there. Only there can you feel at ease.

Along the way, I once went down into this physical mind for awhile to try to set it right, to organize it a little (it was done rather quickly, I didn't stay there long). So when I went inside X, I saw ... It was rather curious, for it's the opposite of the method we follow. In his material consciousness (physical and vital), he has trained himself to be impersonal, open, limitless, in communication with all the universal forces. In the physical mind, silence, immobility. But in the speculative mind, the one there at the very top of the head ... what an organization, phew! ... All the

tradition in its most superb organization, but such a ri-gi-dity! And it had a pretty quality of light, a silver blue – VERY pretty. Oh, it was very calm, wonderfully calm and quiet and still. But what a ceiling it had! – the outer form resembled rigid cubes. Everything inside was beautiful, but that ... There was a very large cube right at the top, I recall, bordered by a purple line, which is a line of power – all this was quite luminous. It looked like a pyramid; the smaller cubes formed a kind of base, the lower part of which faded into something cloudy, and then this passed imperceptibly downwards to a more material realm, or in other words, the physical mind. The cube on top was the largest and most luminous, and the least yielding – even inflexible, you could say. The others were somewhat less defined, and at the bottom it was very blurred. But up at the top! – that's where I wanted to go, right to the top.

When I got there, I felt a moment of anguish; my feeling was that nothing could be done. Not for him in particular, but universally, for all those in his category – it seemed *hopeless*.²⁰⁹ If that was perfection, then nothing more could be done. This lasted only a second, but it was painful. And then I tried ... that is, I wanted to bring my consciousness down into the highest cube – this eternal, universal and infinite consciousness which is the first and foremost expression of the manifestation – but ... nothing doing. It was impossible. I tried for several minutes and saw that it was absolutely impossible. So I had to make a curious movement (I couldn't get through it, it was impassable), I had to come back down into the so-called lower consciousness (not lower, actually – it was vast and impersonal), and from there I came out and regained ... my equilibrium. This is what gave me that splitting headache I told you about. I came out of there as if I were carrying the weight ... the weight of an irreducible absolute – it was dreadful. Unfortunately, I was unable to rest afterwards, and as people were waiting to see me, I had to talk – which is very tiring for me. And this produced a bubbling in my head, like a ... this dark blue light of power in matter was there, shot through with streaks of white and gold, and all this was flashing back and forth in my head, this way and that way – I thought I was going to have a stroke! (*Mother laughs*)

This lasted a good half hour before I could calm it down, make it quiet, quiet. And I saw that this came from the fact that he wanted to bring the Power down, to transmit the Power into the physical mind! But as soon as I'm put in contact with the Power, you understand, it makes everything explode! (*Mother laughs*) It felt exactly like my head was going to explode!

I felt better that night because I was concentrated, but my head was still hurting a little. Then the following day I said to myself, or rather I told him inwardly, ‘Whether you like it or not, I am bringing down what's up above; it is the only way I can feel comfortable!’ And I told you what happened – as soon as I sat down I was so surprised, for he didn't start doing what he had done the day before; I myself did the same thing, I ... participated, so to speak, in his will (so as to find out), but with the resolve to remain consciously in contact with the highest consciousness, as always, and to bring it down. And it came in a marvelous flood. He was quite happy, he did not protest! ... All the pain was gone, there was nothing left, it was perfect. Only towards the end of the meditation did he again want to start doing his little trick of enclosing my physical mind in this construction, but it didn't last – I watched all this from above.

And he isn't aware of this, actually, he isn't aware at all. If he were told, he would absolutely deny it – for him, it's an opening onto Infinity! ... But in fact, it's always like that, we are always shut in, each of us – each one is enclosed inside certain limits which he doesn't feel, for should he feel it, he would get out! Oh, I know this feeling very well, for when I was with Sri Aurobindo I was open in this way (*gesture towards the heights*), and I always had this feeling of ‘Yes, my child ...’ – He tolerated me the way I was and waited for it to change. That's truly how things are, you know. And now I feel my limits, which are the limits of the world as it is at present, but beyond that there's an unmanifested immensity, eternity and infinity – to which we are closed. It merely seeps in – it is not the great opening. What I am trying to bring about is the great opening. Only when it has opened wide will there really be the ... (how should I put it?) the irreducible thing, and

209Original English.

all the world's resistance, all its inertia, even its obscurity will be unable to swallow it up – the determining and transforming thing ... I don't know when it will come.

But this experience with X was really interesting. I learned many things that day, many things ... If you concentrate long enough on any one point, you discover the Infinite (and in his own experience he found the infinite), what could be called your own Infinite. But this is not what WE want, not this; what we want is the direct and integral contact between the manifested universe and the Infinite out of which this universe has emerged. So then it is no longer an individual or personal contact with the Infinite, it's a total contact. And Sri Aurobindo insists on this, he says that it's absolutely impossible to have the transformation (not the contact, but the supramental transformation) without becoming universalized – that is the first condition. You cannot become supramental before being universal. And to be universal means to accept everything, be everything, become everything – really to accept everything. And as for all those who are shut up in a system, even if it belongs to the highest regions of thought, it is not THAT.

But to each his destiny, to each his work, to each his realization, and to want to change someone's destiny or someone's realization is very wrong. For it simply throws him off balance – that's all it does.

But for us who want an integral realization, are all these mantras and this daily japa really a help, or do they also shut us in?

It gives discipline. It's an almost subconscious discipline of the character more than of thought.

Especially at the beginning, Sri Aurobindo used to shatter to pieces all moral ideas (you know, as in the *Aphorisms*, for example). He shattered all those things, he shattered them, really shattered them to pieces. So there's a whole group of *youngsters*²¹⁰ here who were brought up with this idea that 'we can do whatever we want, it doesn't matter in the least!' – that they need not bother about all those concepts of ordinary morality. I've had a hard time making them understand that this morality can be abandoned only for a higher one ... So, one has to be careful not to give them the Power too soon.

It's an almost physical discipline. Moreover, I have seen that the japa has an organizing effect on the subconscious, on the inconscient, on matter, on the body's cells – it takes time, but by persistently repeating it, in the long run it has an effect. It is the same principle as doing daily exercises on the piano, for example. You keep mechanically repeating them, and in the end your hands are filled with consciousness – it fills the body with consciousness.

I have a hard time making X understand that I have work to do when I'm with him. He doesn't understand that one can work.

Of course not! A disciplined work, which to us seems important, is to him basically an ignorance. What is true to such a person is a contemplative, ecstatic life – along with a sentiment of compassion and charity, so that nonetheless you spend a bit of your time helping out the poor brutes! But the true thing is ecstatic contemplation. As for those who are advanced and yet still attach some importance to work – it's irrational!

The only way I can make him understand that I have work to do is to tell him, 'Mother asked me to do it'; then he keeps quiet.

Yes, he doesn't dare say a thing ... He doesn't understand it very well. What funny ideas, eh! He must think I have funny ideas, but anyway ... In the end, he tells himself, 'Oh, it's just because she's born in France that she is still carrying this burden'!

210Original English.

It's quite funny.

Sri Aurobindo saw more clearly. He said – it was even the first thing he told the boys around him when I came in 1914 (he had only seen me once) – he told them that I, Mirra (he immediately called me by my first name), ‘was born free.’

And it's true, I know it, I knew it then. In other words, all this work that usually has to be done to become free was done beforehand, long ago – quite convenient!

He saw me the next day for half an hour. I sat down – it was on the verandah of the ‘Guest House’, I was sitting there on the verandah. There was a table in front of him, and Richard was on the other side facing him. They began talking. Myself, I was seated at his feet, very small, with the table just in front of me – it came to my forehead, which gave me a little protection ... I didn't say anything, I didn't think anything, try anything, want anything – I merely sat near him. When I stood up half an hour later, he had put silence in my head, that's all, without my even having asked him – perhaps even without his trying.

Oh, I had tried – for years I had tried to catch silence in my head ... I never succeeded. I could detach myself from it, but it would keep on turning ... But at that moment, all the mental constructions, all the mental, speculative structures ... none of it remained – a big hole.

And such a peaceful, such a luminous hole!

Afterwards, I kept very still so as not to disturb it. I didn't speak, above all I refrained from thinking and held it, held it tight against me – I said to myself, ‘make it last, make it last, make it last ...’

Later on, I heard Sri Aurobindo saying that there were two people here to whom he had done this and as soon as there was silence, they panicked: ‘My God, I've gone stupid!!’ And they threw it all overboard by starting to think again.

Once it was done, it was done. It was well-rooted.

For years, from 1912 to 1914, I did endless exercises, all kinds of things, even pranayama²¹¹ – if it would only shut up! Really, if it would only be quiet! ... I was able to go out (that wasn't difficult), but inside it kept turning.

This lasted about half an hour. I quietly remained there – I heard the noise of their conversation, but I wasn't listening. And then when I got up, I no longer knew anything, I no longer thought anything, I no longer had any mental construction – everything was gone, absolutely gone, blank! – as if I had just been born.

* * *

(soon afterwards)

I went to inaugurate the sugar factory²¹² the other day. I had an amusing experience.

From the material point of view, it's almost hellish – the noise, the smell – a nauseating smell. I had to apply all my will not to be physically disturbed – they made me climb up narrow little stairs, go down, climb back up, look into deep pits. At some places there weren't even guardrails, so I had really to control myself.

I was watching all this sugar cane – piles of sugar cane – which is thrown into the machine, and then it travels along and falls down to be crushed, crushed, and crushed some more. And then it comes back up to be distilled. And then I saw ... all this is living when it's thrown in, you see, it's

211Pranayama: breathing exercises.

212New Horizon Sugar Mills, which belongs to a disciple. The inauguration was on September 15.

full of its vital force, for it has just been cut. As a result, the vital force is suddenly hurled out of the substance with an extreme violence – the vital force comes out ... the English word *angry* is quite expressive of what I mean – like a snarling dog. *An angry force.*²¹³

So I saw this – I saw it moving about. And it kept coming and coming and coming, accumulating, piling up (they work 24 hours a day, six days a week – only on the seventh do they rest). So I thought that this angry force must have some effect on the people – who knows, maybe this is what creates accidents. For I could see that once the sugar cane was fully crushed and had gone back up the chute, this force that had been beaten out was right there. And this worried me a little; I thought that there must be a certain danger in doing such a thing! ... What saves them is their ignorance and their insensitivity. But Indians are never entirely insensitive in the way Westerners are – they are much more open in their subconscious.

I didn't speak of it to anyone, but it caused me some concern. And just the next day the machine broke down! When I was informed, immediately I thought ... It was then repaired, and again it broke down – three times. Then the following night, just before ten o'clock ... I should mention that during the day I had thought, 'But why not attract these forces to our side, take them and satisfy them, give them some peace and joy and use them?' I thought about it, concentrated a little, but then I didn't bother any further. At ten o'clock that evening, they came upon me – in a flood! They kept coming and coming. And I was busy with them the whole time. They were not ugly (not so luminous either!), they were wholesome, straightforward – honest forces. So I worked on them. This began exactly at 9:30, and for one hour I was busy working. After an hour, I'd had enough: 'Listen, this is quite fine, you're very nice, but I can't spend all my time like this! We shall see what to do later' – for it absorbed my whole consciousness. They kept coming and coming (you understand what that means to a body?!). So at 10:30 I told them, 'Listen, my little ones, be quiet now, that's enough for today ...' At 10:30, the machine broke down!

I found out, of course, because they log everything at the factory, so when they came to inform me of the breakdown the next morning, I asked them what time it had happened – exactly 10:30.

After that, I made a kind of pact with them – the trouble, you see, is that there are constantly new ones. If only they were the same! They are constantly coming in new floods, so there was the need of a permanent formation over there. I've tried to make this permanent formation, to take and absorb them, to calm them down and scatter them a little so they don't accumulate in one spot, which in the end could be dangerous.

I found this quite amusing.

The most recent incident took place a few days ago, for there was a general excitement in the factory due to the expected visit of a government minister during the day. That afternoon, exactly at half past three, I felt that I had to make a little concentration. So I paid attention and saw poor L²¹⁴ praying to me. He was praying, praying, calling me – such a strong call that it pulled me. I was having my bath (you know what happens when I'm very strongly pulled – I'm stopped right in the very midst of a gesture, then the consciousness goes wandering off! And I can't do anything, it stops me dead. That's exactly what happened to me in the bathroom). When I saw what was happening, I straightened things out. Then they must have had their ceremony, for suddenly I felt, 'Ah, now it has calmed down, it's all right.' And I went on to something else.

The next day, L came to see me. He told me that shortly before 3:30, the machine had stopped once again, but this time it was quickly set right; they found out right away what had to be done. And then he told me that at 3:45 he had started praying to me that all should go well. 'Oh, I know!' I said.

213Original English.

214The disciple who manages the sugar factory.

Things can be done in this way. In truth, a lot can be done – it's man's ignorance that gets him in trouble.



September 24, 1960

Imagine! I thought I had lost my hearing. But I just realized that when I don't hear ... it's because I'm elsewhere.

Just now, I concentrated a little and tuned into your voice. And not one word escaped me! It became clear, absolutely clear.

Normally I'm not there. And some people I hear, others I don't hear. But I hadn't imagined that it depended on this – I thought I had lost my hearing. But just now I stopped everything, absolutely everything, I concentrated and tuned in – it became so clear!

Basically, it must be the same for my eyes. Sometimes I see wonderfully, and sometimes it's blurred. It must be for the same reason ... I probably have to learn to concentrate!

Yes, laugh if you want – what I mean is concentrate on what I'm doing. Not concentrate within ... Precisely, I'm rather too concentrated!



October 2, 1960

10.2.60

This wonderful world of
delight waiting at our
gates for our call
to come down upon
earth.²¹⁵

²¹⁵Text written by Mother in French and English; it became the New Year's Message for 1961.

* * *

This world of Delight above us is waiting – not for us to be ready but for us to accept, for us to condescend to receive it!

This is what I am looking at in this photograph.²¹⁶

In fact, this is what I am pulling down.

* * *

My nights contain so many things that I don't always do the necessary work to remember – that takes up a lot of time. Sometimes I get up during the night and sit there recalling precisely everything that has already happened, but that sometimes takes half an hour! – and as urgent work still calls, I don't take the time to remember and it gets erased. But then, you know, with all that's coming you could write volumes!

From a documentary standpoint, my nights are getting quite interesting. In the *Yoga of Self-Perfection*, Sri Aurobindo describes precisely this state you reach in which all things assume meaning and a quality of inner significance, clarification of various points, and help. From this point of view, my nights have become extraordinary. I see infinitely more things than I saw before. Before, it was very limited to a personal contact with people. Now ... In my nights, each thing and each person has the appearance, the gesture, the word or the action that describes EXACTLY his condition. It's becoming quite interesting.

Of course, I much prefer being in my great currents of force – from a personal standpoint, such immensity of action is much more interesting. But these documentary things are also valuable. It is so tremendously different from the dreams and even the vi. signs you have when you enter certain representative realms of the mind (which is what I used to do). It is so different, it has another content, another life altogether: it carries its light, its understanding, its explanation within itself – you look, and everything is explained.

It always gives me the feeling that I am shrinking a little, but it's interesting. And it's useful, for I am constantly moving about and doing things with people; it indicates to me what I have to say and do with each one. It's useful. But all the same, I miss the fullness and joy of the more impersonal Movement of forces.

Before going to bed, sometimes I say to myself, 'I will do what is necessary to spend my night in these great currents of force' (because there is a way to do it). And then I think, 'Oh, what an egotist you are, my girl!' So sometimes it happens, sometimes it doesn't – when there's something important to do, it doesn't happen. But all I have to do is concentrate in a certain way before going to sleep to spend my whole night in these ... very far from here, very far ... I can't say very far from the earth, for surely it's in an intermediate zone between the forces from above and the earth's atmosphere. That's what it mainly is, in any case. It's a great universal current as well, but mainly it's what descends and comes onto the earth, and it is permeating the earth's atmosphere all the time, all the time, and it comes with this wide, overall vision – it makes for wonderful nights ... I no longer bother about people at all – at least not as such, but in a more impersonal way.

(silence)

I have been pestered my whole life by ... something similar to the sense of duty without its stupidity. Sri Aurobindo had told me that it was a 'censor,' that I had with me a 'considerable' one!

216A photograph of Mother that accompanied the 1961 New Year's Message.

It was constantly, constantly telling me, ‘No, it’s not like that, it’s like this ... Oh, no! It’s wrong to do that; be careful, don’t be egotistical; be careful – do this, do that.’ He was right, but I sent it away long ago – or rather, Sri Aurobindo sent it away. But there remains the habit ... of not doing what I like. Rather, of doing what MUST be done, and whether it’s pleasant or not makes no difference.

This, too, Sri Aurobindo had explained to me. I used to tell him, ‘Yes, you always speak of life’s “delight,” life for the sake of its delight.’ But as soon as I had the notion, as soon as I was put in the presence of the Supreme, it was: ‘For You – exclusively what You want. You are the sole, the unique and exclusive reason for being.’ And that has remained, and this movement is so strong that even when ... you see, now I have ecstasy and ananda in abundance – everything comes, everything. But even then, even when that is there, something in me always turns towards the Supreme and says, ‘Does this TRULY serve You? Is it what You expect of me, what You want from me?’

This has protected me from all seeking for pleasure in life. It was a wonderful protection, because pleasure always seemed so futile to me – yes, futile; for the sake of your personal satisfaction. Later, I even understood how foolish it is, for you can never be satisfied – though when you’re small you don’t yet know that. I never liked it: ‘But is it really useful, does it serve some purpose?’ And I still have this attitude in regard to my nights. I have this widening of the consciousness, this impersonalization, this wonderful joy of being above ... all that. But at the same time I also have, ‘I’m here in this body, on earth, to do something – I mustn’t forget it. And this is what I have to do.’ But probably I’m wrong! ...

I’m waiting for the Lord to tell me clearly.

But when I say that, I always see Him smiling – a smile ... it’s all very good to smile, but ... it encourages you more than it cures you!



October 2, 1960

(Letter to Mother from Satprem)

*Pondicherry, October 2, 1960
Sunday evening*

Sweet Mother,

As I did not find the translation of the Message fully satisfying, I have continued pondering over it. Then another possibility, which MAY be better, presented itself. Here it is:

Ce monde merveilleux de félicité,
à nos portes,
qui attend notre appel

pour descendre sur la terre.²¹⁷

In this way we keep the word *appel* [call], which is strong. All I did was change the relative pronoun (at first you had translated it as *qui, à nos portes, attend notre appel...*²¹⁸).

I don't know. Perhaps it is more incisive this way.

Your child, with love.

Signed: Satprem

(*Mother's reply*)

Monday morning

Yes, my dear little one, it is much better like that – it becomes poetry.²¹⁹

With all my tender affection.

Signed: Mother



October 8, 1960

There are moments while reading the *Synthesis of Yoga* when I feel so clearly why he put this particular word in that particular place, and why it could not have been otherwise – that's what makes the translation difficult.

For the placement of words is not the same in English and in French. In English, for example, the place an adverb occupies is of major importance for the precise meaning. In French also, but generally it's not the same! If at least it were exactly the opposite of English it would be easier, but it's not exactly the opposite. It's the same thing for the word order in a series of modifiers or any string of words; usually in English, for example, the most important word comes first and the least important last. In French, it's usually the opposite – but it doesn't always work!

The spirit of the two languages is not the same. Something always escapes. This must surely be why 'revelations' (as Sri Aurobindo calls them) sometimes come to me in one language and

217'This wonderful world of delight,
at our gates,
waiting for our call
to come down upon earth.'

218'waiting at our gates for our call ...'

219A somewhat mocking'! is missing. This note was accompanied by a flower: 'Aristocracy of Beauty'.

sometimes in the other. And it does not depend on the state of consciousness I'm in, it depends on what has to be said.

And the revelations would probably be more exact if we had a more perfect language. Our language is poor.

Sanskrit is better. Sanskrit is a much fuller and subtler language, so it's probably much better. But these modern languages are so artificial (by this, I mean superficial, intellectual); they cut things up into little pieces and remove the light behind.

I also read *On the Veda* where Sri Aurobindo speaks of the difference between the modern mind and the ancient mind; and it's quite obvious, especially from the linguistic point of view. Sanskrit was certainly much more fluid, a better instrument for a more ... global, more comprehensive light, a light containing more things within itself.

In these modern languages, it's as if things are passed through a sieve and broken up into separate little bits, so then you have all the work of putting them back together. And something is always lost.

But I even doubt that the modern mind, built as it now is, would be able to know Sanskrit in this way. I think they are cutting up Sanskrit as well, out of habit.

We need a new language.

We need to make a new language.

Not some kind of esperanto! – but sounds springing straight from above.

The SOUND must be captured. There must be one sound at the origin of all language ... And then, to capture it and project it. To make it vibrate ... because it doesn't vibrate in the same way here as it does above.

That would be an interesting work.

The words must have a power – an expressive power. Yes, they should carry the meaning in themselves!



October 11, 1960

I'm just now finishing the *Yoga of Self-Perfection* ... When we see what human life is and, even in the best of cases, what it represents in the way of imbecility, stupidity, narrowness, meanness (not to mention ignorance because that is too flagrant) ... and even those who believe themselves to have generous heart, for example, or liberal ideas, a desire to do good! ... Each time the consciousness orients itself in one direction to attain some result, everything that was in existence (not just one's personal existence, but this sort of collectivity of existences that each being represents), everything that is contrary to this effort immediately presents itself in its crudest light.

It happened this morning while I was walking back and forth in my room. I had finished my japa ... I had to stop and hold my head in my hands to keep from bursting into tears. 'No, it is too dreadful,' I said to myself; 'and to think that we want Perfection!'

Then naturally there came as a consolation: only because the consciousness is getting closer to THE REAL THING can it see all this wretchedness, and the contrast alone makes these things appear so mean.

And it's true, those things I saw this morning which seemed so ... above all stupid and ugly (I've never had a sense of morality at any time in my life, thank God! But stupid and ugly things have always seemed ... I've always done my best to distance myself from them, even when I was very small). And now I see that these things which seem not only ridiculous but, well, almost shameful were considered, as I recall, remarkably noble earlier on and they represented an exceptionally lofty attitude in life – the very same things. So then I understood that it's quite simply a question of proportion.

And that's how the world is – things which now seem totally unacceptable to us, things we CANNOT tolerate, were quite all right in the past.

The day before yesterday, I spent the whole night looking on. I had read the passage by Sri Aurobindo in *The Synthesis* on 'supramental time' (wherein past, present and future coexist in a global consciousness). While you're in it, it's marvelous! You understand things perfectly. But when you're not in it ... Above all, there's this problem of how to keep the force of one's aspiration, the power of progress, this power which seems so inevitable – so inevitable if existence (let's simply take terrestrial existence) is to mean anything and its presence to be justified. (This ascending movement towards a progressive 'better' that will be eternally better) – How is this to be kept when you have the total vision ... this vision in which everything coexists. At that moment, the other becomes something like a game, an amusement, if you will. (Not everyone finds it amusing!) And when you contain all that, why allow yourself the pleasure of succession? ... Is this pleasure of succession, of seeing things one after the other, equal to this intensity of the will for progress? ... Words are foolish!

The effort to see and to understand this gripped me all night. And when I woke up this morning, I thanked the Lord; I said to Him, 'Obviously, if You were to keep me totally in that consciousness, I could no longer ... I could no longer do my work!' How could I do my work? For I can only say something to people when I feel it or see it, when I see that it's what must be said, but if I am simultaneously in a consciousness in which I'm aware of everything that has led to that situation, everything that is going to happen, everything I'm going to say, everything the other's going to feel – then how could I do it!

There are still many hundreds of years to go before it becomes entirely what Sri Aurobindo describes – there's no hurry!

The mental silence Sri Aurobindo gave you in 1914, about which you were speaking the other day ...

It has never left. I have always kept it. Like a smooth white surface turned upwards. And at any moment at all ... You see, we speak like a machine, but there nothing moves; at any moment at all it can turn towards the heights. It's ALWAYS turned like that, but we can become aware of it being like that. Then, if we listen, we can hear what comes from above. My active consciousness, which was here (*Mother points to her forehead*), has settled above, and it has never again moved from there.

I told this to X – or rather had someone tell him – to see his reaction. And I realized that he did not understand in the least! Once Amrita asked him how he himself SAW and KNEW things. So he tried to explain; he told Amrita that he had to pull his consciousness upwards by a gradual effort, to go beyond the heart, beyond the throat center ... to pull it right up here (*the top of the head*), and once there, you're divine, you know! All of a sudden, I understood that when I said it was there, above the head, it must have seemed absolutely impossible to him! For him, it's the *crown of the head*²²⁰ (what they call the thousand-petalled lotus), just at the top of the head, whereas in my experience it opens, it rises and you go above, and then you settle there ... For a number of years it even changed my [physical] vision – it was as if I were looking at things from above. It returns from time to time, too, as if suddenly I were seeing from above instead of from here, at eye level.

But the faculty of forming thoughts is now there, up above; it's no longer here (*Mother points to her forehead*). And that's contrary to their teachings.

The tantrics recognize seven chakras,²²¹ I believe. Theon said he knew of more, specifically two below the body and three above. That is my experience as well – I know of twelve chakras. And really, the contact with the Divine Consciousness is there (*Mother motions above the head*), not here (*at the top of the head*). One must surge up above.

Doing japa seems to exert a pressure on my physical consciousness, which goes on turning! How can I silence it? As soon as my concentration is not absolute, the physical mind starts up – it grabs at anything, anything at all, any word, fact or event that comes along, and it starts turning, turning. If you stop it, if you put some pressure on it, then it springs back up two minutes later ... And there is no inner consent at all. It chews on words, it chews on ideas or feelings – interminably. What should I do?

Yes, it's the physical mind. The japa is made precisely to control the physical mind.

I myself use it for a very special reason, because ... You see, I invoke (the words are a bit strange) ... the Lord of Tomorrow. Not the unmanifest Lord, but the Lord as he will manifest 'tomorrow,' or in Sri Aurobindo's words, the divine manifestation in its supramental form.

So the first sound of my mantra is the call to that, the evocation. With the second sound, the body's cells make their' surrender,' they give themselves. And with the third sound comes the identification of this [the body] with That, which produces the divine life. These are my three sounds.

And in the beginning, during the first months that I was doing the japa, I felt them ... I had an almost detailed awareness of these myriads of cells opening to this vibration; the vibration of the first sound is an absolutely special vibration (you see, above, there is the light and all that, but beyond this light there is the original vibration), and this vibration was entering into all the cells and was reproduced in them. It went on for months in this way.

Even now, when something or other is not all right, I have only to reproduce the thing with the

220Original English.

221Chakra: center of consciousness. 1) The crown of the head (*sahasradala*), 2) between the eyebrows (*ajna*), 3) the throat (*vishuddha*), 4) the heart (*anahata*) 5) the navel (*manipura*), 6) the abdomen (*svadhishtana*), 7) the base of the spine (*muladhara*).

same type of concentration as at the beginning ... for, when I say the japa, the sound and the words together – the way the words are understood, the feel of the words – create a certain totality. I have to reproduce that. And the way it's repeated is evolving all the time. The words are the same, however, the original sound is the same, but it's all constantly evolving towards a more comprehensive realization and a more and more complete STATE. So when I want to obtain a certain result, I reproduce a certain type of this state. For example, if something in the body is not functioning right (it can't really be called an illness, but when something's out of order), or if I wish to do some specific work on a specific person for a specific reason, then I go back to a certain state of repetition of my mantra, which acts directly on the body's cells. And then the same phenomenon is reproduced – exactly the same extraordinary vibration which I recognized when the supramental world descended. It comes in and vibrates like a pulsation in the cells.

But as I told you, now my japa is different. It is as if I were taking the whole world to lift it up; no longer is it a concentration on the body, but rather a taking of the whole world – the entire world – sometimes in its details, sometimes as a whole, but constantly, constantly – to establish the Contact (*with the supramental world*).

But what you are speaking of, this sort of sound-mill, this milling of words interminably repeating the same thing, I've suddenly caught it two or three times (not very often and with long intervals). It has always seemed fantastic to me! How is it stopped? ... Always in the same way. It's something that takes place outside, actually; it's not inside – it's outside, on the surface, generally somewhere here (*Mother indicates the temples*), and the method is to draw your consciousness up above, to go there and remain there – white. Always this whiteness, white like a sheet of paper, flat like a plate of glass. An absolutely flat and white and motionless surface – white! White like luminous milk, turned upwards. Not transparent: white.

When this mill starts turning – usually it comes from this side (*Mother indicates the right side of the head*) – it takes hold of any sound or any word at all, and then it starts turning, harping on the same thing. This has happened to me a dozen times perhaps, but it doesn't come from me; it comes from outside, from someone or something or some particular work. So then you take it – as if you were picking it up with pincers, and then ... (*She lifts it upwards*), then I hold it there, in this motionless white – no need to keep it there for long!

Aren't you aware of this thing up above, this white plate at the crown of the head? It's what receives intuitions. It's just like a photographic plate, and it's not even active – things pass right through it without our even realizing it. And then if you concentrate just a little, everything stops, everything stops.

A few days ago, I recall, I wanted to know something that was going to happen. I thought that with the consciousness of supramental time, I could find out ... 'I MUST find out what's going to happen. What's going to happen?' – No answer. So I concentrated on it, which is what I usually do, I stopped everything and looked from above – total silence. Nothing. No answer. And I felt a slight impatience: 'But why can't I know?!' And what came was the equivalent of (I'm translating it in words), 'It's none of your business!!'

So I understand more and more. Everything – this whole organization, this whole aggregate, all these cells and nerves and sensors – are all meant uniquely for the work, they have no other purpose than the work; every foolish act that is done is for the work; every stupidity that is thought is for the work; you are made the way you are because only in that way can you do the work – and it's none of your business to seek to be somewhere else. That's my conclusion. 'Very well, as You wish, may Your will be done!' – No, not 'be done'; it IS done. As You wish, exactly as You wish!

And in the end, it's quite fun.

* * *

(Concerning an old 'Question and Answer' of July 4, 1956 at the Playground in which Mother speaks of her first realization of the Divine, in Paris)

Just as the shooting star flashed past, there sprang from my consciousness: 'To realize the divine union, for my body!' And before twelve months were out, it was done.

I remember, it was at the door of our studio²²² in Paris. I can still see it. That's how I always remember – the picture simply comes to me.

I am just finishing *The Synthesis of Yoga*, and what Sri Aurobindo says is exactly what has happened to me throughout my life. And he explains how you can still make mistakes as long as you are not supramentalized. Sri Aurobindo describes all the ways by which images are sent to you – and they are not always images or reflections of the truth of things past, present or future; there are also all the images that come from human mental formations and all the various things that want to be considered. It is very, very interesting. And interestingly enough, in these few pages I have found a description of the work I have spent my whole life doing, trying to SIFT out all we see.

I can only be sure of something once a certain type of picture comes, and then the whole world could tell me, 'But things didn't happen like that'; I would reply, 'Sorry, but I see it.' And that type of picture is certain, for I have studied it, I have studied their differences in quality and the texture of the pictures. It is very interesting.

* * *

Basically, I see more and more that the Supreme Consciousness makes use of ANYTHING AT ALL when the time comes.

In these *Questions and Answers*, for example, you had wanted to edit out the words 'Sweet Mother' since people from the West might not understand. But then, we have just now received a letter from someone who suddenly had a very beautiful experience when he came across those words, 'Sweet Mother.' He saw, he suddenly felt this maternal presence of love and compassion watching over the world. The moment had come and, precisely, it did its work. It's very interesting.

Mentally we say, 'Oh, that can't go.' And even I am often inclined to say, 'Don't publish this, don't speak of something or other.' Then I realize how silly it is! There is something that uses everything. Even what may seem useless to us – or perhaps worse than useless, harmful – might be just the thing to give someone the right shock.



October 15, 1960

I see Z every day, yet he asked me, 'Why do you do nothing for me?'!! 'Each time you come here,' I told him, 'I am NECESSARILY doing something for you, it cannot be otherwise!' But since it's

just a part of his work,²²³ it doesn't count!

Of course, I don't say, 'All right, now let's meditate! ...' So on his birthday I'll have to sit down and tell him, 'Now we are going to meditate' – that way he'll feel sure. What childishness!

It's so funny – the thing in itself doesn't exist for people. What's important to them is their attitude towards the thing, what they think of it. How odd!

Each thing carries within itself its own truth – its absolute truth, so luminous and so clear. And if you are in contact with THAT, then everything falls into place so wonderfully; but men are NOT in contact with that, they are always in contact through their thought: what they think of something, what they feel about something, the meaning they attach to it (or sometimes it's worse) – but the highest they go is always the thought they have of it. That's what creates all this mixture and all this disorder – things in themselves are very good, and then they get confused.



October 19, 1960

(The day before 'Kali Puja,' the ritual festival devoted each year in India to the goddess Kali, the warrior aspect of the universal Mother)

She has already been here for two days and ... Oh, yesterday especially, she was so ... in such a mood! – like a warrior. I said to her, 'But why not change them through ... through an excess of love?'

So then she answered (I remember how she put it), 'First a good punch in the chest (she didn't say 'in the nose'!), a good punch in the chest, and then when they're down, gasping for air, they're ready.'

That's one opinion!

* * *

(Concerning a tantric)

Those people deny the reality of all physical needs.

It's quite all right when you've come TO THE END, when you have totally mastered the body by means of the spiritual consciousness. But until then, I don't agree – I do not at all agree.

It's the same as when X tells people, 'I am feeding you, so eat!' And he serves you ten times more than you can put in. If you tell him, 'My stomach can't digest it,' he answers that this is nonsense: 'Eat, and you will see!' And in fact, up above – that is, once you've mastered it – it's perfectly true. But we aren't there yet, far from it! He himself is sick all the time.

Then he would answer, 'Everyone is sick.' – But that's no reason.

223Z's work involved seeing Mother everyday to watch over her health and her food.

It's very well to say, 'If you live in the Spirit, it's not the same.' That's quite true, but ... MUCH later. For the last two years, I myself have been learning this, and I see how difficult it is – one mustn't boast. And to say, 'Oh, it's all the same to me,' is a way of boasting. It SHOULD NOT be all the same to you. This body is not meant for us – it wasn't for us that it was given, it's for the Work, so consequently it must be in working order.

*That's what annoys me sometimes. Why not have this mastery? We SHOULD be masters of it.
With consciousness, we should be able to be the masters of our bodies.*

Yes, this was precisely the extraordinary thing Sri Aurobindo had. He made no effort ... But then he didn't use it on himself!

But for humans, this is something UNTHINKABLE.

He wanted to go.

You see, he had decided to go. But he didn't want me to know that he was doing it deliberately; he knew that if for a single moment I knew he was doing it deliberately, I would have reacted with such a violence that he would not have been able to leave!

And he did this ... he bore it all as if it were some unconsciousness, an ordinary illness, simply to keep me from knowing – and he left at the very moment he had to leave. But ...

And I couldn't even imagine he was gone once he had gone, just there, in front of me – it seemed so far away ... And then afterwards, when he came out of his body and entered into mine, I understood it all ... It's fantastic.

Fantastic.

It's ... it's absolutely superhuman. There's not one human being capable of doing such a thing. And what ... what a mastery of his body – absolute, absolute!

And when it came to others ... he could remove an illness like that (*gesture, as if Mother were calmly extracting an illness from the body with her fingertips*). That happened to you once, didn't it? You said that I had done this for you – but it wasn't me; he was the one who did it ... He could give you peace in the mind in the same way (*Mother brushes her hand across her forehead*). You see, his actions were absolutely ... On others, it had all the characteristics of a total mastery ... Absolutely superhuman.

One day, he'll tell you all this himself.²²⁴

Now I understand it.

It's tre-men-dous.

I would like very much to ask you something ... Why did he have to go?

Ah! That can't be told.

(long silence)

I can tell you why, but in a purely superficial way ... Because for him to do IMMEDIATELY – without leaving his body, that is – what he had to do, well ...

(silence)

We can put it this way: the world was not ready. But to tell you the truth, it was the totality of things around him that was not ready. So when he SAW this (I only understood this afterwards), he saw that it would go much faster if he were not there.

²²⁴He came to tell us this fifteen years later, as a matter of fact, while we were writing *The Divine Materialism*.

And he was ABSOLUTELY right, it was true.

Once I saw that, I accepted. When I saw it, when he made me understand, I accepted; otherwise ...

There was a difficult period.

(silence)

It wasn't long, but it was difficult.

When he left, I said twelve days, twelve days.²²⁵ And truly, I gave it twelve days, twelve days to see if the entire Work ... Outwardly, I said, 'After twelve days I will tell you if the Ashram (the Ashram was nothing but a symbol, of course), if the Ashram will continue or if it is finished.'

And later (I don't know – it didn't take twelve days; I said that on December 9, and on the 12th it was all decided – seen, clear and understood), on the 12th, I saw people, I saw a few people. However, we began all the activities again only after 12 days from December 5. But it was decided on the 12th.

Everything was left hanging until the moment he made me understand the COMPLETE thing, in its entirety ... But that's for later on.

He himself will tell you, it's true – later on.



October 22, 1960

(Pavitra shows Mother a photograph of the house in which She lived in Paris, rue du Val de Grâce)

Well, well! The house on Val de Grâce! It looks inhabited, the windows have curtains in them. I lived there – a small house, really very small, with a bedroom upstairs.

Here, this is the kitchen; here is the living room, this is the studio. And then behind the kitchen there was a small room that I used as the dining room, and it opened onto a courtyard. Between the dining room and the kitchen there was a bathroom and a small hallway. The kitchen is here; you went up three steps and then there was this small hallway with the stairs leading up to the bedroom. Next to the bedroom was a bathroom about as big as a thimble.

It is part of a huge house. There's a seven-story apartment building on each side, and the street is here.

It wasn't very big. The studio was rather large – a beautiful room ... That's where I received Madame David-Neel – we saw each other nearly every evening.

There was a considerable library in the studio; one whole end was given over to the library – more than two thousand books belonging to my brother. There were even the complete works of several classical writers. And I had my entire collection of the *Revue Cosmique*, and my post card

²²⁵Mother stopped all her activities for twelve days from December 5, 1950, the day Sri Aurobindo departed.

collection (it was down below) – mainly post cards of Algeria, Tlemcen, nearly 200 of them. But there were five years of the *Revue Cosmique*. And written in such a French! How funny it was!

Theon's wife dictated it in English while she was in trance. Another English lady who was there claimed to know French like a Frenchman. ‘Myself, I never use a dictionary,’ she would say, ‘I don't need a dictionary.’ But then she would turn out such translations! She made all the classic mistakes of English words that mustn't be translated like that. Then it was sent to me in Paris for correcting. It was literally impossible.

There was this Themanlys, my brother's schoolmate; he wrote books, but he was lazy-minded and didn't want to work! So he had passed that job on to me. But it was impossible, you couldn't do a thing with it. And what words! Theon would invent words for the subtle organs, the inner senses; he had found a word for each thing – a frightful barbarism! And I took care of everything: I found the printer, corrected the proofs – all the work for a long time.

They were stories, narratives, an entire initiation in the form of stories. There was a lot in it, really a lot. She knew many things. But it was presented in such a way that it was unreadable.

I also wrote one or two things, experiences I had noted down; they were rather interesting, which is why I'd like to get them back. I had described some of my visions to Madame Theon, and then she explained their meaning to me. So I would narrate the vision and give its explanation. That was readable and interesting, because there was some symbolism.

(*Pavitra:*) What was this ‘Chronicle of Ki’?

It wasn't ‘Ki’ but ‘Chi,’ for he was the founder of China! – those things were fantastic! The story was almost childish, but there was a whole world of knowledge in it. Madame Theon was an extraordinary occultist. That woman had incredible faculties, incredible.

She was a small woman, fat, almost flabby – she gave you the feeling that if you leaned against her, it would melt! Once, I remember ... I was there in Tlemcen with Andre's father, who had come to join us – a painter, an artist. Theon was wearing a dark purple robe. Theon said to him, ‘This robe is purple.’ ‘No, it's not purple,’ the other answered, ‘it's violet.’ Theon went rigid: ‘When I say purple, it's purple!’ And they started arguing over this foolishness. Suddenly there flashed from my head, ‘No, this is too ridiculous!’ – I didn't say a word, but it went out from my head (I even saw the flash), and then Madame Theon got up and came over to me, stood behind me (neither of us uttered a word – the other two were staring at each other like two angry cocks), then she laid my head against her breast – absolutely the feeling of sinking into eiderdown!

And never in my life, never, had I felt such peace – it was absolutely luminous and soft ... a peace, such a soft, tender, luminous peace. After a moment, she bent down and whispered in my ear, ‘One must never question one's master!’ It wasn't I who was questioning!

She was a wonderful woman, wonderful. But as for him ... well ...

It's funny ... I don't know why, but a short while ago this house on Val de Grâce suddenly came to me ... (to *Pavitra*) When did this photograph come?

Yesterday.

Suddenly the house had come into the atmosphere. ‘Well, well,’ I said to myself; ‘someone is thinking about that house.’

* * *

I entered into your sleep last night. I saw you and told you certain things, I even gave you some explanations: ‘You see, you must do it this way ... you must go like this ...’ I also said, ‘One day, we shall meditate together.’ But more precisely, you had once spoken to me about the problem in

your physical mind – that it keeps on turning interminably – and you had told me that it happens during your japa. So last night I told you, ‘I would like you to do your japa for a few minutes with me one day so that I may see what goes on inside you, in your physical mind.’

But I wasn’t speaking to you with words ... Everything I see at night has a special color and a special vibration. It’s strange, but it looks sketched ... When I said that to you, for example, there was a kind of *patch*,²²⁶ a white patch, as I recall – white, exactly like a piece of white paper – a patch with a pink border around it, then this same blue light I keep telling you about – deep blue – encircling the rest, as it were. And beyond that, it was swarming – a swarming of black and dark gray vibrations ... in a terrible agitation. When I saw this, I said to you, ‘You must repeat your mantra once in my presence so that I may see if there is anything I can do about this swarming.’ And then – I don’t know why – you objected, and this objection was red, like a tongue of fire lashing out from the white, like this (*Mother draws an arabesque*). So I said, ‘No, don’t worry, it doesn’t matter, I won’t disturb a thing’²²⁷! (*Mother laughs mischievously*)

All this took place in a realm which is constantly active, everywhere; it is like a permanent mental transcription of everything that physically takes place ... They aren’t actually thoughts; when I see this, I don’t really get the impression of thinking, but it’s a transcription ... it’s the result of thoughts on a certain mental atmosphere which records things.

And I see it all the time now. If someone is speaking or if I’m doing something, I see the two things at the same time – I see the physical thing, his words or my action, and then this colored, luminous transcription at the same time. The two things are superimposed. For example, when someone speaks to me, it gets translated into some kind of picture, a play of light or color (which is not always so luminous!) – this is why most of the time, in fact, I don’t even know what has been said to me. I recall the first time this phenomenon happened, I said to myself, ‘Ah, so that’s what these modern artists see!’ Only, as they themselves aren’t very coherent, what they see is not very coherent either!

And that’s how it works – it is translated by patches and moving forms, which is how it gets registered in the earth’s memory. So when things from this realm enter into people’s active consciousness, they get translated into each one’s language and the words and thoughts that each one is accustomed to – because that doesn’t belong to any language or to any idea: it is the exact IMPRINT of what is happening.

I am constantly seeing this now.

And it is here, too, that I see the result of this confusion and excitement in the Ashram – it jumps, jumps, jumps about. It keeps jumping on the same spot. There are machines like that – constantly shaking; it’s exasperating.

* * *

For some time now I’ve been experiencing a precise moment during my japa when something takes hold of me and I have all the difficulty in the world to keep from entering into trance. Yet I remain standing. Usually I’m walking, but some things I say while leaning up against the window – not a very good place to go into trance! And it grabs me exactly at the same place each time.

Yesterday, I suddenly saw a huge living head of blue light – this blue light which is the force, the powerful force in material Nature (this is the light the tantras use). The head was made entirely of this light, and it wore a sort of tiara – a big head, so big (*Mother indicates the length of her forearm*); its eyes weren’t closed, but rather lowered, like this. The immobility of eternity, absolutely – the repose, the immobility of eternity. A magnificent head, quite similar to the way the

226Original English.

227Traditionally, one’s mantra is never to be repeated before anyone except the guru.

gods here are represented, but even better; something between certain heads of the Buddha and ... (these heads most probably come to the artists). Everything else was lost in a kind of cloud.

I felt that this kind of ... yes, immobility came from there: everything stops, absolutely everything stops. Silence, immobility ... truly, you enter into eternity. – I told him it wasn't time!

But I tried to understand what he wanted ... It's been difficult here in the Ashram for some time – everyone is seized with a sort of frenzy, a weary restlessness. They are all writing to me, they all want to see me. It makes for such an atmosphere ... I react as well as I can, but I'm not able to pass this on to them to keep them quiet (the more tired and weary you are, the more calm you ought to remain – certainly not get excited, that's dreadful!). So I understood: this head had come to tell me, 'This is what you must give them.'

But if I were to pass that on to them, they'd all think they were becoming rattle-brained, that they were losing their faculties, that their energy was spent. For they only feel energy when they spend it. They are incapable of feeling energy in immobility – they have to be stirring about, they have to be spending it. Or else, it has to be pounded into them.

I looked at this problem yesterday; it occupied me for much of the day. And I'm sure this head came to give me the solution. For me, it's very easy – at once ... three seconds, and everything stops, everything. But the others are stubborn! And yet I'm positive, I'm positive, I tell them, 'But relax; why are you on pins and needles like that? Relax! It's the only way to overcome your fatigue.' But they immediately start feeling that they'll lose their faculties and become inert – the opposite of life!

And this is surely what oriented my night, for I started my night looking at this problem: How can I make them accept this? For neither should they fall into the other extreme and slip from this weary agitation into *tamas*.²²⁸ That's obvious.

But how many letters I receive from people telling me, 'I feel listless, all I want to do is sleep, to rest, not do anything.' They go on complaining.

The experience I have – what I mean by 'I' is this aggregate here (*Mother indicates her body*), this particular individuality – is that the more quiet and calm it is, the more work it can do and the faster the work can be done. What is most disturbing and time consuming are all these agitated vibrations that fall on me (truly speaking, each person who comes throws them on me). And this is what makes the work difficult – it stirs up a whirlwind. And you can't do anything in this whirlwind, it's impossible. If you try to do something material, your fingers stumble; if you try to do something intellectual, your thoughts get all entangled and you no longer see clearly. I've had the experience, for example, of wanting to look up a word in the dictionary while this agitation was in the atmosphere, and everything jumps up and down (yet the lighting is the same and I'm using the same magnifying glass), I no longer see a thing, it's all jumping! I go page by page, but the word simply doesn't exist in the dictionary! Then I remain quiet, I do this ... (*Mother makes a gesture of bringing down the Peace*) and after half a minute I open the dictionary: the very spot, and the word leaps out at me! And I see clearly and distinctly. Consequently I have now the indisputable proof that if you want to do anything properly, you must FIRST be calm – but not only be calm yourself; you must either isolate yourself or be capable of imposing a calm on this whirlwind of forces that comes upon you all the time from all around.

All the teachers are wanting to quit the school – weary! Which means they'll begin the year with half the teachers gone. They live in constant tension, they don't know how to relax – that's really what it is. They don't know how to act without agitation.

I think that's what this head came to tell me, and it's precisely what's wrong in the Ashram – everything here is done in agitation, absolutely everything. So it's constantly a comedy of errors; someone speaks, the other doesn't listen and responds all wrong, and nothing gets done. Someone

²²⁸Tamas: inertia.

asks one thing, another answers to something else – bah! It's a dreadful con-fu-sion.

(silence)

What if we meditated a little.

Sit as you normally do and ... forget that I'm here!

(After the meditation)

I'm going to tell you what I saw – it's very interesting. First, emanating from here (*Mother indicates the chest*), a florescence of every color like a peacock's tail spread wide; but it was made of light, and it was very, very delicate, very fine, like this (*gesture*). Then it rose up and formed what truly seemed like a luminous peacock, up above, and it remained like that. Then, from here (*the chest*), what looked like a sword of white light climbed straight up. It went up very high and formed a kind of expanse, a very vast expanse, which was like a call – this lasted the longest. And then, in response, a veritable rain, like ... (no, it was much finer than drops) a golden light – white and golden – with various shades, at times more towards white, at times more golden, at times with a tinge of pink. And all this was descending, descending into you. And here (*the chest*), it changed into this same deep blue light, with a powdering of green light inside it – emerald green. And at that moment, when it reached here (*the level of the heart*), a number of little divinities of living gold – a deep, living gold – came, like this, and then looked at you. And just as they looked at you, there was the image of the Mother right at the very center of you – not as she is commonly portrayed but as she is in the Indian consciousness ... Very serene and pure and luminous. And then that changed into a temple, and inside the temple there seemed to be an image of Sri Aurobindo and an image of me – but living images in a powdering of light. Then it grew into a magnificent edifice and settled in with an extraordinary power. And it remained motionless.

That is the representation of your japa.

It's beautiful.

I had to stop because there is something like time that exists here – what a shame!

But it is very good.

And it shouldn't be difficult to keep that all the time.

I didn't notice you being bothered by these things of the physical mind you had mentioned. However, I had first done this (*gesture of cleansing the atmosphere*), right at the beginning, so that nothing would come to disturb us ... Did you feel anything?

I felt that you were there. I felt your Force.

Ah! You felt it!

Yes, of course – very strongly. At one moment it was very, very powerful.

(*Mother laughs heartily*) Your japa is lovely. Oh, it's a whole world that's forming, and it's truly harmonious, powerful, beautiful. It's very good. If you like, we'll do this for a few moments from time to time. It was very ... how should I put it? ... very pleasant for me. It feels comfortable, a bit removed from all this porridge! I was very glad.

If you want to prevent these disturbances in your physical mind, then when you sit for japa ... You know my Force, don't you? Well then, wrap it around you, like this, twelve times, from top to bottom.



October 25, 1960

There is a black cloud over the ashram. Its origin is rather unique and very interesting.

S has a nephew in Bombay, and one day towards the end of August or beginning September, he told me an extraordinary story about this nephew, who had disappeared (he showed me his photograph – he looks rather like a medium). He returned home two days later, I believe. He'd been found in a train in a hypnotic state; fortunately someone shook him and he suddenly woke up: 'Why am I here? What am I doing here?' (He had no intention of travelling, you see; he had simply left his house to visit a neighbor in Bombay.) So he returned home without knowing what had happened to him. And he was quite bizarre, really rather off.

A few days later, this nephew had to go somewhere, I don't know where; he went down to the railway station – and didn't return. Impossible to find out what had happened to him, he was nowhere to be found. Several days had passed when the family decided to send me his photograph and to tell me the story, adding that it was surely a sequel to the previous occurrence (there must be some people doing hypnotism), and then they asked me where he was and what had become of him.

All this happened just on the day X²²⁹ was leaving. So I told S to take the photograph and letter to X and tell him the story. X consulted some book, did a very short japa for a few seconds and said, 'Oh, he'll come back before September 26, BUT inform Mother so that She may see to it.' therefore, I concentrated a little.

About two weeks later (in other words, ten days or so before September 26), some more news – the boy's older brother, who lives in Ahmedabad (not Bombay), came to visit his mother, father and grandmother (there's also a grandmother), and he asked about his brother. He had come with a friend. 'Your brother has disappeared,' they explained, 'we don't know what has happened to him.' So the two of them decided to search for him: 'We'll find him.'

The day before their departure, the elder brother's friend said he was going to visit the grandmother (she lives some hundred yards away). He went out – and didn't return. Disappeared.

So of course they were terribly worried; they wondered what had happened. I had someone write to X, I concentrated, and four days later the boy (the brother's friend, that is) returned in a lamentable state: white, emaciated, barely able to speak. Then he recounted his story:

On his way to the grandmother's house, he passed by the station and went in to drink something. While drinking, two persons who were there started playing with some balls in front of him. He WATCHED. But suddenly, he felt very uneasy; he wanted to leave and ran towards an exit that opened onto the tracks – it was closed and he could not get out. And these two people were just behind him; suddenly he lost consciousness: 'I don't know what happened to me after that.'

He woke up in a railway station somewhere between Bombay and Poona, and he began telling them that he was hungry (he was with those same two persons). They punched him in the stomach and put a handkerchief over his nose – he again passed out! At Poona, he woke up again (he'd lost his appetite by then!), and again they put the handkerchief over his nose. And it went on like that – they kept on punching him a lot. When he woke up in the country on the outskirts of Poona, four men were around him arguing in a language he didn't know (his language is Gujarati). They were

229The disciple's tantric guru.

probably speaking in some other language, I don't know which one – it seems they were very dark. He didn't understand, but from various signs they made he could see that they were arguing about whether to kill him or not. Finally, they told him (probably in a language he could understand), 'Either you join our gang, or we'll kill you.' He grunted in reply so as not to commit himself. The others decided to wait for their chief (thus the chief wasn't there): 'We'll decide after he comes.' Then just to make sure, they punched him a few more times in the belly and put the handkerchief over his nose – out!

Sometime later (he doesn't know how long, for until he returned he had no sense of time), he woke up in a rather dark, low-roofed house way out in the country; there were five persons now, not four. They were busy eating, so he was careful not to budge. Mainly they were drinking (they have prohibition there). Four of them were already dead drunk. So he got up to have a look. The fifth one, whom he hadn't seen before (he must have been the chief), was not yet totally drunk; when he saw the boy stirring, he let out a fearful growl – so the poor boy threw himself flat in the corner and lay still – he waited. After awhile, the fifth one (after downing another bottle) was also dead drunk. So now that he saw them all fast asleep, he got up very cautiously and ... he said he ran for an hour and a half! ... A boy pummelled as he had been, who hadn't eaten for four days! I think that's a miracle.

After running for an hour and a half, he found himself back at the Poona station, he doesn't know how. He caught a train back to Bombay, scarcely knowing how he managed it.

When I found this out, I immediately thought, 'Good, this boy caught the formation²³⁰ X had made for the other one, and it got him back.' For it's really miraculous that he succeeded. But the other one, the nephew, was left stranded, nowhere to be found. It was obviously the same gang and the same method.

Then the police got involved. They wanted to take him back to the countryside around Poona (naturally I suppose they nursed him in the meantime), but not much came out of it. Seems that wherever he remembered seeing these people, when he said he had seen them, he fainted. Finally, I was told the story, and the poor family wrote to me saying, 'Who are these demons with such a great power that even it withstands Mother's force as well as that of X – and who are holding our son?' So X was again informed and, knowing the story of the elder brother's friend, he said, 'Ah, now I know where the other one is, and I hope it won't take too long.' But then September 26 passed – general despair in the family. They wrote to me, and I concentrated.

It was just before Durga Puja,²³¹ or just after – I can't remember (dates and I don't go together) – no, it was after Durga Puja. So I went into a deep concentration and, as a matter of fact, I saw that a very powerful and dangerous *rakshasic*²³² power was involved. And then, when I started walking for my japa upstairs in my room (I had given some thought to this story and tried asking for something to be done), I suddenly saw Durga before me raising high a lance of white light – the lance of light that destroys the hostile forces – and She struck into a black swarming mass of men.

But then there came a ... frightful reaction. For one day I was nearly as sick – not quite – as two years ago²³³ (they must have used the same mantra). And, you see, I who never vomit ... terrible vomiting – everything inside came out! Only now I'm a bit more experienced than two years ago

230In occult language, a 'formation' is a concentration of power towards a specific end. In this case, the tantric guru's formation to save the nephew.

231The yearly ritual worship in honor of Durga, the universal Mother.

232The *rakshas* are demons of the lower vital plane.

233The attack of black magic in December 1958.

(!), so I set it right ... It happened here, downstairs, in the afternoon. I went right back up to my room (I didn't see anyone that afternoon), and I remained concentrated to try to find out what had happened. I saw that it came from there – a backlash of those people trying to defend themselves.

I did what had to be done.

But unfortunately, this spread all over the Ashram, all over everyone – a black cloud everywhere. It was rather ... troublesome!

But some days later, a telephone call: the boy was found in Ahmedabad and brought back to Bombay.

The boy's story is ... fantastic! It's fantastic. He was thin, gray, empty-headed. I no longer recall all the details, but ultimately it was the same story: abducted from a railway station in the same way; he saw some people, an hypnotic state, and then no more recollection of what had happened to him, nothing at all. I don't know if they used a handkerchief on him as well, but he was 'hypnotized.' They punched him also when he asked to eat. And after that, no more appetite! As if they removed all interest in eating – even when there was food, he didn't touch it. And absolutely empty-headed.

However, he recalls them repeatedly telling him this: 'You have no family; that name is not yours; you are called by such-and-such-a-name (they gave him another name); you are all alone and depend exclusively upon us.' But then, probably this boy had a slightly deeper consciousness, for although his brain did not seem to be working outwardly, something deep down was able to observe and remember.

Finally, they had him work as a waiter in a small café in Ahmedabad, near the station. One day it even happened that his brother and his brother's friend stopped by (he vaguely recalls having seen them) but he was incapable of speaking to them or of getting them to recognize him. Another time, he tried to leave and headed towards the station, but after awhile he could no longer walk, he was suddenly stopped by something (he doesn't know what), and he had to go back. That's how it was – quite a ... unique state. But one day, a friend of the brother stopped at this café to drink something, and this same boy served him. He had changed a lot, but the other fellow recognized him all the same and asked, 'What's your name?' He saw that the boy seemed dazed and couldn't answer. So he didn't say anything but ran immediately to where the elder brother lived; they came back, took the boy into a corner and doused his face with seltzer water. It seems that then he started becoming more alive. Then they led him away and informed the police.

I don't have any more details yet ...

(Here we introduce, parenthetically, the details of the story as Mother told them two months later)

I found out the details: this boy had to go to the station, but on his way, he went into a shoe store just next to the station to buy a pair of sandals. As he entered, he saw a man there choosing a pair of women's shoes for himself! This seemed strange to him: 'What's this man doing buying ...' and he WATCHED – suddenly, nothing more. He lost consciousness and no longer knew what happened to him. And that's how the story began – a man selecting women's shoes in a shop! He must do strange things – probably intentionally – to attract people's attention. Naturally, out of curiosity, the boy started watching, and that was that – all of a sudden, blank, nothing more! And long afterwards he found himself far away in a train with this man. He's here now with his mother – they came to thank me. It's he who gave me the details. He's a nice boy, but all this has left him with some anxiety, especially when he speaks of it. He's trying to forget. He told me he'd like to join the army and asked my permission. The boy feels a need for force and he has the idea that to be part of such a force would be good for him. (Of course, he didn't tell me all this, he's not that conscious. But that's what he feels – the need to be supported by an organization of force.) So I encouraged him. I told him it was a good idea. His mother wasn't very happy! She feared he was leaping from the frying pan into the fire!

Another curious detail is that after having taken away all his appetite and having put him in the café as a waiter, they told him, ‘Now you must eat,’ so he tried to eat, and for four days he vomited up everything he put in – it was completely black! After that, he was able to start eating a little. It’s a fantastic story!

(The conversation resumes here)

But I was mainly interested by the fact that I felt the danger these people represented – not because they were brigands, but because they had some power – brigands with a power – and from what I saw, it was not merely an hypnotic power. There must have been a tantric force in it, otherwise they would not have been so powerful, and especially so powerful from a distance. I had said to myself, ‘They MUST be caught.’ Which was why ... (the Force kept on working, you see). And yesterday, the newspaper said that a gang of five men, eight women and half a dozen children had been arrested by the police in Allahabad for using what the newspaper called ‘mesmeric’ means to rob people, attack them, etc. (They were operating in Poona, Bombay and Ahmedabad, but they were caught in Allahabad). Probably when they realized that the boy was gone, they got frightened and fled to the North. And they were arrested in Allahabad – I had made a very strong formation and had said, ‘They MUST be caught.’

As of now, I have no other news ... They’ve been caught, so they can’t do any wrong OUTWARDLY, but still their power is there. We’re going to have to be ... And everyone here says the same thing – like a black veil of unconsciousness that has fallen upon us. Even those who aren’t accustomed to such things have felt it. I’m presently cleaning the whole place – it’s not easy. Everything is upside down.

I had X informed. But I didn’t tell him my difficulty (this mantra they threw on me to kill me), I didn’t speak of that at all. For he had insisted, from the beginning he had said, ‘Mother must see to it, only Mother’s grace can save them.’ And I understood – their attack came just at the time of Durga Puja, so I understood that Durga had to intervene. So that’s the story.

Things are not going so well for X either; everywhere it’s grating. It was probably very important ... I am hopeful that it can bring some change.

But normally, shouldn’t the mantra bounce back on them?

Obviously! It’s boomeranging back on them. They must be having a rather hard time of it now, but too bad for them! They won’t escape it.

I don’t know what’s going to happen to them ... They must have killed quite a few people. If that’s discovered, they’ll get what they deserve and we’ll be rid of them – they’ll become little disembodied demons! It’s less dangerous.

Unless they reincarnate somewhere else. Some people are always ready to accept demons, that’s the trouble!

(No sooner had Mother finished telling this story than, by a curious ‘coincidence,’ someone brought her a portrait drawn by P.K., one of the Ashram artists. Several days earlier, at about two in the morning during an uncommonly violent lightning storm, P.K. had suddenly SEEN amidst the flashes of lightning in the sky a rather terrible, demoniacal head in front of his very eyes. Having nothing else available, he hastily drew his vision in chalk on a schoolchild’s slate, which is the portrait Mother speaks of here:)

Well, well! So P.K. is clairvoyant! It’s him, for sure – this is the being behind those people. That’s why they had so much power. And he came here because of that – he was furious. Quite a demon!

I also saw him that night. ‘You fools with your small crackers,’ he said, ‘I will show you what

*real crackers are!*²³⁴ – and those flashes of lightning, such an astonishing violence ... Oh, he proclaimed all kinds of things, disasters, what not ... But these are very complex matters and it's better not to go into detail.

(*Some days later, Mother added the following:*)

Merely by looking at that portrait, one child came down with fever!²³⁵

I myself didn't dare look at it for long!

Oh, it's terrifying! I don't know who had the stupid idea of showing this to the child, but after he saw it he had a fever for three days, with terrible chills. And I believe the artist too was sick after finishing his sketch.

* * *

(*soon afterwards*)

What about you, is your health better? (*the disciple had not been well*)

When you have to slip in seven hours of japa a day, it makes your life a bit strange!

It's so contrary not only to the education but to the make up of people from the West! For an Indian ... for a modern Indian it would be difficult, but for those who have kept something of the old tradition it would not be difficult. It's easy for children raised in a monastery or near the guru ...

(*silence*)

I looked and saw the realm which is under the influence of thought – the power of thought on the body is tremendous! You cannot imagine how tremendous it is. Even a subconscious or sometimes unconscious thought acts and provokes fantastic results! ... I've studied this. I've been studying it IN DETAIL for the last two years – it's incredible! If I had the time one day to explain all this, it would be interesting.

Even tiny, the tiniest mental or vital reactions – so tiny that to our ordinary consciousness they don't appear to have the LEAST importance – act upon the body's cells and can create disorders ... You see, when you observe carefully, you suddenly become aware of a very slight uneasiness, a mere nothing (when you're busy, you don't even notice it), and then if you follow this uneasiness to see what it is, you perceive that it comes from something quite imperceptible and 'insignificant' to our active consciousness – but it's enough to create an uneasy feeling in the body.

Which is why – unless you are intentionally and constantly in what here is called the Brahmic consciousness – it is practically impossible to control. And this is what gives the impression of certain things happening in the body independently of ... not only of our will but of our consciousness – BUT IT IS NOT TRUE.

Only, there is all that comes from outside – that's what is most dangerous. Constantly, constantly – when you eat, you catch it ... oh, what a mass of vibrations! The vibrations of the thing you eat when it was living (they always remain), the vibrations of the person who cooked it, vibrations of ... All the time, all the time, they never stop – you breathe, they enter. Of course, when you start talking to someone or mixing with people, then you become a bit more conscious of what is coming, but even just sitting still, uninvolved with others – it comes! There is an almost total

²³⁴Original English. This happened at the time of 'Deepavali,' the Festival of Light, when people throughout India set off all kinds of fireworks.

²³⁵Which is why we are not publishing it.

interdependence – isolation is an illusion. By reinforcing your own atmosphere (*Mother gestures, as if building a wall around her*), you can hold these things off TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, but simply this effort to keep them at a distance creates (I'm thinking in English and speaking in French) ... *disturbances*.²³⁶ Anyway, now all this has been SEEN.

But I know in an absolute way that once this whole mass of the physical mind is mastered and the Brahmic consciousness is brought into it in a continuous way, you CAN ... you become the MASTER of your health.

This is why I tell people (not that I expect them to do it, at least not now, but it's good they know) that it's NOT a matter of fate, NOT something that completely escapes our control, NOT some sort of 'Law of Nature' over which we have no power – it is not so. We are truly the masters of everything which has been brought together to create our transitory individuality; we have been given the power of control, if only we knew how to use it.

It's a discipline, a tremendous *tapasya*.²³⁷

But it's good to know in order to avoid this feeling of being crushed when things are still completely outside your control, this sense of fatality people have – they're born, they live, they die: Nature is crushing and we are the playthings of something much bigger, much stronger than us – that is the Falsehood.

In any case, for myself, in my yoga, only after I KNEW that I AM the Master of everything (provided I know how to BE this Master and LET myself be this Master – provided, that is, that the outer stupidity accepts to stay in its place), did I know that one could be the Master of Nature.

There's also this old idea rooted in religions of Chaldean or Christian origin of a God with whom you can have no true contact – an abyss between the two. That is terrible.

That absolutely has to stop.

For with that idea, the earth and men will NEVER be able to change. This is why I have often said that this idea is the work of the *Asuras*,²³⁸ and with it they have ruled the earth.

Whereas whatever the effort, whatever the difficulty, whatever time it takes, whatever number of lives, you must know that all this doesn't matter: you KNOW you ARE the Master, that the Master and you are the same. All that's necessary is ... to know it INTEGRALLY, and nothing must belie it. That's the way out.

When I tell people that their health depends on their inner life (an intermediate inner life, not the deepest), it's because of this.

During the last two years, I've been accumulating experiences IN THEIR MINUTEST DETAILS, things that might seem most useless. You have to consent to that and not have a mania for greatness; you must know that where the key is found is in the tiniest effort to create a true attitude in a few cells.

The problem is that when you enter into the ordinary consciousness, these things become so subtle and require such a scrupulous observance that people are justified (they FEEL justified) in having the attitude, 'Oh, it's Nature, it's Fate, it's the Divine Will!' But with that conviction, the 'Yoga of Perfection' is impossible and appears as a mere utopian fantasy – but this is FALSE. The truth is something else entirely.

(long silence)

236Original English.

237*Tapasya*: asceticism, austerities, severe discipline.

238*Asuras*: demons of the mental plane.

... When I say to someone, 'I shall take care of you,' do you know what I do? I join his body to mine. And then all the work is done in me (as far as possible – essentially it's possible, but there is a relativity because of time; but as far as possible ...). So I find it very interesting to make cross-references and find out the results of my intervention – not so I can boast (there's nothing much to boast about), but for the sake of the SCIENTIFIC study of the problem: to know how to proceed, how to discriminate, what is active and what isn't, what are the guide lines, etc.

And even if at the moment you don't feel very good, you are able to say, 'It doesn't matter; what we have to do, we'll do' (this fear of not being able to do what has to be done is the most irksome), if at that moment you can sincerely say to yourself, 'No, I trust in the Divine Grace ... no, I will do what I have to do, and I'll be given the power to do it, or the power to do it will be created in me' – then that is the true attitude.

I feel that's what you give me.



October 30, 1960

(After a meditation with Mother on the occasion of the disciple's birthday. At the outset of the conversation, Mother had given the disciple a small leather wallet with an Egyptian fresco depicted on it.)

Let me see the wallet (*Mother looks at it*) ... Ah, so that has nothing to do with it!

As soon as the meditation began, I started seeing quite familiar scenes from ancient Egypt. And you, you looked a little different, but quite similar all the same ... The first thing I saw was their god with a head like this (*gesture of a muzzle*), with a sun above his head. A dark animal head with ... I know it VERY WELL, but I don't remember exactly which animal it is. One is a hawk,²³⁹ but the other has a head like ... (*Mother makes the same gesture*)

Like a jackal?

Yes, like a jackal, that's it. Yes, that's what it was. With a kind of lyre above its head, and then a sun.²⁴⁰

And this god was very intimately related to you, as if you were melted together; you were like a

239Horus, the sun god, child of Isis and Osiris.

240According to tradition, *Anubis*, the jackal-headed god, helped Isis to rebuild the body of her spouse, Osiris, who had been killed and dismembered by his brother Set. Osiris was the first god to rule over men. Owing to certain special rites, Isis, helped by Anubis, succeeded in bringing him back to life. So we are not very far from the legend of Savitri and Satyavan.

sacrificial priest and at the same time he was entering into you.

And this lasted quite long (it's what I saw most clearly and what I best remember). But there were many, many things – old things that I know – and certainly a VERY INTIMATE relationship which we had in the days of Egypt, at Thebes.

It's the first time I saw this for you – it was very, very ...

'Was it by chance the wallet that brought this to mind?' I wondered right at first. I had the impression of having given you something Egyptian, but I could no longer remember what it was – I'm happy it wasn't that! ... I hesitated for barely a moment, then said to myself, 'Why?' And what came is that everything, even apparently accidental things, is organized by the same Consciousness for the same ends – it's obvious.

But I found this interesting, so I began looking, and I LIVED the scene, all kinds of scenes of initiation, worship, etc., for quite some time. When that lifted, a light much stronger than the last time (*during the last meditation*) came down, in a wonderful silence. (I might add that the first thing I did, at the beginning, was to try to establish a silence around you, to insulate you from other things so as to keep your mind quiet; it kept jumping a little, but once this light came down ...) And it came down with a very hieratic quality and ... (how can I put this?) Egyptian in character – very occult, very occult, very, very distinct, very specific, like this (*gesture indicating a block of silence descending*).

And then there came a long moment of absolutely motionless contemplation ... with something that now escapes me – it may come back.

Then suddenly I went into a little trance. And in it I saw you, but you were ... physically, you were on one plane, and then I saw another man on a different plane (I saw him quite concretely; he was rather tall, broad-shouldered – not so tall as broad, with a dark, European suit). And he took your hands and started shaking them enthusiastically! – but you were quite indifferent, just as you are now, dressed in Indian fashion and sitting cross-legged. He took both your hands and started shaking them! And then I distinctly heard the words: 'Congratulations, it's a great success!' – it had to do with your book.²⁴¹ And at the same time, I saw all sorts of people and things who were touched by your book – all kinds of people, obviously French, or Westerners in any case ... women, men. There was even one woman (she must have been an actress or a singer or ... anyway, someone whose life was ... she was even dressed for the stage, with some kind of tights – a beautiful girl!) and she said to someone, 'Ah, it has even given me a taste for the spiritual life!' It was extremely interesting ... All kinds of things of this nature. And then once again I came out of this trance and ... In the end, I tried to do some certain thing for you and it turned out well. It turned out quite well.

But then, just before that, there was this powdering of golden light coming down. And as it descended, it was white with a touch of gold (but it was white) and it came down in a column, with such POWER! ... And then, just at the end, this powdering of gold came and settled into this white light which had remained there the whole time – oh, it was so ... abundant. A great power of realization. I had a hard time coming out of it! At the start, I had decided to come out of it at half past, so I came out, but still not completely ...

So there, my child. And you, what did you feel?

When I meditate with you ... When I'm alone, there is never this power, this ... It's something else ... Sometimes it's strong but it always lacks this particular quality. There are powerful moments when I'm alone, but not like this.

Of course! I'm also with you there in your room when you meditate, but it does make a difference ...

241 *L'Orpailleur*, which had just been published. The man's description, as a matter of fact, bears a striking resemblance to the publisher.

The physical vibration is important. The circumstances relating to the work of transformation make the physical vibration important. I feel it, for as soon as I want to do something with someone on the physical plane (physical, mind you), it all comes into the body. And the body is simply seized ... I see that absolutely physical vibrations are being used all the time. It's really so different. All the work which is done at a distance (*gesture indicating action stemming from the mind*) – it acts, of course, but ...

You know, even now, all this (*Mother touches her body, her hands*) feels so vibrant and alive that it's difficult to sense its limits ... as if it extends beyond the body in all directions. It no longer has any limits.

But it's still not luminous in the dark. What is normally luminous in the dark is something else ... I had that when I was working with Theon (after returning to France, we had group meditations – though he didn't call it 'meditation,' he called it 'repose,' and we used to do this in a darkened room), and there was ... it was like phosphorescence, exactly the color of phosphorescent light, like certain fish in the water at night. It would come out [of the body], spread forth, move about. But that is the vital, it originates in the vital. It is a force from above, but what manifests is vital. Whereas now it is absolutely, clearly the golden supralental light in ... an extraordinary pulsation, vibrant in intensity ... But probably it still lacks a ... what Theon used to call 'density,' an agent that enables it to be seen in the dark – and then it would be visibly gold, not phosphorescent.

But it is very, very concrete, very material.

I wonder if at night ... Sometimes it's so intense that I wonder if it doesn't radiate. But I can't see as my eyes are closed!

Again last night, for a large part of the night, it was ... the body has no more limits – it's only a great MASS of vibrations.

And the experience just now (*during meditation*) was somehow mixed with what I usually see at night (it was not a combination – or maybe it was a combination ...), for it had that same light ... It was a kind of powdering, even finer than tiny dots – a powdering like an atomic dust, but with an EXTREMELY intense vibration ... but without any shifting of place. And yet it's in constant motion ... Something shifting about within something that vibrates on the same spot without moving (something does move, but it's subtler, like a current of tremendous power which passes through a milieu that doesn't move at all: rather, it vibrates on the same spot with an extreme intensity). But I don't exactly know how it is different from the present experience ... It becomes less golden at night, the gold is less visible, whereas the other colors – white, blue and a sort of pink – are much more visible.

Oh, now I remember! It was PINK during the second phase, just afterwards, after Egypt! Oh, it was like ... like at the end of a sunrise when it gets very clear and luminous. A magnificent color. And it kept coming down and down, in a flood ... that part was new. It's something I see very rarely. It was not there at all the last time we meditated together. And it came filled with such a joy! Oh! ... It was absolutely ecstatic. It lasted quite a long time. And from there I went into this trance where I saw (*laughing*) that man congratulating you! I heard him say (his voice is what roused me from my trance, and then I saw him), 'Congratulations, it's a great success!' (*Mother laughs*)

It's good. We'll have these little meditations from time to time. For me, it's pleasant, for I have neither to restrict nor contain nor veil myself. It's nice.

And I see what's coming down; it's good.

And there is something very happy, very happy, which keeps repeating, 'It's good, it's good!' Happy ... and rather satisfied because of that.

My impression is that in a while, maybe not in such a distant future, we'll be able to do something, a sort of ... it will no longer be personal. We should be able to establish something.²⁴²

242The terrestrial work to be accomplished through the *Agenda*.

* * *

(soon afterwards, when leaving)

Is that all? You have nothing to tell me, nothing to ask?

I'm counting above all on your force to put my body back in order.

Yes, of course! But to be put back in order, it must become a bit stronger. The more fragile you are, the more it breaks down.

All I know is that HERE you must be very careful not to weaken the body's resistance (I don't just mean in India, but here in the Ashram). Here, it's important – the base must be solid, for otherwise it's difficult. The more the Force descends – as it has just now descended – the more the body must be ... rather square. It's important.

I've tried everything, you know, from complete fasting to a meat diet – everything, everything. Well, I noticed that you can have pleasant experiences while fasting, but it's not good, it shouldn't be done – these are all old ideas. No, the body must be solid, solid ... otherwise ...

(Mother gives the disciple a carnation, named by her 'Collaboration')

So, I won't see you again? ... No, too many people come in the afternoon, it's not pleasant ...



November 5, 1960

These things from the past ... it's rather odd – now, once they come and I've spoken of them, they get erased. As if they were returning one last time to say goodbye before going for good.

All these 'memories' (actually they're rather pictures) seem to be coming forward to show themselves with all the knowledge, truth and HELP they represent; they come to say, 'There! You see, this is the origin of that' – a whole curve. Then once I've seen it, it's gone.

One day, as an experiment, I tried to remember something from the past, for I was interested in what it contained; I tried – impossible! It had been cleaned out, it was gone. So I understood that these things come, they show themselves (you have to be ATTENTIVE and know what purpose they have served) and then they go away.

I have so totally forgotten a whole world of incidents and events that when someone reminds me of something (the people around me have lived with me, so they've seen things and remember them), I get the feeling that they are speaking of someone or something else – it no longer has any connection with me at all. And it's the same with everything, whether near or far, which has brought to my consciousness whatever it had to bring, lost its utility and – disappeared. Only, these memories probably still have some utility for the others, so they remain. But for me it's completely erased, absolutely, as if it had never been.

It's the only way to forget.

People often try to forget the past, but it doesn't work. Only once it has brought all the lessons that it was meant to bring into your life (it's decanted, so you see the thing in its deepest truth), is its utility finished, and it disappears.

I am convinced that at heart *Karma* is simply all the things we haven't used in the true way that we drag along behind us ... If totally and clearly we have learned the lesson which each event or each circumstance ought to have brought, then it's finished, its utility is gone and it dissolves.

It's an interesting experience to follow and observe.

* * *

(soon afterwards)

I went down into a place ... a place simply in the human consciousness, thus necessarily in my body ... I have never seen anything more timorous, fearful, feeble and mean! It's ... it must be a part of the cells, part of the consciousness, something that lives in apprehension, fear, dread, anxiety ... It was truly, truly dreadful.

And we carry that within us! We aren't aware of it, it's almost subconscious – for you see, the consciousness is there to prevent us from yielding to that – it's cowardly, and it can make you fall sick IN A MINUTE. I saw it, I saw things that had been cured and overcome in myself (cured in the true manner, not in an outer way), and then they return! It's cured, but then it begins again.

So then I went in search of its origin. It's something in the subconscious – in the cells' subconscious. Its roots are there, and on the least occasion ... And it's so very, very ingrained that ... For example, you can be feeling very good, the body can be perfectly harmonious (and when the body is perfectly harmonious, its motions are harmonious, things are in their true places, everything works exactly as it should without needing the least attention – a general harmony), when suddenly the clock strikes, for example, or someone utters a word, and you have just the faint impression 'Oh, it's late, I'm not going to be on time' – a second, a split second, and ... the whole working of the body falls apart. You suddenly feel feeble, drained, uneasy. And you have to intervene. It's terrible. And we're at the mercy of such things!

To change it, you have to descend into it – which is what I'm in the midst of doing. But you know, it makes for painful moments. Anyway, once it's done, it will be something. When that is done, I'll explain it to you. And then I'll have the power to restore you to health.



November 8, 1960

(After a conversation with Z, a distant 'disciple' reputed for his loose morals and the object of numerous 'moralistic' or even so-called 'yogic' criticisms among the 'true disciples' in the Ashram)

He lives in a region which is largely a kind of vital vibration which penetrates the mind and makes use of the imagination (essentially it's the same region most so-called cultured men live in). I don't mean to be severe or critical, but it's a world that likes to play to itself. It's not really what we could call histrionics, not that – it's rather a need to dramatize to oneself. So it can be an heroic drama, it can be a musical drama, it can be a tragic drama, or quite simply a poetic drama – and ninety-nine times out of a hundred, it's a romantic drama. And then, these 'soul states' (!) come replete with certain spoken expressions ... (*laughing*) I'm holding myself back from saying certain things! – You know, it's like a theatricals store where you rent scenery and costumes. It's all ready and waiting – a little call, and there it comes, ready-made. For a particular occasion, they say, 'You're the woman of my life' (to be repeated as often as necessary), and for another they say ... It's a whole world, a whole mode of human life which I suddenly felt I was holding in my arms. Yes, like a decoration, an ornament, a nicety – an ornament of existence, to keep it from being flat and dull – and the best means the human mind has found to get out of its *tamas*. It's a kind of artifice.

So for persons who are severe and grave (there are two such examples here, but it's not necessary to name them) ... There are beings who are grave, so serious, so sincere, who find it hypocritical; and when it borders on certain (how shall I put it?) vital excesses, they call it vice. There are others who have lived their entire lives in a yogic or religious discipline, and they see this as an obstacle, illusion, dirtyness (*Mother makes a gesture of rejecting with disgust*), but above all, it's this 'terrible illusion that prevents you from nearing the Divine.' And when I saw the way these two people here reacted, in fact, I said to myself, 'but ...' – you see, I FELT So strongly that this too is the Divine, it too is a way of getting out of something that has had its place in evolution, and still has a place, individually, for certain individuals. Naturally, if you remain there, you keep turning in circles; it will always be (not eternally, but indefinitely) 'the woman of my life,' to take that as a symbol. But once you're out of it, you see that this had its place, its utility – it made you emerge from a kind of very animal-like wisdom and quietude – that of the herd or of the being who sees no further than his daily round. It was necessary. We mustn't condemn it, we mustn't use harsh words.

The mistake we make is to remain there too long, for if you spend your whole life in that, well, you'll probably need many more lifetimes. But once the chance to get out of it comes, you can look at it with a smile and say, 'Yes, it's really a sort of love for fiction!' – people love fiction, they want fiction, they need fiction! Otherwise it's boring and all much too flat.

All this came to me yesterday. I kept Z with me for more than half an hour, nearly 45 minutes. He told me some very interesting things. What he said was quite good and I encouraged him a great deal – some action on the right lines which will be quite useful, and then a book ... unfortunately mixed with an influence from that artificial world (but actually, even that can be used as a link to attract people). He must have spoken to you about this. He wants to write a kind of dialogue to introduce Sri Aurobindo's ideas – it's a good idea – like the conversations in *Les Hommes de Bonne Volonté* by Jules Romain. He wants to do it, and I told him it was an excellent idea. And not only one type – he should take all types of people who for the moment are closed to this vision of life, from the Catholic, the fervent believer, right to the utmost materialist, men of science, etc. It could be very interesting.

This is what you see in life, it's all like that – each thing has its place and its necessity. This has made me see a whole current of life ... I was very, very involved with people from this milieu during a whole period of my existence – and in fact, it's the first approach to Beauty. But it gets mixed.

(*Mother remains silent a moment*)

Symbolically, in life, we might think of *tamas* as the earth (the solid and obdurate earth), and this intervention of the vital is water flowing onto it. But when first it touches the earth, it stirs up mud! There's no reason to protest, for it's like that. And thereby the earth becomes less hard and resistant, and it begins receiving.

It's an approach which is not at all mental nor intellectual nor (God knows!) moral in the least –

no notion of Good or Evil nor any of those things, absolutely none of that. There's a moment in life when you begin thinking a little and you see all this from an overall or universal point of view in which all moral notions completely disappear – FOR ANOTHER REASON. This experience with Z reminded me of a certain way of approaching Beauty that enables you even to find it in what appears dirty and ugly to the common vision. It is She trying to express herself in this something which to the common vision is ugly, dirty, hypocritical. But of course, if you yourself have striven assiduously and have greatly held yourself in, then you look at it reprovingly.

From my earliest childhood, instinctively, I have never felt the slightest contempt or ... how should I say ... (well, well! I was thinking in English) shrinking or disapproval, severe criticism or disgust for the things people call vice.

(silence)

I have experienced all kinds of things in life, but I have always felt a sort of light – so INTANGIBLE, So perfectly pure (not in the moral sense, but pure light!) – and it could go anywhere, mix everywhere without ever really getting mixed with anything. I felt this flame as a young child – a white flame. And NEVER have I felt disgust, contempt, recoil, the sense of being dirtied – by anything or anyone. There was always this flame – white, white, so white that nothing could make it other than white. And I started feeling it long ago in the past (now my approach is entirely different – it comes straight from above, and I have other reasons for seeing the Purity in everything). But it came back when I met Z (because of the contact with him) – and I felt nothing negative, absolutely nothing. Afterwards, people said, ‘Oh, how he used to be this, how he used to be that! ... And now look at him! See what he's become! ...’ Someone even used the word ‘rotten’ – that made me smile. Because, you see, that doesn't exist for me.

What I saw is this world, this realm where people are like that, they live that, for it's necessary to get out from below and this is a way – it's a way, the only way. It was the only way for the vital formation and the vital creation to enter into the material world, into inert matter. An intellectualized vital, a vital of ideas, an ‘artist’; it even fringes upon or has the first drops of Poetry – this Poetry which upon its peaks goes beyond the mind and becomes an expression of the Spirit. Well, when these first drops fall on earth, it stirs up mud.

And I wondered why people are so rigid and severe, why they condemn others (but one day I'll understand this as well). I say this because very often I run into these two states of mind in my activities (the grave and serious mind which sees hypocrisy and vice, and the religious and yogic mind which sees the illusion that prevents you from nearing the Divine) – and without being openly criticized, I'm criticized ... I'll tell you about this one day ...

You're criticized?

Yes, but naturally without daring to criticize me openly. But I'm aware of it. On the one hand, they see it as a kind of *looseness* on my part (oh, not only for that – many things!). And on the other hand,²⁴³ you know well enough; it applies to other things, slightly different areas, it's not exactly the same, but in this area they're also severe. I'm even told that there are some people who shouldn't be in the Ashram.

My reply is that the whole world should be in the Ashram!

But as I cannot contain the whole world, I have to contain at least one representative of each type.

They also find I give too much time and too much force (and maybe too much attention) to people and things that should be regarded with more severity. That never bothered me much. It doesn't matter, they can say what they like.

²⁴³Mother is referring to traditional tantraism.

But since Z's visit yesterday, and this morning on the balcony ... Oh, it's so ... I had already seen this long ago – this whole milieu that is not very pretty – and I had said, 'Well, it's all right, that's how it is,' and I didn't discuss it further: 'That's how it is, and absolutely the whole world belongs to the Lord – IS the Lord! And the Lord made it so, and the Lord wants it so, and it's quite all right.' Then I put it aside. But with his visit yesterday, it found its place – such a smiling place. And there's a whole world of things of life which have found their true place in this way – with a smile!

(silence)

As if suddenly something were opening in a marvelous way – it has classified a whole part of terrestrial life. It was truly interesting.

(silence)

How strange it is! ... You have the feeling of ascending, of a progress in consciousness, and everything, all the events and circumstances of life follow one another with an unquestioning logic. You see the Divine Will unfolding with a wonderful logic. Then, from time to time, there appears a little 'set' of circumstances (either isolated or repeated), which are like snags on the way; you can't explain them, so you put them aside 'for later on.' Some such 'accidents' have been quite significant, but they don't seem to follow this ascending line of the present individuality. They're scattered along the way, sometimes repeated, sometimes only once, and then they vanish. And when you go through such an experience, you sense that they are things put aside for later on. And then, all of a sudden (especially during these last two years when I have again descended to take all that up), all of a sudden, one after another, all these snags return. And they don't follow the same curve; rather, it's as if suddenly you reach a certain state and a certain impersonal breadth that far surpasses the individual, and this new state enters into contact with one of those old 'accidents' that had remained in the deepest part of the subconscious – and that makes it rise up again, the two meet ... in an explosion of light. Everything is explained, everything is understood, everything is clear! No explanation is needed: it has become OBVIOUS.

This is entirely another way of understanding – it's not an ascent, not even a descent nor an inspiration ... it must be what Sri Aurobindo calls a 'revelation.' It's the meeting of this subconscious notation – this something which has remained buried within, held down so as not to manifest, but which suddenly surges forth to meet the light streaming down from above, this very vast state of consciousness that excludes nothing ... and from it springs forth a light – oh, a resplendence of light! – like a new explanation of the world, or of that part of the world not yet explained.

And this is the true way of knowing.

These things are like landmarks along the ascending path: you go forward step by step, and sometimes it's painful, sometimes joyful, or with a certain amount of toil that bears witness still to the presence of the personality or the individuality and its limitations (the *Questions and Answers* are full of this) – but the other thing is different, completely different: the other thing is an overflowing joy, and not only the joy of knowing but the joy of BEING. An overflowing joy.²⁴⁴

There, my child.

... If you weren't there, all these things would never get said.

I don't know why. I don't know why I wouldn't say them. But I know why I say them to you – I already gave you a *hint*.²⁴⁵ I told you, didn't I, that there was a reason.

²⁴⁴Later coming back to the experience She has just described, Mother added the following: 'It's a very interesting experience. It's a very powerful lever for abolishing the moral point of view in its narrowest forms. And this is precisely what I encounter all the time in people – you see, all those who make a spiritual effort bring me truckloads of morality!'

²⁴⁵Original English.

Yes, but you didn't tell me what it was!

(Mother laughs) Because it's not that kind of reason, not a reason that can be explained!! No, it's a ... it's the same thing, a contact.

I know – I told you that I had had a vision, but you didn't understand what I told you that day. It was a vision of the place you occupy in my being and of the work we have to do together. That's really how it is. These things [that I tell you] have their utility and a concrete life, and I see them as very powerful for world transformation – they're what I call 'experiences' (which is much more than an experience because it extends far beyond the individual) – and it's the same whether it's said or not said: the Action is done. But the fact that it is said, that it is formulated here and preserved, is exclusively for you, because you were made for this and this is why we met.

It doesn't need a lot of explaining.

And, even with Sri Aurobindo, even with him I didn't speak of these things for I wouldn't waste his time, and I found it quite useless to burden him with all this. I would tell him ... I always described my visions and experiences at night – I always recounted that to him. And he would remember (I myself would forget; the next day, the whole thing would be gone), he would remember; then sometimes, long afterwards, even years afterwards, he would say, 'Ah, yes! You had seen that back then.' He had a wonderful memory. While myself, I would already have forgotten. But those were the only things I told him, and even then only when I saw that it had a very sure, very superior quality. I didn't bother him with a whole jumble of words. But otherwise... even Nolini,²⁴⁶ who understands well ... I never, never felt even the ... (it's not the need) not even the POSSIBILITY.

I don't want to tell you this too precisely, to expand on it, for these things cannot be explained. I want you to – not know nor think it, but feel it suddenly, like a little electric shock within that leaps forth.

It will come.

I'm really so thick, you know ...

It's the mind that's terrible. It's a nuisance. To have an experience like the one I told you about a little while ago you have to tell it, 'Okay, be quiet; be quiet now, be calm.' But if it's left on its own and you're unfortunate enough to listen to it, it spoils everything. This is what you must learn to do.

But effort is not of much use, my child, it's ... (*long silence*) it's ... you can call it grace, or you can call it a 'knack' – two very different things, yet it has something of each.

If I could only make my head quiet!

That is horrible. It's painful, exhausting.

And the more you try, the more fidgety it gets.

That's it, exactly. It's what I was telling you, that it's not the result of any effort ... In fact, sometimes it comes all by itself when you're no longer thinking about it. Maybe I'll be able to help you one day.

246The most senior disciple in the Ashram.



Undated, 1960

(Handwritten note from Mother to Satprem)

At the moment
when
you least expect it.



November 12, 1960

(It has not stopped raining for the last 20 days ...)

Chittagong was hit by a cyclone, there were tidal waves somewhere else ... The cyclone went up the wrong side! – for according to X's predictions, it was Karachi that should have disappeared.

He said only in 1962 or 1963 would Karachi totally disappear. And three-fourths of Bombay underwater!

And just a while ago some volcanoes erupted, so the sea rose and swept away all kinds of things in Japan and all along its path, but it didn't come all the way to India. When I was in Japan, one island was swallowed up just like that, along with its 30,000 inhabitants, glub!

You see, it amuses them; it's the way these beings amuse themselves – only it's on another scale, that's all. They look at us like ants, so what's it matter to them! 'If they don't like it, too bad for them.' Only, ants can't protest, or at least we don't understand their protests! Whereas when we ourselves protest, we can make ourselves heard. We have the means to make ourselves heard.

We can be heard?

Certainly, we CAN be heard. So far I never said anything. It even surprised me, for I had never paid it any attention, I was quite away from all that: it's raining? – so what, it's raining, it happens. It's not raining? – so what, it's not raining, it's the same thing. And then gradually people started mentioning that should it continue, they wouldn't be able to do their exercises, and they wouldn't be

ready for December 2.²⁴⁷ Then I started receiving desperate letters – one person even told me he was doing his puja underwater! So I answered by saying, ‘Take it as the Lord’s blessing’ but I’m not sure he appreciated it! And then I learned that 200 houses [in the Ashram] – 200! – are leaking. Naturally, each one is in a great hurry – it’s terribly urgent! So perhaps I shall file a complaint and ask them what they mean by this!

Actually, if communications are interrupted, it can be troublesome ... Let us see.

(*After a moment of silence*) We don’t have time now to work, it’s too late. And anyway, we can’t see properly. Did you bring anything?

Yes, some ‘Questions and Answers.’

More small talk!

Speaking of which, I looked at T’s most recent questions on the *Aphorisms* again. All these children haven’t the least sense of humor, so Sri Aurobindo’s paradoxes throw them into a kind of despair! ... The last aphorism went something like this: ‘When I could read a wearisome book from one end to the other with pleasure, then I knew I had conquered my mind.’²⁴⁸ So T asked me ‘How can you read a wearisome book with pleasure?’!! I had to explain it to her. And on top of that, I have to take on a rather serious tone, for were I to reply in the same ironic fashion, they would be totally drowned! It throws them into a terrible confusion!

It’s a lack of plasticity in the mind, and they are bound by the expression of things; for them, words are rigid. Sri Aurobindo explained it so well in *The Secret of the Veda*, he shows how language evolves and how, before, it was very supple and evocative. For example, one could at once think of a river and of inspiration.

Sri Aurobindo also gives the example of a sailboat and the forward march of life. And he says that for those of the Vedic age it was quite natural, the two could go together, superimposed; it was merely a way of looking at the same thing from two sides, whereas now, when a word is said, we think only of this word all by itself, and to get a clear picture we need a whole literary or poetic imagery (with explanations to boot!). That’s exactly the case with these children; they’re at a stage where everything is rigid. Such is the product of modern education. It even extracts the subtlest nuance between two words and FIXES it: ‘And above all, don’t make any mistake, don’t use this word for that word, for otherwise your writing’s no good.’ But it’s just the opposite.

(silence)

So, are you sleeping in water?

It’s not that bad!

Yes, everything is getting mildewed, everything you touch. I’m sleeping in a damp bed; to walk on the woolen carpets upstairs is like walking on moss – in the forest! For myself, I don’t mind.

There’s a certain sensibility which makes any increase in humidity felt. Before it starts raining, even several hours before, it feels like there are drops falling on my body. I can always say when it’s going to rain. It’s entirely physical, actually, merely a heightened sensitivity. It feels like very tiny drops (you know, like drizzle), the feeling of a very fine spray falling on the body. And yet the sky is clear; I say, ‘Hmm, it’s going to rain.’ And it rains – I felt it. I feel the water, and it never fails to come a few hours later.

247The Ashram’s annual physical education demonstration at the Sportsground.

248The actual aphorism reads: ‘When I read a wearisome book through and with pleasure, yet perceived all the perfection of its wearisomeness, then I knew that my mind was conquered.’

(silence)

You asked me just now if we have a say in the matter. Well, last year I didn't go out; I had no intention of going to the Sportsground or to the theater for the December 2 program, but I was often asked to see that the weather be good. So while I was doing my japa upstairs, I started saying that it shouldn't rain. But 'they' weren't in a very good mood! (When I used to go out myself, it had an effect, for it kept the thing in check, and even if it had been raining earlier, that day it would stop.) So they said, 'But you aren't going out, so what does it matter.' I said I was counting on it. Then they answered, 'Are you prepared to have it rain the next time you go out?' – 'Do what you like,' I replied. And when I went out on November 24 for the prize distribution, there was a deluge. It came pouring down and we had to run for shelter in the gymnasium – everyone was splashing around, the band playing on the verandah was half-drenched, it was dreadful! – the day before it hadn't rained, the day after it didn't rain. But on that day they had their revenge!

I don't want that to happen this time. Once is enough. So I'm going to see about it.

(silence)

But it's explained very well in *Savitri*! All these things have their laws and their conventions (and truly speaking, a really FORMIDABLE power is needed to change anything of their rights, for they have rights – what they call 'laws') ... Sri Aurobindo explains this very well when Savitri, following Satyavan into death, argues with the god of Death.²⁴⁹ 'It's the Law, and who has the right to change the Law?' he says. And then comes this wonderful passage at the end where she replies, 'My God can change it. And my God is a God of Love.' Oh, how magnificent!

And by force of repeating this to him, he yields ... She replies in this way to EVERYTHING.

It's all right for winning a Victory, but not for stopping the rain for one day!

So I'm trying to come to an understanding, to reach an agreement – these are very complicated matters (!). For it's a whole totality ... You see, we are trying something here which really is contrary to all those laws and practices, something which disturbs everything. So 'they' propose things that have me advancing like this (*sinuous motion*), without disturbing things too much, and without having to call in forces ... (Mother makes a gesture of a lance thrust into the pack) forces a bit too great, which may disturb things too much. Like that, we can keep tacking back and forth.

A while ago ... You know that I have TREMENDOUS financial difficulties. In fact, I have handed the whole matter over to the Lord, telling Him, 'It's your affair; if you want us to continue this experience, well, you must provide the means.' But this upsets some of 'them,' so they come along with all kinds of suggestions to keep me from having to ... to resort to something so drastic. They suggest all kinds of things; some time ago they said, 'What about a good cyclone, or a good earthquake? A lot of damage to the Ashram, a public appeal – that would bring in some funds!' (Mother laughs) Yes, it's of this order! And it's all quite clear and definite – we have veritable 'conversations'!

I listen, I answer. 'It's not satisfactory!' I told them. But they've kept to their idea, they like it. When that first storm came some time back (you remember, with those terrible bolts of lightning and that asuric being P.K. saw and sketched): 'Don't you want us to destroy something? ...' I got angry. But it was ... This influence was so close and acute that it gave you goose bumps! The whole time the storm lasted, I had to hold on tight in my bed, like this (Mother closes her fists tight as in a trance or deep concentration), and I didn't move – didn't move – like a ... a rock during the entire storm, until he consented to go a bit further away. Then I moved. And even now, it comes – from others (there's not just one, you see, there are many): 'How about a good flood?' A roof collapsed the other day with someone underneath, but he was able to escape. So roofs are collapsing, houses ... 'Arouse public sympathy, we must help the Ashram!' 'It's no good,' I said. But maybe

249Yama: the god of Death. He is also the guardian of the Law.

that's what's responsible for this interminable rain. And they offer so many other things ... oh, what they parade past me! You could write books on all this!

But generally – and this is something Theon had told me (Theon was very qualified on the subject of hostile forces and the workings of all that ‘resists’ the divine influence, and he was a great fighter – as you might imagine! He himself was an incarnation of an asura, so he knew how to tackle these things!); he was always saying, If you make a VERY SMALL concession or suffer a minor defeat, it gives you the right to a very great victory.’ It’s a very good trick. And I have observed, in practice, that for all things, even for the very little things of everyday life, it’s true – if you yield on one point (if, even though you see what should be, you yield on a very secondary and unimportant point), it immediately gives you the power to impose your will for something much more important. I mentioned this to Sri Aurobindo and he said that it was true. It is true in the world as it is today, but it’s not what we want; we want it to change, really change.

He wrote this in a letter, I believe, and he spoke of this system of compensation – for example, those who take an illness on themselves in order to have the power to cure; and then there’s the symbolic story of Christ dying on the cross to set men free. And Sri Aurobindo said, ‘That’s fine for a certain age, but we must now go beyond that.’ As he told me (it’s even one of the first things he told me), ‘We are no longer at the time of Christ when, to be victorious, it was necessary to die.’

I have always remembered this.

But things are PULLING backwards – phew, how they pull! ... ‘The Law, the Law, it’s a Law. Don’t you understand, it’s a LAW, you can’t change the Law.’

– ‘But I CAME to change the Law.’

– ‘Then pay the price.’

(silence)

What can make them yield?

Divine Love.

It’s the only thing.

Sri Aurobindo has explained it in *Savitri*. Only when Divine Love has manifested in all its purity will everything yield, will it all yield – it will then be done.

It’s the only thing that can do it.

It will be the great Victory.

(silence)

On a small scale, in very small details, I feel that of all the forces, this is the strongest. And it’s the only one with a power over hostile wills. Only ... for the world to change, it must manifest here in all its fullness. We have to be up to it ...

Sri Aurobindo had also written to the effect, ‘If Divine Love were to manifest now in all its fullness and totality, not a single material organism would but burst.’ So we must learn to widen, widen, widen not only the inner consciousness (that is relatively easy – at least feasible), but even this conglomeration of cells. And I’ve experienced this: you have to be able to widen this sort of crystallization if you want to be able to hold this Force. I know. Two or three times, upstairs (*in Mother’s room*), I felt the body about to burst. Actually, I was on the verge of saying, ‘burst and be done with.’ But Sri Aurobindo always intervened – all three times he intervened in an entirely tangible, living and concrete way ... and he arranged everything so that I was forced to wait.

Then weeks go by, sometimes even months, between one thing and another, so that some elasticity may come into these stupid cells.

So much time is wasted. We are ... oh! We are so hard! (*Mother hits her body*) As hard as a rock.

But three times now, I've really felt that I was on the verge of ... falling apart. The first time it brought a fever, a fever so ... I don't know, as if I had at least 115°! – I was roasting from head to toe; everything became red hot, and then ... it was over. That was the day when suddenly – suddenly – I was ... You see, I had said to myself, 'All right, you must be peaceful, let's see what happens,' so then I brought down the Peace, and immediately I was able to pass into a 'second of unconsciousness – and I woke up in the subtle physical, in Sri Aurobindo's abode.²⁵⁰ There he was. And then I spent some time with him, explaining the problem.

But that was really an experience, a decisive experience (it was many months ago, perhaps more than a year ago).

So I explained the problem to Sri Aurobindo, and he replied (by his expression, not with words, but it was clear), 'Patience, patience – patience, it will come.' And a few days after this experience, 'by chance' I came upon something he had written where precisely he explained that we are much too rigid, coagulated, clenched for these things to be able to manifest – we must widen, relax, become plastic.

But this takes time.

I don't really see what we can do ... I mean, it's you who does, of course, but I don't see what we can do to help change things.

Nor do I!

I have quite the feeling that I myself 'do' nothing at all, absolutely nothing. The only thing I do is this (*gesture of offering upwards*), constantly this, in everything – in thoughts, feelings, sensations, in the body's cells, all the time: 'You, You, You. It's You, it's You, it's You ...' That's all. And nothing else.

In other words, a more and more complete, a more and more integral assent, more and more like this (*gesture of letting herself be carried*). That's when you have the feeling that you must be ABSOLUTELY like a child.

If you start thinking, 'Oh, I want to be like this! Oh, I ought to be like that!' you waste your time.



November 15, 1960

I don't know if it's due to Z's visit²⁵¹ or simply if the time had come and things converged (because

250Night of July 24, 1959.

251Conversation of November 8, the 'artist' disciple with loose morals.

that's what generally happens), but a whole period of the past is coming up again – and it's not a purely personal past, for it includes all the acquaintances I used to have, a whole collection of things that represents not only my individual life but something rather collective (as it always is; each of us is always a collectivity but we aren't aware of it, and if anything were taken away, it would unbalance the whole). A whole set of things that were absolutely wiped clean from the memory (it must have been buried somewhere in the subconscious or the semi-conscious – in any case, something more unconscious than the subconscious), and it has all come back up. Oh, things ... such things ... If just two weeks ago someone had asked me, 'Do you remember that?' I would have replied, 'No, not at all!' And it's coming from every side. Oh, such mediocrity! (mediocre in the way of consciousness, experiences and activities) and so gray, so dull, so flat! Only this morning, while getting ready for the balcony, I thought, 'Is it possible to live like that?!"

And then it became so clear that behind all this there was always the same luminous Presence, this Presence that is everywhere, always, watching over everything.

And as I look now at the things of life, at people, at this totality, I see that it's identically the same thing when seen from there, from that consciousness – it's so drab, dull, insipid, gray, uninteresting, lifeless ... Oh, all of life, WHATEVER IT IS, is like that when seen from that consciousness!

So I understood that this must correspond to a certain realm of experience; I understood all those who say, 'If it has to be like this, if it can never be otherwise, then ...' (this opposition, this abyss between a TRUE life, a TRUE consciousness, a TRUE activity, something living, powerful, fulfilling ... and life as it now is), 'if there must always be this difference between the physical expression as it is or as it can be in the present circumstances, and the true life, then ...' For if despite everything – despite this tremendous distance I've covered in my life (these memories go back more than sixty years) and all the evolutionary effort upwards I have made since that time IN MATTER (I'm not speaking of leaving Matter behind, but IN MATTER, IN action) – if that doesn't further reduce this gap between the true consciousness and the possible material realization, then I understand ... I understand why people say, 'It's hopeless.' (Of course, this 'hopeless' is meaningless to me.)

But I ... (how can I put this?) I lived their experience, I lived it; and even events which seem quite extraordinary when seen from afar, which is the way they appear to most people, even historical things which have furthered the earth's transformation and its upheavals – the crucial events, the great works, you might say – are woven from the SAME fabric, they are the SAME thing! When you look at all this from afar, on the whole it can make an impression, but the life of each minute, of each hour, of each second is woven from this SAME fabric, drab, dull, insipid, WITHOUT ANY TRUE LIFE – a mere reflection of life, an illusion of life – powerless, void of any light or anything that resembles joy in the least. Oh! ... if it has always to remain like that, then we don't want any of it.

Such is the feeling it gives.

For me it's different, because I KNOW that it can and must become something else. But then all this Consciousness which is there and in which I live and which has this world vision must come forward and manifest in the vibration of EACH second – not in a whole which looks interesting when seen from afar; it must enter the vibration of each second, the consciousness of each minute, otherwise ...

(silence)

How well I understand all those who don't know or to whom it hasn't been shown or revealed that we are GOING towards something else, that it WILL BE something else! ... Such a feeling of futility, stupidity, uselessness, and absolutely devoid of any ... any intensity, any life, any reality, any ardor, any soul – bah! It's disgusting.

While it was all coming up, I thought, 'How is this possible? ...' For during those years of my

life (I'm now outside things; I do them but I'm entirely outside, so they don't involve me – whether it's like this or like that makes no difference to me; I'm only doing my work, that's all), I was already conscious, but nevertheless I was IN what I was doing to a certain extent; I was this web of social life (but thank God it wasn't here in India, for had it been here I could not have withstood it! I think that even as a child I would have smashed everything, because here it's even worse than over there). You see, there it's ... it's a bit less constricting, a bit looser, you can slip through the mesh from time to time to breathe some air. But here, according to what I've learned from people and what Sri Aurobindo told me, it's absolutely unbearable (it's the same in Japan, absolutely unbearable). In other words, you can't help but smash everything. Over there, you sometimes get a breath of air, but still it's quite relative. And this morning I wondered ... (you see, for years I lived in that way ... for years and years) just as I was wondering, 'How was I able to live that and not kick out in every direction?', just as I was looking at it, I saw up above, above this ... (it is worse than horrible, it is a kind of ... Oh, not despair, for there isn't even any sense of feeling – there is NOTHING! It is dull, dull, dull ... gray, gray, gray, clenched tight, a closed web that lets through neither air nor life nor light – there is nothing) and just then I saw a splendor of such sweet light above it – so sweet, so full of true love, true compassion something so warm, so warm ... the relief, the solace of an eternity of sweetness, light, beauty, in an eternity of patience which feels neither the past nor the inanity and imbecility of things – it was so wonderful! That was entirely the feeling it gave, and I said to myself, 'THAT is what made you live, without THAT it would not have been possible.' Oh, it would not have been possible – I would not have lived even three days! THAT is there, ALWAYS there, awaiting its hour, if we would only let it in.

(silence)

And it's still the same thing; only now I'm up here (*Mother gestures above the head*), I'm here, so it's quite another matter.

I am no longer looking out at the sky from below, but from up above ... I am looking, as if each look at each thing seen established the Contact.

It was like that this morning at the balcony.

The rainy season expresses this state of things so well: a constant descent of luminous sweetness (sweetness is not the right word – there must be a Sanskrit word for it, but this is all we have! ...) in this endless gloom.

* * *

(*Soon afterwards, Mother comes back to the same theme*)

It all began the day I received the news of Z's arrival. 'All right,' I thought, 'here's a chunk of life sent back to me for clarifying. I must work on it.' But it didn't stop there ... It's strange how all this past had been swept clean – I could no longer remember dates, I couldn't even remember when Z had been here before, I no longer knew what had happened, it had all been wiped clean – which means that it had all been pushed down into the subconscious. I didn't even know how I used to speak to him when I saw him, nothing, it was all gone. All that had remained alive were one or two movements or facts which were clearly connected to the psychic life, the psychic consciousness – but just one or two or three such memories; all the rest was gone.

So a whole slice of my life came back, but it didn't stop there! It keeps extending back further and further, and memories keep on coming, things that go back sixty years now, even beyond, seventy, seventy-five years – they are all coming back. And so it all has to be put in order.

It's quite odd, for this was not a personal consciousness, it was not 'someone remembering his life' – this is what I found most interesting; what came were pieces, little chunks of life's construction, a collection of people and circumstances. And it is impossible to separate the

individual from all that is around him, it's clear! It all holds together like ... (if you change one thing, everything is changed) it holds together like an agglomerated mass.

I had seen this earlier from another angle. In the beginning, when I started having the consciousness of immortality and when I brought together this true consciousness of immortality and the human conception of it (which is entirely different), I saw so clearly that when a human (even quite an ordinary human, one who is not a collectivity in himself – as is a writer, for example, or a philosopher or statesman) projects himself through his imagination into what he calls ‘immortality’ (meaning an indefinite duration of time) he doesn’t project himself alone but rather, inevitably and always, what is projected along with himself is a whole agglomeration, a collectivity or totality of things which represent the life and the consciousness of his present existence. And then I made the following experiment on a number of people; I said to them, ‘Excuse me, but let’s say that through a special discipline or a special grace your life were to continue indefinitely. What you would most likely extend into this indefinite future are the circumstances of your life, this formation you have built around yourself that is made up of people, relationships, activities, a whole collection of more or less living or inert things. But that CANNOT be extended as it is, for everything is constantly changing! And to be immortal, you have to follow this perpetual change; otherwise, what will naturally happen is what now happens – one day you will die because you can no longer follow the change. But if you can follow it, then all this will fall from you! Understand that what will survive in you is something you don’t know very well, but it’s the only thing that can survive – and all the rest will keep falling off all the time ... Do you still want to be immortal?’ – Not one in ten said yes! ... Once you are able to make them feel the thing concretely, they tell you, ‘Oh no! Oh no! Since everything else is changing, the body might as well change too! What difference would it make?’ But what remains is THAT; THAT is what you must truly hold on to – but then you must BE THAT, not this whole agglomeration. What you now call ‘you’ is not THAT, it’s a whole collection of things..

Formerly, that was my first step – a long time ago. Now it’s so very different ... I wonder how it was possible to have been so totally blind as to call that ‘oneself’ at any moment in one’s life! It’s a collection of things. And what was the link by which that could be called ‘oneself’? That’s more difficult to find out. Only when you climb above do you come to realize that THAT is at work here, but it could work there as well, or as well here, or here, or here ... At times there is suddenly a drop of something (Oh, I saw that this morning – it was like a drop, a little drop, but with SUCH an intense and perfect light ...), and where THAT falls it makes its center and begins radiating out and acting. THAT is what can be called ‘oneself’ – nothing else. And THAT precisely is what enabled me to live in such dreadfully uninteresting, such nonexistent circumstances. And at the moment when you ARE that, you see how that has lived and how that has used everything, not only in this body but in all bodies and through all time.

At the core, this is the experience; it is no longer knowledge. I now understand quite clearly the difference between the knowledge of the eternal soul, of life eternal through all its changes, and this CONCRETE experience of the thing.

It’s very moving.

It was strange, this morning ... I came a few minutes late. (I blamed the clocks which weren’t working, but it wasn’t the clocks which were to blame!) I was getting dressed when suddenly all this came upon me – I had a moment of ... it may have lasted one or two minutes, just a few minutes, not long. – Oh, the emotion I had during the experience was ... it was very absorbing.

It was no longer this (that is, life as it is on earth) becoming conscious of That (the eternal soul, this ‘portion of the Supreme’ as Sri Aurobindo said); it was the eternal soul seeing life ... in its own way – but without separation, without any separation, not like something looking from above that feels itself to be different ... How strange it is! It’s not something else, it’s NOT something else, it’s not even a distortion, not even ... It’s losing its illusory quality as described in the old spiritualities – that’s not what it is! In my experience, there was ... there was clearly an ... emotion – I can’t

describe it, there are no words. It wasn't a feeling, it was something like an emotion, a vibration ... of such TOTAL closeness and at the same time of compassion, a compassion of love. (Oh, words are so pitiful! ...) One was this outer thing, which was the total negation of the other and AT THE SAME TIME the other, without the least separation between them. It WAS the other. So what was born in one was born in the other as well, in this eternal light. A sweetness of identity, precisely, an identity that was necessarily such total understanding with such perfect love – but 'love' says it poorly, all words are poor! It's not that; it's something else! It's something that cannot be expressed.

I lived that this morning, upstairs.

And this body is ... oh, how feeble and how poor it is. All it finds to express itself are the tears that come to its eyes! Why? – I don't know.

It has a lot to do before it is strong enough to LIVE that.

This was still there, like a sweetness, when I came to the balcony ... And the notion that people, objects, life, that all that are 'different' ... is unthinkable! It is not possible. Even thought is so strange!

(silence)

I often find leaving the balcony difficult. And it's only this same gentleman ... (you know, the 'censor') who starts telling me, 'You're keeping them there in the rain just because you're in ecstasy; you're just letting them stand there drenched and getting a crick in the neck looking up in the air. Aren't you going to let them go?' – When he insists too much, I go back inside.

Maybe that's why he's still there. Otherwise, if I forgot ... (*Mother laughs*)



November 26, 1960

(Mother had wanted this personal conversation to be erased and remain untranscribed, but considering its importance, we thought it better to preserve it.)

Your force cured me in one hour in a spectacular way. I would understand if you had merely cured my flu, for that's something more general, and with a good general vibration it can be removed; but the force acted with an astonishing precision and accuracy: first it wiped out my flu, then it touched a toothache that's been hurting for the last three days, and in five minutes that was gone. Finally, I had a pulled ligament which for three or four years now has periodically given me pain (a thigh ligament where it joins the pelvis, to be precise) and this last week it was hurting so much that I found it difficult to sit cross-legged for meditation. And then I felt the force come and touch just there, exactly at this point, and the pain vanished. And yet the problem was of an organic nature, not some general illness! ...

(Mother remains silent a moment,

then says:)

Not last night but the night before, I touched at least one of the causes (at that time it felt like THE cause) of a certain powerlessness to act directly on Matter ... You see, when the Will and the Power come, they are extremely effective everywhere UP TO A CERTAIN REGION (in other words, whether people are receptive or not, open or not, makes no difference – when the Will is applied it is all-powerful UP TO a certain region) but once it arrives here, at the most material material, its efficacy depends on many things – and a power which depends on something is no power! For a long, long time I have been searching for the reasons behind this powerlessness. I've located a few, one after another, and upon these points there was an immediate effect. But some things resisted (oh, quite a number, in a number of ways), for example it had difficulty acting on illnesses, on the cells, on doubt (not mental doubt, but rather the doubt of the physical consciousness which can't accept certain things that seem impossible to it – what Sri Aurobindo calls *disbelief*,²⁵² not a mental doubt, but the *disbelief* of the physical consciousness which can't accept what is contrary to its own nature and its own working). And as for illnesses, sometimes it has an immediate effect, but sometimes it drags on and has to follow its so-called normal course. On all these three points, I clearly felt that something was hampering it. These are the Enemy's strongholds; all that doesn't want the Divine seizes upon it and even the working of the Power coming from above is obstructed, for when it must work here in the body, it is stopped or deformed or altered or diminished.

All this goes on in the subconscious; these are things that were pushed out of the physical consciousness down into the subconscious, so they're there and they come back up whenever they please.

Two nights ago (no, three – the night before Darshan), I had one of those experiences that ... that leaves you pensive the whole day ...

(silence)

It was still there when I went down for Darshan, and in spite of all my will to be friendly and pleasant, I was like a rock, looking at that ... I can't speak of it now, for it's the key to SOMETHING VERY GREAT.

(silence)

It's the very point where Nature (I mean the passive side of the force of manifestation) is a slave to the hostile forces. There is a point where She is dominated by them. And this must be cured before the Power from above, the Power of the Shakti, can pass through everything, dominate everything, and be infallible ...

I saw the thing, the experience took place, but sometimes it takes long for all the consequences to be ... *worked out*.²⁵³

But immediately, the following day – Darshan day – as the thing developed (you see, something was working inside), I could again turn my attention to the people who were there. And oddly enough, just when you came, there was suddenly a kind of little shock, like an electric shock, and a spark leapt out. And at that moment the Power acted for perhaps a split second ... You see, there has been this bad karma, this old formation around you for a very long time, and it hadn't ... I recall telling you several years ago, 'I shall be able to cure such cases as yours only when the Supramental descends.' And this feeling of incapacity, of something resisting, was still present, still alive – of not having the right power to dominate it. But just as you went by, for a second, there was this flash of ... like a spark when two electric wires touch. It was a golden spark, a resplendent light – zzzt!

252Original English.

253Original English.

And it leapt out. ‘Ah!’ I thought; ‘it’s good.’

That was it.

Then afterwards, when you wrote that you were sick, I thought, ‘Well, well! What does it mean?’ I didn’t answer, I didn’t say a thing, but when I went back upstairs and started walking for my japa, I brought back this experience of the Darshan – this moment during the Darshan – and I felt that it had left something behind (the effect was not total or absolute, but something had been left), and I decided that through this I would try to make you feel better.

I felt your intervention very clearly. I was really in a bad way, but when I came out of the japa, I knew it was cured. There is still something in the leg that pulls a little, but it has practically disappeared.

It’s the memory, the memory in the cells. Good; it’s good. I’m happy. It’s the first such experience.

Before I fell sick, I had a peculiar dream. I was here in the corridor, and someone quite dark came to tell me that Mother wanted me to change my work. And I recall trying with all my might to ask him, ‘But why, why?’ Finally you arrived. You were there at a table with some others. I was quite annoyed because all these people upset me, they were hindering me from being with you. And you said to me very clearly, ‘It’s time this gentleman goes.’ perhaps this gentleman represented a part of my being which had to disappear or change, but anyway you asked me to do something extremely difficult – I felt a very great difficulty doing it. I even remember, in my dream, having left you for an instant, as if I wanted to leave the Ashram, then I must have walked up and down for a while. Finally, I must have made an enormous effort to come back and sit next to you on a bench which symbolically was very hard ... The next morning I woke up with the flu.

So, it’s very simple. The sickness was due to one part of your being going faster than the rest. A part of the physical consciousness probably remained behind, and that created this imbalance and triggered the sickness.

It took a huge effort in my dream.

Yes, it’s good. It’s working as it should. It may not be very nice to tell someone it’s good he was sick, but it’s good!

(silence)

You see, I’m doing the sadhana really along a ... a path that has never been trod by anyone. Sri Aurobindo did it ... in principle. But he gave the charge of doing it in the body to me.

That was the wonderful thing when we were together and all these hostile forces were fighting ... (they tried to kill me any number of times. He always saved me in an absolutely miraculous and marvelous way). But you see, this seemed to create very great BODILY difficulties for him. We discussed this a great deal, and I told him, ‘If one of us must go, I want that it should be me.’

‘It can’t be you,’ he replied, ‘because you alone can do the material thing.’²⁵⁴

And that was all.

He said nothing more. He forbade me to leave my body. That’s all. ‘It is absolutely forbidden.’ he said. ‘You can’t, you must remain.’²⁵⁵

After that (this took place early in 1950), he gradually ... You see, he let himself fall ill. For he

254Original English.

knew quite well that should he say ‘I *must* go,’²⁵⁶ I would not have obeyed him, and I would have gone. For according to the way I felt, he was much more indispensable than I. But he saw the matter from the other side. And he knew that I had the power to leave my body at will. So he didn’t say a thing, he didn’t say a thing right to the very last minute ...

(silence)

Once or twice I ‘heard’ certain things about him and I told him (for I told him all I saw or heard), and I said that I was ... that these suggestions were coming from the Enemy and that I was violently fighting against them. Then he looked at me – twice – he looked at me, nodded his head and smiled. And that’s all. Nothing more was said. ‘How strange!’ I thought. And that’s all. Then I myself must have forgotten. You see, he wanted me to forget.

I only remembered afterwards.

(silence)

But ...

(silence)

This path is very hard.

(silence)

And then things don’t happen at all as they do in ordinary life ... for three or four minutes, sometimes five or ten minutes, I’m a-bo-minably sick, with every sign that it’s all over.

(silence)

But it’s only to make me find the ... to make me go through the experience and to find the strength. And also to give the body this absolute faith in its Divine Reality – to show it that the Divine is there and that He wants to be there and that He shall be there. And it’s only at such ‘moments’ as these – when logically, according to the ordinary physical logic, it’s all over – that you can seize the key.

You have to go right through everything without flinching.

I haven’t told this to anyone until now, especially not to those who take care and watch over me, for I don’t want to ... terrify them. Besides, I’m not so sure of their reactions – you understand, if they started getting frightened, it would be terrible. So I don’t tell them. But it has happened at least five or six times, usually in the morning before going down to the balcony, just when I don’t have the time ... And it has to be done quickly, for I have to be ready on time!

It’s very, very interesting. But then, you see, at such moments the ... *concreteness of the Presence*²⁵⁷ – concrete to the touch, really to the material touch – is extraordinary!

How many more such experiences will be necessary? I don’t know, you see, I’m only building the path.

(silence)

Don’t write all this down, erase it, because ... I’ll speak of it later – once it’s over, when I’ve reached the end. I don’t want it to fall into anyone’s hands by accident. And for you, keep it in your

255Original English.

256Original English.

257Original English.

consciousness.

(silence)

I'm telling you all this because of what happened the other day. It's with such experiences that the ... the true Power is acquired.

And then, at the same time, some rather interesting things are happening. Imagine, X is starting to understand certain things – that is, in his own way he is discovering the progress I am making; he's discovering it as a received teaching (*through subtle channels*). He wrote a letter to Amrita two or three days ago in which he translates in his own language, with his own words and his own way of speaking, exactly my most recent experiences – things that I have conquered in a general way.

This interests me, for these things do not at all enter through the mind (he doesn't receive a thing there, he's closed there). So in his letter he says that this thing or that is necessary (he describes it in his own words), and he adds, 'This is why we must be so grateful to have among us the ... *the great Mother*²⁵⁸ (as he puts it), the great Mother who knows these things.' – 'Good!' I said to myself. (It had to do with something specific concerning the capacity for discrimination in the outside world, the different qualities and different functions of different beings, all of which depends on one's inner construction, as it were.) So I see that even this, even these physical experiences, is received (and yet I hadn't tried, I had never tried to make him receive it); it merely works like this, you see (*gesture of a widespread diffusion*), and the experience is very – how should I say? – drastic, with a kind of ... (*power of radiation*). Imperative.



December 2, 1960

(*After meditating together*)

A sort of unification is taking place [in you], as if you had become a more uniform whole within-without. I don't know how to explain this – it feels more unified, more organized – uniform. Not some parts more developed and others less so, some more luminous and others less so; it's much more uniform, and uniform even in the vibration, a kind of ... really a uniformity in all its movements, responses, vibrations, light. And this kind of powdering of the new light which I see is much more widespread. It's as if everything, everything ... what is happening is really a work of unifying – stabilizing, unifying. And this powdering of golden light has completely enveloped you, with this same blue light in your japa, with different intensities of power – both are there. Like a unifying of the consciousness, as if all the less receptive elements were starting to open, thereby creating a much more homogeneous whole. I don't know how your nights are, but ...

Not very conscious.

258Original English.



December 13, 1960

During these last days, I was face to face with a problem as old as the world which had taken on an extraordinary intensity.

It's what Sri Aurobindo calls *disbelief*, and it's located in the most material physical consciousness – it isn't doubt (which mainly belongs to the mind), it is almost like a refusal to accept the obvious as soon as it doesn't belong to the little daily routine of ordinary sensations and reactions – a sort of incapacity to accept and recognize the exceptional.

This *disbelief* is the bedrock of the consciousness. And it comes with a ... ('thought' is too big a word for such an ordinary thing) a mental-physical activity which makes you ... (I am forced to use the word) 'think' things and which always foresees, imagines or draws conclusions (depending on the case) in a way which I myself call DEFEATIST. In other words, it automatically leads you to imagine all the bad things that can happen. And this occurs in a realm which is absolutely run-of-the-mill, in the most ordinary, restricted, banal activities of life – such as eating, moving ... in short, the coarsest of things.

It's fairly easy to manage and control this in the realm of thought, but when it comes to those reactions that rise up from the very bottom ... they're so petty that you can barely express them to yourself. For example, if someone mentions that so-and-so ate such-and-such a thing, immediately something somewhere starts stealing in: 'Ah, he's going to get a stomach-ache!' Or you hear that someone is going somewhere – 'Oh, he's going to have an accident!' ... And it applies to everything; it's swarming down below. Nothing to do with thought as such!

It's quite a nasty habit, for it keeps the most material state in a condition of disharmony, disorder, ugliness and difficulty.

I tried every possible way ... To get out of it is relatively easy. But then it doesn't change.

The problem appeared again to me very intensely when I read Sri Aurobindo's *The Yoga of Self-Perfection*. I was confronted with a whole formidable world to be transformed – to transform what is already luminous is quite easy, but to transform that! ... ugh – this stuff of life, so low and so coarse, so ordinary ... it's much more difficult.²⁵⁹

For the last several days, I've been at grips fighting with it. How can I stop this idiotic, coarse and above all defeatist automatism from constantly manifesting? It's truly an automatism; it doesn't respond to any conscious will, nothing. So what will it take to ... ? And it's QUITE INTIMATELY related to the body's illnesses (the old habits the body has of coming out of its rhythmic movement, of entering into confusion) – the two things are *very* intimately linked.

I'm deep in the problem.

²⁵⁹Later, Mother added the following: 'In this regard – I don't know where, but somewhere – Sri Aurobindo spoke of this physical mind, and he said that there was nothing you could do with it; it must only be destroyed.'

Mother may be alluding to the following passage from *The Synthesis of Yoga*: 'There is nothing to be done with this fickle, restless, violent and disturbing factor but to get rid of it whether by detaching it and then reducing it to stillness or by giving a concentration and singleness to the thought by which it will of itself reject this alien and confusing element.' (sent. Ed., Vol. XX, p. 300.)

For me, ‘the problem’ doesn’t mean explaining the thing (it’s easy to explain), but controlling, mastering and transforming it. That will take some time.

We shall see.

Now X is coming, and these days of meditation with trim.²⁶⁰ What is going to happen? ... By the way, he no longer writes that he’s coming to ‘help the Ashram.’ He wrote to Amrita that he’s coming to have the opportunity (I can’t exactly remember his words) ... anyway, to take advantage of his meditations with me so that he can make the necessary transformations! ... Quite a changed attitude. I had several visions concerning him which I’ll tell you later.



December 17, 1960

(Mother gives the disciple a cadamba flower which she has named ‘Supramental Sun’ – a striking orange ball consisting of innumerable stamens)

It’s beautiful, isn’t it? It’s all together, but it’s innumerable. It’s ONE thing going in all directions. And what a color! The tree is glorious.

Nature is a marvelous inventor – everything She does is beautiful. I don’t believe that man has succeeded in producing anything so perfect. Later, it’s true, some new species were developed by him, but nevertheless Nature still remains the origin.

Yes, ugliness seems to begin with man.

I think that even what seems to us ugly in animal and vegetal nature appears so only because of the limitations of our own understanding. But really, as soon as man enters the scene ... phew!

Yes, I have always felt that in Nature one can live in beauty, always. But then once man shows up, something gets thrown out of joint. It’s the mind, actually. What gives birth to ugliness is really the intrusion of the mind in life. I wonder if it was necessary, if it could not have been immediately harmonious. But it appears not.

Even stones are beautiful; they are always beautiful in one way or another. When life appeared, there were some forms that were a little ‘difficult,’ but not to that extent, not like certain human mental creations. Of course, there may have been some animal species which were rather ... but they were more monstrous than actually ugly. And most probably, it only seems like that to our consciousness. But the mind ... And it’s the same for all these ideas of sin, of wrong, of ... all that – it’s a falsehood. But it was man who invented falsehood, wasn’t it? The mind invented falsehood: to deceive! to deceive! And it’s a curious fact that animals domesticated by man have also learned to lie!

The curve ...

260The tantric guru. During his periodic visits to the Ashram, Mother used to give him almost daily meditations.

Anyway, we have to go beyond all that.

Beyond? ... That's quite a task!

So many people are satisfied with their falsehood, their ugliness, their narrowness, all of it. They're quite satisfied. When they're asked to be something else ...

This realm that I'm now investigating, oh! ... I spend whole nights visiting certain places, and there I meet people I know here materially [in the Ashram]. So many are PERFECTLY satisfied with their ... their infirmities, their incapacities, their ugliness, their powerlessness.

And they protest when you want them to change!

Even last night I went down into it ... It was so gray and dull and ... phew! Banal, lifeless. When they are told that, they retort, 'No, not at all! Things are quite all right as they are, it's you who is living in a dreamland!'

We'll get out of it one day.

But you cannot get out as long as it all seems quite natural to you. What's most unfortunate is when you resign yourself to it. You realize this when you go back to earlier states of consciousness; you see that it all seemed, if not quite natural, at least almost inevitable – 'that's how things are, you must take them as they are.' And you don't even think about it; you take things as they are, you EXPECT them to be what they are; it's the stuff of our daily lives, and it keeps repeating itself endlessly. And the only thing you learn is to hold on, hold on, not let yourself be shaken, to go right through it all – and it feels endless, interminable, almost eternal. (However, once you understand what eternal is, you see that this CANNOT be eternal, for otherwise ...)

But this particular state of endurance – this endurance that nothing can upset – is very dangerous. And yet it's indispensable; for you must first accept everything before having the power to transform anything.

It's what Sri Aurobindo always said: FIRST you must accept EVERYTHING – accept it as coming from the Divine, as the Divine Will; accept without disgust, without regret, without getting upset or impatient. Accept with a perfect equanimity; and only AFTER that can you say, 'Now let's get to work to change it.'

But to work to change it before having attained a perfect equanimity is impossible. That's what I have learned during these last years.

And for every detail, it's the same. First, 'May Thy Will be done'; then, afterwards, 'The Will of tomorrow' – and then those things will disappear. But first, one must accept.

That's why it takes so long. Because those who readily accept are ... they get encrusted and buried under it; they no longer move. And those who see the future and what must be have a hard time accepting; they pull back, they kick and protest – so they don't have any power.

* * *

(Soon afterwards, concerning the conversation of November 5 on the subconscious roots in the cells that can make everything fall apart in a second: 'To change it, you have to descend into it ... it makes for painful moments ... Once it's done, I'll have the power ... ')

When was this? November 5? And now it's December 17 ...

Well, it's still continuing!

There should be machines to graph the curves, for it's so ... sometimes it goes like this (*gesture of a very steep ascent*) and at such moments you feel, 'Ah! now I've caught the thing.' And then back it falls – toil. Sometimes it even feels like you're falling in a hole, really a hole – and how are

you ever going to get out? But that ALWAYS precedes a rapid ascent and a revelation or illumination: ‘Ah, how wonderful! I’ve finally got it!’

And that goes on for weeks and weeks.

To have the exact curve or the REAL history, we’d have to note down everything at each minute, for it’s a CONSTANT work that’s taking place. You see, the outer activities are becoming almost automatic, whereas this goes on behind – I’m speaking, yet at the same time this is going on behind.

It’s a sort of oscillation – really, it’s so interesting – between two extremes, one of which is the all-powerfulness and capital or primordial importance of the Physical, and the other its utter unreality.

And it’s constantly going back and forth between the two (*seesaw motion*). And both are equally false, equally true.

It goes back and forth between the two all the time – a kind of curve like an electric arc between them; it goes up, it goes down, it falls and then climbs back up. In a flash comes the clear vision that the universal realization will be achieved along with the perfection of the material, TERRESTRIAL world. (I say ‘terrestrial, for the earth is still something unique; the rest of the universe is different – so this blown up speck of dust becomes of capital importance!) Then, at another moment, eternity – for which all the universes are simply ... the expression of a second, and in which all this is a sort of – not even an interesting game, but rather ... a breathing in and out, in and out ... And at such a moment, all the importance we give to material things seems so fantastically idiotic! And it goes in and out ... In this state, everything is obvious and indisputable. And in the other state, everything is obvious and indisputable. But between the two there is EVERY combination and every possibility.

(silence)

And the problem is to hold both of them so PERFECTLY together that they are no longer in opposition. For one second, it comes – ah! – just a thousandth of a second – ah, yes! – and then it’s over, it’s gone. And you have to begin again.

(silence)

And particularly, this sense of what’s ‘important’ and ‘not important’ is something which vanishes, leaving no trace at all. You are left like that, with ... nothing. There is no SCALE in importance – that is entirely our mental imbecility. Either nothing is important or EVERYTHING is EQUALLY important.

The speck of dust, there, which you sweep away, or ecstatic contemplation – it’s ALL THE SAME.



December 20, 1960

Regarding Christmas, I’ll tell you a curious story.

For a while, there was a Muslim girl close to me (not a believer, but her origins were Muslim; in other words, she wasn't at all Christian) who had a special fondness for Santa Claus! She had seen pictures of him, read some books, etc. Then one year while she was here, she got it into her head that Santa Claus had to bring me something. 'He has to bring you something for Christmas,' she told me.

'Try,' I replied.

I don't know what all she did, but she prayed to him to bring me money. She fixed a certain sum. And on Christmas Eve, exactly this sum was given to me! And it was a large sum, several thousand rupees. Exactly the amount she had specified. And it came on that very day in quite an unexpected way.

I found it very interesting.

* * *

(Soon afterwards, concerning the last conversation of December 17 – a speck of dust which you sweep away, or ecstatic contemplation, 'It's all the same')

If I could only note all this down ... It's been so interesting all morning, right from the start – on the balcony, then upstairs while walking for my japa! And it was on this same theme (*experience of the speck of dust*) ... This habit people have (especially in India, but more or less everywhere among those who have a religious nature), this habit of doing all things religious with respect and compunction – and no mixing of things, above all there should be no mixing; in some circumstances, at certain times, you MUST NOT think of God, for then it would be a kind of blasphemy.

There's the religious attitude, and then there's ordinary life where people do things – working, living, eating, enjoying life; they regard these as the essentials, and as for the rest, well, when there's time they think about it. But what Sri Aurobindo brought down, precisely ... I remember at Tlemcen, Theon used to say that there was a whole world of things, such as eating, for example, or taking care of your body, that should be done automatically, without giving it any importance – 'it's not the time to think of things divine.'(!) That's what he preached. So you have the religious attitude of all the religious types, and then ordinary life – I found both of them equally unsatisfactory. Then I came here and told Sri Aurobindo my feeling; I said that if someone is truly in union with the Divine, it CANNOT change no matter what he does (the quality of what you're doing may change, but the union can't change no matter what you're doing). And when he said that this was the truth, I felt a relief. And that feeling has stayed with me all through my life.

And now, all these different attitudes which individuals, groups and categories of men hold are coming from every direction (while I'm walking upstairs) to assert their own points of view as the true thing. And I see that for myself, I'm being forced to deal with a whole mass of things, most of which are quite futile from an ordinary point of view – not to mention the things of which these moral or religious types disapprove. Quite interestingly, all kinds of mental formations come like arrows while I'm walking for my japa upstairs (*Mother makes a gesture of little arrows in the air coming into her mental atmosphere from every direction*); and yet, I'm entirely in what I could call the joy and happiness of my japa, full of the energy of walking (the purpose of walking is to give a material energy to the experience, in all the body's cells). Yet in spite of this, one thing after another comes, like this, like that (*Mother draws little arrows in the air*): what I must do, what I must answer to this person, what I must say to that one, what has to be done ... All kinds of things, most of which might be considered most futile! And I see that all this is SITUATED in a totality, and this totality ... I could say that it's nothing but the body of the Divine. I FEEL it, actually, I feel it as if I were touching it everywhere (*Mother touches her arms, her hands, her body*). And all these things neither veil nor destroy nor divert this feeling of being entirely this ... a movement, an action

in the body of the Divine. And it's increasing from day to day, for it seems that He is plunging me more and more into entirely material things with the will that THERE TOO it must be done – that all these things must be consciously full of Him; they *are* full of Him, in actual fact, but it must become conscious, with the perception that it is all the very substance of His being which is moving in everything ...

It was quite beautiful on the balcony this morning ...

A sweetness, a sensation ... (both together) a sensation of eternity, and a sweetness! I wonder if it's even possible for anything to escape That!

(silence)

Of course, if one is so unfortunate as to start thinking, it's all over.

(silence)

It's a FACT. It's not a thought, not something you observe – you aren't a witness: it's A FACT which is LIVED. So if you want to translate the experience, you'd have to say the most paradoxical of things, like Sri Aurobindo – so paradoxical that they are almost offensive to reason! Yes, more, far more than paradoxical.



December 23, 1960

(Mother arrives from a meditation with X, the tantric guru)

I come empty-handed ...

(Mother remains absorbed for a long time)

I sat down shortly before ten o'clock for meditation. I was in my normal state and I was interested to see if there would be any difference from earlier times. And really, at first there was no difference at all. Then slowly, slowly, I felt this type of smiling and serene peace that I live in entering into the body. The cells are still not always conscious of it (sometimes they feel a sort of ... tension of life – I don't know what to call it). They're conscious of their existence and of what it means and of the Energy that is acting (yes, conscious of the Action and the Energy that acts), but during the meditation THAT descended and there was an extraordinary relaxation. Not the relaxation that comes with *surrender*,²⁶¹ which I normally feel before sleeping, but the relaxation that comes from a kind of serene, immutable and eternal joy. At that moment the body felt it could remain like that forever! 'Oh, how nice I feel! ...' it said. And as a matter of fact, I'm not sure but I think he felt the meditation was over, whereas I was still ... I felt him stirring, so I stopped.

There was a marked difference.

261Original English.

For when something isn't right, a pressure always comes down on the body from above, the pressure of the descending Force. But in this case it wasn't that at all; rather, it was like this (*Mother holds her palms upwards in an attitude of total surrender*), but beatific in that it lives in itself, it is existence in itself – and that's all.

I came here in that state directly after the meditation, and when I sat down ... You see, I didn't even have the ... (naturally there is no question of 'idea') I don't know, not even the instinct to pick up a flower for you, you understand? And when I sat down here, the consciousness of the column of Light started coming. There was no more personality, no more individuality: there was only a column of Light descending right into the very cells of the body – and that's all.

Then it gradually became conscious of itself, conscious of BEING this column of Light. And then the ordinary consciousness slowly returned.

(silence)

It's interesting for me to come here soon after the meditation, for it's as if I were objectivizing my experience. Otherwise I'd be within, like that (*gesture*), and there's no longer any ... (you see, I say 'I' – but at that moment it doesn't exist!) and even THE BODY feels this way, a kind of immutable and beatific eternity, and that's all.

I tell you, not even ... When I arrived, I said to you, 'My hands are empty'; merely the contact with your atmosphere made me say it. But otherwise the 'my,' the 'hands' – none of it had any meaning.

It's interesting.



December 25, 1960

(*Letter to Mother from Satprem*)

Pondicherry, December 25, 1960

Sweet Mother,

I want to tell you that X completely changed my japa this morning. Instead of ten hours a day, I now have only about half an hour to do three times a day!

He told me that 'everything' is in this new japa.

And I want also to tell you how grateful I am. You think of us even in the smallest human details – grateful is not even the word. Simply, may I serve you better, may I better give of myself.

With love.

Signed: Satprem



December 31, 1960

(Mother usually improvised on the harmonium the morning of January 1 before reading the New Year's Message. She has come the day before to try out the instrument.)

Let's see ... How many months has it been? I haven't touched this instrument for at least eight months! And now tomorrow I have to play – don't feel like it. Anyway, since I must, I must! ... We'll meditate on it (*the New Year's Message*²⁶²) – you know what it is, for we worked on it together – and then I'll see if something comes.

(silence)

This throng looks more like a chaos. A dreadful confusion. But from next week people will start leaving. The crowning day will be January 6, which is Epiphany (but we have made it into a day for the offering of the material world to the Divine: the material world giving itself to the Divine) – it will be the climax,²⁶³ and I shall then see you on the 7th. After that, we'll work hard! But until then, no work – my head's in a kind of soup ... Oh, if you only knew! It's dreadful what people bring me, what they ask ...

(Mother sits at the harmonium)

Oh, my dress is caught under one of the stool legs. Are you strong?

Oh yes!

Can you lift me up? I'm very heavy, you know! ...

No, I'm afraid of making you capsize.

95 pounds.

95 pounds!

Yes, I was joking when I said that I was very heavy.

I thought as much!

I weigh 95 pounds. I should normally weigh 130 pounds.

(After playing)

It'll be something like that ... or something else – I've no idea!

²⁶²'This wonderful world of Delight waiting at our gates for our call, to come down upon earth.'

²⁶³Original English.

X seemed happy about his visit this time. We had long meditations of half an hour – he never seemed to want to leave at all! There was above all a kind of extremely calm universalization. An absolute and universal calm in all the cells of the body. I don't know if it was only me, but it seemed he was in the same state – unable to move, quite content, smiling. Once I heard the clock chime, and as I thought it was time and that perhaps he was ready to leave, I looked; he had removed the *mala*²⁶⁴ that he wears around his neck and I found him doing japa. As soon as he saw me looking, he quickly put it back on!

But what's most surprising is that with me, not a word, nothing, neither he nor I. And it seems to be just as comfortable for him as it is for me!

(silence)

On the 6th, everyone will finally be gone. But tomorrow is going to be dreadful; I have to sit there for at least two hours distributing calendars. And on top of that, there are all these controversies over the music they play at the library each week. Some say that it's very good, others that it's very bad (the usual things). And each party has pleaded his case. They told me that they'll give me a concert at *Prosperity*²⁶⁵ so that I may judge for myself. It's all recorded. I'm afraid it will be rather noisy ... For myself, I know quite well how to get out of it – I 'think' of something else! But it's going to ... I can see it already. Didn't I tell you we're in a chaos? Well, I have the feeling that this is going to beat all.

How do you mean a chaos?

Noise, movement, confusion, people ... Noise always gives me the impression of chaos, always.

I must say that downstairs on Darshan days people chat, look each other over, see how he or she is dressed – it's like a county fair around the Samadhi.

Yes, it's true – who's there, who isn't, how he looks, who's he with ... Oh!

(silence)

And you? What news?

It's not always easy.

Why isn't it easy!?

Oh, but you know, night after night, night after night, I SEE how things which in their truth are so simple become complicated here in the human atmosphere. Really, it's so interesting; I have visions ... you see, the thing in its truth is so simple it's stupefying, and then here it becomes so complicated, painful, exhausting, upsetting.

But it's enough to take one step behind to come out of it all.

I'll tell you about that ... Wait, we still have three minutes; I want to tell you one of my most recent visions (but it's almost the same thing every night):

I was in my home, somewhere – a world whose light is like a sun (golden with scarlet reflections); it was very beautiful. It was in a town, and my house was in that town. I wanted to take to someone some ... not presents, but things he needed. So I got everything together, prepared it all, and then loaded my arms with all the packages (I had taken my own time to arrange everything

264*Mala*: a kind of necklace of wooden beads with which one repeats a mantra.

265The room where Mother distributed to the disciples their needs (soap, paper, etc.) on the first of each month.

nicely), and I went out when the whole town was completely deserted – there was not a soul on the streets. A complete solitude. And such a sense of well-being, of light and force! Yes, really a kind of felicity, for no reason. And instead of weighing me down, it seemed as if my packages were pulling me! They pulled me on in such a way that each step was a joy, like a dance.

This lasted the whole time I was crossing the town. Then I came to a border, right at the beginning of another part where I was to take my packages; there, just a little below me, I saw a house under construction – the house belonging to the person to whom I had to deliver these presents (the symbolism in all this, of course, is quite clear).

As I approached the house, but still from some distance, I suddenly saw some men busy at work. Then instantly ... instantly this road which was so vast, sunlit and smooth – so smooth to the feet ... oh, it became the top level of a scaffolding. And what is more, this scaffolding was not very well made, and the closer I came the more complicated it got – there were planks jutting out, beams off balance. In short, you had to watch every single step to keep from breaking your neck. I began getting annoyed. Moreover, my packages were heavy. They were heavy and they so saddled my arms that I was unable to hold onto anything and had constantly to do a balancing act. Then I began thinking, ‘My God, how complicated this world is!’ And just at that moment, I saw a young person coming along, like a young girl dressed in European clothes, with a hat on her head ... all black! This young person had white skin, but her clothes were black, and she wore black shoes on her small white feet. She was dressed all in black – black, all in black. Like complete unconsciousness. She also came carrying packages (many more than me), and she came hopping along the whole length of the scaffolding, putting her feet just anywhere! ‘My God,’ I said to myself, ‘she’s going to break her neck!’ – But not at all! She was totally unconscious; she wasn’t even aware that it was dangerous or complicated – a total unconsciousness. But her unconsciousness is what allowed her to go on like that! I watched it all. ‘Well, sometimes it’s good to be unconscious!’ Then she disappeared; she had only come to give me a demonstration (she neither saw me nor looked at me). And looking down at the workers, I saw that everything was getting more and more complicated, more and more, more and more – and there wasn’t even any ladder by which to get down. In other words, it was getting unbearable. Then something in me rebelled: ‘Ah, no! I’ve had enough of all this – it’s too stupid!’

And IMMEDIATELY, I found myself down below, relieved of my packages. And everything was perfectly simple. (I had even brought the packages along without realizing it.) All, all was in order, very neat, very luminous, very simple – simply because I had said, ‘Ah, no! I’ve had enough of this business! Why all these stupid complications!’²⁶⁶

But these are not ‘dreams,’ they are types of activity – more real, more concrete than material life; the experience is much more concrete than ordinary life.

I have had hundreds of such examples ... It’s not always the same scene. The scenes are different, but the story is always the same – the thing, in its truth, is absolutely luminous, pleasant, charming; then as soon as men get involved, it becomes an abominable complication. And once you say, ‘No! I’ve had enough of all this – it’s NOT TRUE! it goes away.

There have been similar stories in ‘dreams’ with X. I saw him when he was very young (his education, the ideas he had, how he was trained). And the same thing happened. I was with him ... but I’ll tell you that another time ...²⁶⁷ And then at the end, I’d had enough and I said, ‘Oh, no! It’s too ridiculous!’ and with that I left the house. At the door was a little squirrel sitting on his haunches making friendly little gestures towards me. ‘Oh!’ I said, ‘here’s someone who understands better!’

But later I observed, I saw that this had helped drain him of all the weight of his past education.

266Mother later discovered that this world of complications is the symbol of the physical mind.

267Mother later narrated the end of her ‘dream’ with X:

Very interesting ... Night after night, night after night, night after night – plenty of things! You could write novels about it all.



‘It was his house, and it was rather complicated to enter. I was saying a mantra or japa when X came along; he had a ... a terribly reproachful air! Then he smelled my hands: ‘It’s a bad habit to wear perfume. (*Mother laughs*) You cannot live a spiritual life when you wear perfume.’ then I looked at him and thought, ‘My God, does he have to be so backward!’ But it annoyed me, so I said, ‘Very well, I’m going.’ When I got near the door, he started saying, ‘Is it true you have been married several times, and that you’ve been divorced?’ Then a kind of anger entered me (*laughing*) and I told him, ‘No, not just once, but twice!’ Thereupon, I left. All the old ideas ...

After that was when I saw the little squirrel.’

THE MOTHER'S VISION

Selections from *Questions and Answers*



The Mother

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The Mother

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM
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Publisher's Note

This book contains a selection of the Mother's conversations during the years 1929-31 and 1950-58. Covering a wide range of subjects in considerable depth, they give us a glimpse of her vision of existence. It is an inspiring vision of the future evolution of humanity and the promise of a divine life on earth.

The conversations belong to two distinct groups. During the first period, from 1929 to 1931, the Mother spoke informally with a small group of Ashramites who met her every week, answering questions about life and Yoga. During the second, from 1950 to 1958, she spoke to a larger audience, the Ashramites and students who attended her evening classes at the Ashram playground. The Mother often began by reading out to the class a passage from a work by Sri Aurobindo or herself. She then commented on the passage or invited questions on it. The conversations of 1929-31 were spoken in English; those of the 1950s were spoken in French and appear here in English translation.

The compilation was made by Georges Van Vrekhem. Details about the book are given in the Note on the Texts. There is also a Glossary for those who are not familiar with the terms used by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

NOTE ON PUNCTUATION

... Three dots indicate a brief pause in the Mother's speech. (A fourth dot is added when the pause comes at the end of a sentence.)

[...] Three dots within square brackets indicate an omission by the editors of some part of the text.

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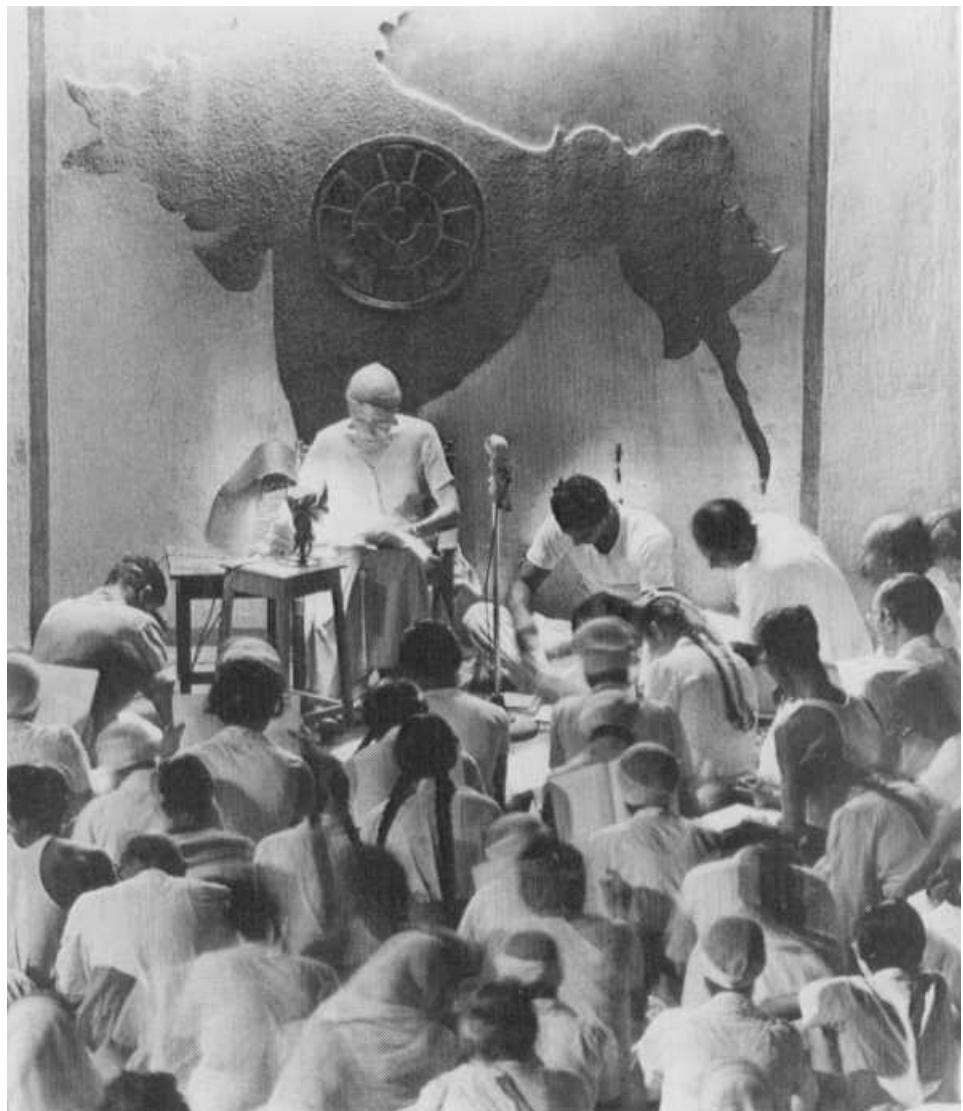
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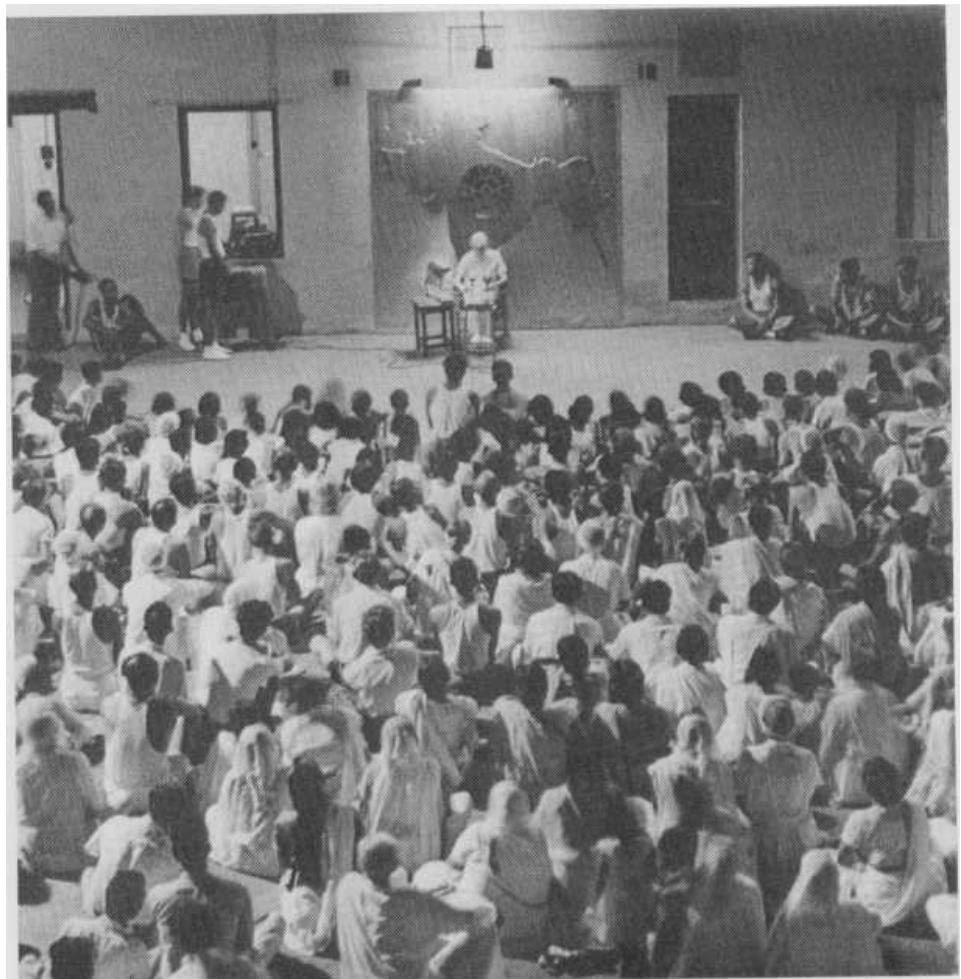
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The Mother with her French class in 1954



The Mother with members of her French class at the Ashram Playground in 1954

CHAPTER 1

The Divine and His Creation

God, the Divine, the Supreme

It all depends on what meaning you put into the word “God”. It is a word (I have told you this at least four or five times) to express “something” you do not know but are trying to attain. Well, if you have received a religious education, you are accustomed to call this “God”. If you have received a more positivist and also a more philosophical education, you are accustomed to call this by all sorts of names, and you may at the same time have the idea that it is the supreme truth. If one wants to speak of God and describe him, one is obliged to make use of things which are the most inaccessible to our consciousness, and to call God what is beyond anything we know and can grasp and be — all that is too far for us to be able to understand, we call God. Only some religions (there are some) give a precise form to the godhead; and sometimes they give several forms and they have several gods; sometimes they give one form and have only one God; but all this is human fabrication.

There is “something”, there is a reality which is beyond all our expressions, but which we can succeed in contacting by practising a discipline. We can identify ourselves with it. Once one is identified with it one knows what it is, but one cannot express it, for words cannot say it. So, if you use one kind of vocabulary, if you have a particular mental conviction, you will use the vocabulary corresponding to that conviction. If you belong to another group which has another way of speaking, you will call it or even think about it in that way. I am telling you this to give you the true impression, that there is something there which cannot be — grasped by thought — but which exists. But the name you give it matters little, that's of no importance, it *exists*.

And so the only thing to do is to enter into contact with it — not to give it a name or describe it. In fact, there is hardly any use giving it a name or describing it. One must try to enter into contact, to concentrate upon it, live it, live that reality, and whatever the name you give it is not at all

important once you have the experience. The experience alone counts. And when people associate the experience with a particular expression — and in so narrow a way, so closed up in itself that apart from this formula one can find nothing — that is an inferiority. One must be able to *live* that reality through all possible paths, all occasions, all formations; one must live it, for that indeed is true, for that is supremely good, that is all-powerful, that knows all, that... Yes, one can live that, but one cannot speak about it. And if one does speak, all that one says about it has no great importance. It is only one way of speaking, that is all.

There is an entire line of philosophers and people who have replaced the notion of God by the notion of an impersonal Absolute or by a notion of Truth or a notion of justice or even by a notion of progress — of something eternally progressive; but for one who has within him the capacity of identifying himself with that, what has been said about it hasn't much importance. Sometimes one may read a whole book of philosophy and not progress a step farther. Sometimes one may be quite a fervent devotee of a religion and not progress. There are people who have spent entire lifetimes seated in contemplation and attained nothing. There are people (we have well-known examples) who used to do the most modest of manual works, like a cobbler mending old shoes, and who had an experience. It is altogether beyond what one thinks and says of it. It is some gift that's there, that is all. And all that is needed is to be that — to succeed in identifying oneself with it and live it. At times you read one sentence in a book and that leads you there. Sometimes you read entire books of philosophy or religion and they get you nowhere. There are people, however, whom the reading of philosophy books helps to go ahead. But all these things are secondary.

There is only one thing that's important: that is a sincere and persistent will, for these things don't happen in a twinkling. So one must persevere. When someone feels that he is not advancing, he must not get discouraged; he must try to find out what it is in the nature that is opposing, and then make the necessary progress. And suddenly one goes forward. And when you reach the end you have an experience. And what is remarkable is that people who have followed altogether different paths, with altogether different mental constructions, from the greatest believer to the most unbelieving, even materialists, have arrived at that experience, it is the

same for everyone. Because it is true — because it is real, because it is the sole reality. And it is quite simply *that*. I do not say anything more. This is of no importance, the way one speaks about it, what is important is to follow the path, *your* path, no matter which — yes, to go there.

17 February 1954

*

What exactly is meant by “the impersonal Divine”?

It's what is called in some philosophies and religions the Formless; something that's beyond all form, even the forms of thought, you see, not necessarily physical forms: forms of thought, forms of movement. It is the conception of something which is beyond not only what can be thought or conceived or seen even with the most subtle eyes, but all that has any kind of perceptible form whatever, even vibrations more subtle than those which infinitely overpass all human perceptions, even in the highest states of being, something which is beyond all manifestation of any order whatever — usually that's how we define the impersonal God. He has nothing, none of the qualities we can conceive of, He is beyond all qualification. It is obviously the quest of something which is the opposite of the creation, and that is why some religions have introduced the idea of what they call Nirvana, that is, of something which is nothing; it is the same quest, the same attempt to find something which would be the opposite of all that we can conceive. So finally we define It, because how can we speak of It? But in experience one tries to go beyond all that belongs to the manifested world, and that is what we call the impersonal Divine.

20 July 1955

*

What does “to seek after the Impersonal” mean?

Oh! it's very much in fashion in the West, my child. All those who are

tired or disgusted with the God taught by the Chaldean religions, and especially by the Christian religion — a single God, jealous, severe, despotic and so much in the image of man that one wonders if it is not a demiurge as Anatole France said — these people when they want to lead a spiritual life no longer want the personal God, because they are too frightened lest the personal God resemble the one they have been taught about; they want an impersonal Godhead, something that doesn't *at all* resemble — or as little as possible — the human being; that's what they want.

But Sri Aurobindo says — something he has always said — that there are the godheads of the Overmind who indeed are very similar — we have said this several times — very similar to human beings, infinitely greater and more powerful but with resemblances which are a little too striking. Beyond these there is the impersonal Godhead, the impersonal Divine; but beyond the impersonal Divine there is the Divine who is the Person himself; and we must go through the Impersonal to reach the Supreme Divine who is beyond.

Only it is good, as I said, for those who have been put by education into contact with too individual, too personal a God, to seek the impersonal Divine, because this liberates them from many superstitions. After that if they are capable they will go farther and have once again a personal contact with a Divine who indeed is beyond all these other godheads.

20 July 1955

*

One of the great difficulties for most philosophies is that they have never recognised or studied the different planes of existence, the different regions of the being. They have the Supreme and then the Creation and then that's all, nothing between the two. This makes explanations very difficult.... All explanations, in the last analysis, are simply languages — there are languages which make understanding easier and others which make it more difficult. And some of these theories make the understanding of things very difficult — while if you recognise and study and become aware of the different intermediary states between the most material

Nature and the Supreme Origin, if you recognise and become conscious of all the intermediary regions, of all the inner states of being and all the outer regions, that can explain many problems. We have already studied this in connection with determinisms. If you say that the determinism is absolute and remain there, you understand nothing; it is quite obvious that all the events of life give you the lie; or else the problem is so complicated that you can't get hold of it. But if you understand that there are a large number of determinisms acting upon each other, interpenetrating, changing the action of one determinism by the action of another, then the problem becomes comprehensible.

It is the same thing for explaining the action of the Divine in the universe. If you take a central creative Force or a central creative Consciousness or a central immobile Witness, and then the universe, only that, nothing between the two, you cannot understand. There are people who have used this in such a naive way! They have made a Creator God and then his creatures. So all the problems come up. He has made the world, with what? Some tell you it is from the dust, but what is it, this dust? What was it doing before it was used to make a world?... Or from nothing! A universe was created out of nothing — that is foolish! it is very awkward for a logical mind. And over and above all that, you are told that He did this consciously, deliberately, and when he had finished he exclaimed, "Look, it is very good." Then, those who are in the universe reply, "We don't find it so good. It is perhaps very good for you but not for us."

These are naive conceptions. They are simply ignorant and naive conceptions which make the problem of the universe absolutely incomprehensible. And all these explanations are inadmissible for a mind which is ever so slightly awakened. That is why you are told, "Don't try to understand, you will never understand." But that is mental laziness, it is the mind's bad will. You see, one feels within oneself that, because one has this kind of power of thought-activity, this aspiration to find a light, a solution, it must correspond to something, otherwise... otherwise, truly (I think I have written this somewhere), if the universe were reduced to that simple notion, well, it would be the most sinister of farces and I should very well understand those who have declared, "Run away, get out of it as fast as possible." Unfortunately, I don't see how they would be able to get

out of it, for there is nothing else — how can you get out of something which alone exists? So, one enters a vicious circle, one turns round and round and this leads quite naturally to mental despair. But when one has the key — there are one or two keys, but there is one which opens all the doors — when one has the key, one follows one's road and little by little understands *the Thing*.

28 April 1951

*

What does Sri Aurobindo mean by an integral idea of the Divine?

Everyone forms an idea of the Divine for himself according to his personal taste, his possibilities of understanding, his mental preferences, and even his desires. People form the idea of the Divine they want, the Divine they wish to meet, and so naturally they limit their realisation considerably.

But if we can come to understand that the Divine is all that we can conceive of, and infinitely more, we begin to progress towards integrality. Integrality is an extremely difficult thing for the human consciousness, which begins to be conscious only by limiting itself. But still, with a little effort, for those who know how to play with mental activities, it is possible to widen oneself sufficiently to approach something integral.

You form an idea of the Divine which suits your own nature and your own conception, don't you? So if you want to get out of yourself a little and attempt to do a truly integral yoga, you must try to understand that the Divine is not only what you think or feel Him to be, but also what others think and feel Him to be — and in addition something that nobody can think and feel.

So, if you understand this, you have taken the first step on the path of integrality.

4 January 1956

The Oneness of Everything

Sweet Mother, here it is written: “All are linked together by a secret Oneness.” (Sri Aurobindo) What is this secret Oneness?

It is precisely the divine Presence.

Because the Divine is essentially one, and yet He has subdivided Himself apparently in all beings, and in this way recreated the primordial Oneness. And it is because of this divine Oneness — which, however, appears fragmented in beings — that the Unity is re-established in its essence. And when one becomes conscious of this, one has the joy of the consciousness of this Oneness. But those who are not conscious — what they miss is the joy of consciousness. But the fact remains the same.

Sri Aurobindo says: the Oneness exists; whether you are aware of it or not, it exists, in reality it makes no difference; but it makes a difference to you: if you are conscious, you have the joy; if you are not conscious, you miss this joy.[...]

Whether you know it or not, whether you want it or not, you are all united by the divine Presence which, though it appears fragmented, is yet One. The Divine is One, He only appears fragmented in things and beings. And because this Unity is a fact, whether you are aware of it or not doesn't alter the fact at all. And whether you want it or not, you are in spite of everything subject to this Unity.

This is what I have explained to you I don't know how many times: you think you are separate from one another, but it is the same single Substance which is in you all, despite differences in appearance; and a vibration in one centre automatically awakens a vibration in another.[...]

Everything turns around the consciousness, the fact of being or not being conscious. And it is only in the supreme Consciousness that you can attain the perfect expression of yourself.

But that the Oneness exists, even if you feel just the opposite, is a fact you can do nothing about, for it is a divine action and a divine fact — it is a divine action and a divine fact. If you are conscious of the Divine, you become conscious of this fact. If you are not conscious of the Divine, the

fact exists but you simply are not conscious of it — that's all.

So, everything turns around a phenomenon of consciousness. And the world is in a state of obscurity, suffering, misery, of... everything, all it is, simply because it is not conscious of the Divine, because it has cut off the connection in its consciousness, because its consciousness is separated from the Divine. That is to say, it has become unconscious.

For the true consciousness is the divine Consciousness. If you cut yourself off from the divine Consciousness, you become absolutely unconscious; that is exactly what has happened. And so, everything there is, the world as it is, your consciousness as it is, things in the state they are in, are the result of this separation of the consciousness and its immediate obscuration.

The minute the individual consciousness is separated from the divine Consciousness, it enters what we call the inconscience, and it is this inconscience that is the cause of all its miseries.

But all that is, is essentially divine, and the divine Oneness is a fact, you can't do anything about it; all your unconsciousness and all your denials will change nothing — it is a fact, it's like that.

And the conclusion is this, that the true transformation is the transformation of consciousness — all the rest will follow automatically.
[...]

Does the inconscient aspire to become conscious?

No. It is the Divine in the inconscient who aspires for the Divine in the consciousness. That is to say, without the Divine there would be no aspiration; without the consciousness hidden in the inconscient, there would be no possibility of changing the inconscience to consciousness. But because at the very heart of the inconscient there is the divine Consciousness, you aspire, and necessarily — this is what he says — automatically, mechanically, the sacrifice is made. And this is why when one says, "It is not *you* who aspire, it is the Divine, it is not *you* who make progress, it is the Divine, it is not *you* who are conscious, it is the Divine" these are not mere words, it is a fact. And it is simply your ignorance and your unconsciousness which prevent you from realising it.

*

If you analyse carefully, you see, for instance, that all that you think has been thought by others, that these are things which circulate and pass through you, but you have not produced this thought, you are not the originator of this thought. All your reactions come from atavism, from those who gave you birth and from the environment in which you have lived, from all the impressions which have accumulated in you and constituted something which seems to you yourself, yet which is not produced by you, but merely felt and experienced; you become aware of it in passing, but it is not you who created it, not you who gave it birth.

It could be said that these are like sounds — any kind of sounds: words, music, anything — recorded by an instrument, then reproduced by another instrument which plays them back like a gramophone, for instance. You wouldn't say that the gramophone has created the sound you hear, would you? That would never occur to you. But as you are under the illusion of your separate personality, these thoughts which cross your mind and find expression, these feelings which pass through your vital and find expression, you think, have come from you; but nothing comes from you. Where is the "you" which can create all that?

You must go deep, deep within, and find the eternal essence of your being to know the creative reality in yourself. And once you have found that, you will realise that it is one single thing, the same in all others, and so where is your separate personality? Nothing's left any longer.

Yes, these are recording and reproducing instruments, and there are always what might be called distortions — they may be distortions for the better, they may be distortions for the worse, they may be fairly great changes; the inner combinations are such that things are not reproduced exactly as they passed from one to the other because the instrument is very complex. But it is one and the same thing which is moved by a conscious will, quite independent of all personal wills.

When the Buddha wanted to make his disciples understand these things, he used to tell them: every time you send out a vibration, a desire

for example, the desire for some particular thing, your desire starts circulating from one person to another, from one to another across the universe and will go right round and come back to you. And as it is not only one thing but a world of things, and as you are not the only transmitting centre — all individuals are transmitting centres — it is such a confusion that you lose your bearings in there.

But these vibrations move about in a single, absolutely identical field; it is only the complication and interception of the vibrations which give you the impression of something independent or separate.

But there's nothing separate or independent; there is only *one* Substance, *one* Force, *one* Consciousness, *one* Will, which moves in countless ways of being.

And it is so complicated that one is no longer aware of it, but if one steps back and follows the movement, no matter which line of movement, one can see very clearly that the vibrations propagate themselves, one following another, one following another, one following another, and that in fact there is only one unity — unity of Substance, unity of Consciousness, unity of Will. And that is the only reality. Outwardly there is a kind of illusion: the illusion of separation and the illusion of difference.[...]

From the minute you become conscious of the Unity — unity of Force, unity of Consciousness and unity of Will — well, you no longer have the perception which makes you quite separate from others, so that you do not know what goes on in them, they are strangers to you, you are shut up as it were in your own skin, and have no contact with others except quite externally and superficially. But this happens precisely because you have not realised in yourself the perception of this oneness of Consciousness, Force and Will — even of material vibrations.

It is the complexity which makes this perception difficult — for our faculties of perception are quite linear and very one-sided; so when we want to understand, we are immediately assailed by countless things which are almost inconsistent with each other and intermix in such an intricate way that one can no longer make out the lines and follow things — one suddenly enters a whirlwind.

But this is because... For instance, most men think one thought after

another, even as they have to say one word after another — they can't say more than one word at the same time, you know, or else they stammer. Well, most people think like that, they think one thought after another, and so their whole consciousness has a linear movement. But one begins to perceive things only when one can see spherically, globally, think spherically, that is, have innumerable thoughts and perceptions simultaneously.

Naturally, up to now, if one wanted to describe things, one had to describe them one after another, for one can't say ten words at once, one says one word after another; and that is why all one says is practically quite incapable of expressing the truth, quite incapable. For we have to say one thing after another — the minute we say them one after another, they are no longer true. They must all be said at the same time, just as they can all be seen at the same time, and each one in its place.

So, when one begins to see like this — to see, to discern, to feel, to think, to will like this one — draws near the Truth. But so long as one sees as one speaks, oh, what a lamentable poverty!

8 February 1956

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What is the role of the spirit?

One might say that it is both the conscious intermediary between the Supreme and the manifestation, and the meeting-place of the manifestation with the Supreme.

Spirit is capable of understanding and communicating with the highest Godhead and at the same time it is the purest, one might say the least distorted intermediary of the highest Godhead in the outermost manifestation. It is spirit which, with the help of the soul, turns the consciousness towards the Highest, the Divine, and it is in the spirit that the consciousness can begin to understand the Divine.

It might be said that what is called "spirit" is the atmosphere brought into the material world by the Grace so that it may awaken to the consciousness of its origin and aspire to return to it. It is indeed a kind of

atmosphere which liberates, opens the doors, sets the consciousness free. This is what enables the realisation of the truth and gives aspiration its full power of accomplishment.

From a higher standpoint, this could be put in another way: it is this action, this luminous and liberating influence that is known as “spirit”. All that opens to us the road to the supreme realities, pulls us out from the mud of the Ignorance in which we are stuck, opens the doors to us, shows us the path, leads us to where we have to go — this is what man has called “spirit”. It is the atmosphere created by the Divine Grace in the universe to save it from the darkness into which it has fallen.

The soul is a kind of individual concentration of this Grace, its individual representative in the human being. The soul is something particular to humanity, it exists only in man. It is like a particular expression of the spirit in the human being. The beings of the other worlds do not have a soul, but they can live in the spirit. One might say that the soul is a delegation of the spirit in mankind, a special help to lead it faster. It is the soul that makes individual progress possible. The spirit, in its original form, has a more general, more collective action.

For the moment the spirit plays the part of a helper and guide, but it is not the all-powerful master of the material manifestation; when the Supermind is organised into a new world, the spirit will become the master and govern Nature in a clear and visible way.

What is called “new birth” is the birth into the spiritual life, the spiritual consciousness; it is to carry in oneself something of the spirit which, individually, through the soul, can begin to rule the life and be the master of existence. But in the supramental world, the spirit will be the master of this entire world and all its manifestations, all its expressions, consciously, spontaneously, naturally.

In the individual existence, that is what makes all the difference; so long as one just speaks of the spirit and it is something one has read about, whose existence one vaguely knows about, but not a very concrete reality for the consciousness, this means that one is not born into the spirit. And when one is born into the spirit, it becomes something much more concrete, much more living, much more real, much more tangible than the whole material world. And this is what makes the essential difference

between beings. When *that* becomes spontaneously real — the true, concrete existence, the atmosphere one can freely breathe — then one knows one has crossed over to the other side. But so long as it is something rather vague and hazy — you have heard about it, you know that it exists, but... it has no concrete reality — well, this means that the new birth has not yet taken place. As long as you tell yourself, “Yes, this I can see, this I can touch, the pain I suffer from, the hunger that torments me, the sleep that makes me feel heavy, this is real, this is concrete...” (*Mother laughs*), that means that you have not yet crossed over to the other side, you are not born into the spirit.

(*Silence*)

In fact, the vast majority of men are like prisoners with all the doors and windows closed, so they suffocate, which is quite natural. But they have with them the key that opens the doors and windows, and they do not use it.... Certainly there is a time when they don't know they have the key, but long after they have come to know it, long after they have been told about it, they hesitate to use it and doubt whether it has the power to open the doors and windows or even that it is a good thing to open them! And even when they feel that “after all, it might be good”, there remains some fear: “What will happen when these doors and windows are opened?...” and they are afraid. They are afraid of being lost in that light and freedom. They want to remain what they call “themselves”. They like their falsehood and their bondage. Something in them likes it and goes on clinging to it. They still have the impression that without their limits they would no longer exist.

That is why the journey is so long, that is why it is difficult. For if one truly consented to cease to exist, everything would become so easy, so swift, so luminous, so joyful — but perhaps not in the way men understand joy and ease. In truth, there are very few people who do not enjoy fighting. There are very few who could accept the absence of night, few can conceive of light except as the opposite of darkness: “Without shadows there would be no picture. Without struggle, there would be no victory. Without suffering there would be no joy.” That is what they think, and so long as one thinks in this way, one is not yet born into the spirit.

The Creation or Manifestation

“There is a plane of divine consciousness in which all is known absolutely, and the whole plan of things foreseen and predetermined. That way of seeing lives in the highest reaches of the Supermental; it is the Supreme’s own vision. But when we do not possess that consciousness, it is useless to speak in terms that hold good only in that region and are not our present effective way of seeing things. For at a lower level of consciousness nothing is realised or fixed beforehand; all is in the process of making. Here there are no settled facts, there is only the play of possibilities; out of the clash of possibilities is realised the thing that has to happen. On this plane we can choose and select; we can refuse one possibility and accept another; we can follow one path, turn away from another. And that we can do, even though what is actually happening may have been foreseen and predetermined in a higher plane.” (The Mother)¹

The word “predetermined” does not correspond to the reality; the word “pre-existent” would be more correct. The consciousness of an unfolding has a reality, it is not only an appearance.

Imagine the world as a single whole and, in a certain sense, finite, limited but containing potentially innumerable possibilities of which the combinations are so numerous that they are equivalent to an infinite (you must be careful with words, however; I am very much cramped by words, they do not express exactly what I mean). So, the universe is objectified by the Divine Consciousness, by the Supreme, according to certain determined laws of which we shall speak later. The universe is a single whole, in the sense that it is the Divine — it does not contain the whole of the Divine, but it is as though the Divine deployed Himself so as to objectify Himself; that is the *raison d’être* of the manifestation of the universe. It is as if the divine Consciousness wandered into all divine

¹ The Mother read this passage to the class and then commented on it. This is the case for most of the passages quoted in the book. Some of the passages are from the Mother’s works, some from Sri Aurobindo’s.

possibilities following a path it had chosen. Imagine then a multitude of possibles of which all the possible combinations are equivalent to an infinite. The divine Consciousness is essentially free — It wanders therein and objectifies Itself. The path traversed is free in the midst of an infinite multiplicity which is at the same time pre-existent and absolutely undetermined according to the action of the free divine Will. It may be conceived that this Will, being free, is able to change the course of the deployment, change the path and, although everything is pre-existent and consequently inevitable, the road, the path is free and absolutely unexpected. These changes of the route, if one may say so, can therefore change the relations between things and circumstances, and consequently the determinism is changed. This change of the circuit is called “the effect of the Grace”; well, through the aid of the Grace, if the Grace decides it, things can change, the course can be different. Things can change their places and instead of following a certain circuit follow another. A circumstance which, according to a particular determinism, should occur at a certain place ahead, for instance, would instead occur behind, and so on. The relations between things consequently change.

At what moment does Time begin ? The Consciousness that chooses — is it in Time as soon as the unrolling begins?

No, Time is a succession; you must be able to conceive that the Supreme Consciousness, before objectifying itself, becomes aware of Itself in Itself. There is a global, total and simultaneous perception and there, there is no Time. Likewise one cannot speak of “Space”, for the same reason, because all is simultaneous. It is something more; it corresponds to a state of consciousness subjective rather than objective, for the aim, the motive of creation is objectivisation; but there is a first step in this objectivisation in which there is a plenary consciousness, total and simultaneous, beyond Time and Space, of what will constitute the content of this universe; and there, the universe is pre-existent, but not manifested, and Time begins with objectivisation.

Can it be said that Time begins with the supramental plane?

It is not the same kind of Time. There is only a beginning of Time and a beginning of form. Time there is of a very different quality. There is a

global, static consciousness before arriving at the supramental level, in which everything appears simultaneously — Time is the result of the fact that there is a succession in the organisation of the whole. While the totality you perceive all at once, on the supramental level, is not a static totality — the static totality gives place to another totality which gives the impression of Time. These are inner relations within the Supermind, in the sense that one is not aware of something which happens outside oneself; one is conscious only of something within oneself, internal, but the internal relations vary, and this gives a first impression of Time.

In this state of consciousness one does not have the impression of things being born, passing, disappearing, does one?

Oh, no! Nothing of the kind.

“The Supreme Consciousness knows everything beforehand, because everything is realised there in her eternity. But for the sake of her play and in order to carry out actually on the physical plane what is foreordained in her own supreme self, she moves here upon earth as if she did not know the whole story; she works as if it was a new and untried thread that she was weaving.”

(The Mother)

If you undertake a work and are told beforehand that all will be useless and you will not be able to do what you want, would you do it? No, surely not! Well, it is something like that which happens. Ninety times out of a hundred, what you do does not give the expected result. Not one person in a million would do his work if he were told: “Do this, but the result will not be at all what you want.” But in the play of forces many must work for the aggregate of forces, for the totality of forces, although individually this work has no personal utility for the one who does it. So, if the individual had the knowledge that the part he plays in the whole is infinitesimal, he would not play it. But the moment you go above that, when you do things, not with a fixed end in view, but because you know within yourself that this is the thing to be done, whatever the result, then with this kind of detachment you know and see in the higher Consciousness that all action is done exclusively because it has to be done whatever may be the result; and

generally you are sufficiently clear-sighted to know, at least vaguely, what will be the result of this action. For knowing it will not change in the least your way of doing it.

Instead of an explanation which goes from below upward, it would be wiser to look for an explanation which comes from above down ward and rather to conceive that little by little the Consciousness comes down and as it comes down is obscured, and one no longer understands by what mechanism things are done — that is what is called a state of ignorance.

"In a picture you need a definite scheme of composition and colour; you have to set a limit, to put the whole thing within a fixed framework; but the limit is illusory, the frame is a mere convention. There is a constant continuation of the picture that stretches beyond any particular frame, and each continuation can be drawn in the same conditions in an unending series of frames. Our aim is this or that, we say, but we know that it is only the beginning of another aim beyond it, and that in its turn leads to yet another....

(*The Mother*)

If I were told that things are going to stop at a certain point, I would find it very boring, so boring that I would not stir!

The only thing which consoles me is that everything continues always, infinitely, that there is always something new to be done. Whatever be the goal attained, it is only a beginning.

1 March 1951

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If you remain in a consciousness which functions mentally, even if it is the highest mind, you have the notion of an absolute determinism of cause and effect and feel that things are what they are because they are what they are and cannot be otherwise.

It is only when you come out of the mental consciousness completely and enter a higher perception of things — which you may call spiritual or divine — that you suddenly find yourself in a state of *perfect* freedom

where *everything* is possible.

(*Silence*)

Those who have contacted that state or lived in it, even if only for a moment, try to describe it as a feeling of an absolute Will in action, which immediately gives to the human mentality the feeling of being arbitrary. And because of that distortion there arises the idea — which I might call traditional — of a supreme and arbitrary God, which is something most *unacceptable* to every enlightened mind. I suppose that this experience badly expressed is at the origin of this notion. And in fact it is incorrect to express it as an absolute Will: it is very, very, very different. It is something else altogether. For, what man understands by “Will” is a decision that is taken and carried out. We are obliged to use the word “will”, but in its truth the Will acting in the universe is neither a choice nor a decision that is taken. What seems to me the closest expression is “vision”. Things are because they are *seen*. But of course “seen”, not seen as we see with these eyes. (*Mother touches her eyes...*) All the same, it is the nearest thing. It is a vision — a vision unfolding itself.

The universe becomes objective as it is progressively seen.

28 August 1957

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The universe is an objectivisation of the Supreme, as if He had objectivised himself outside of himself in order to see himself, to live himself, to know himself, and so that there might be an existence and a consciousness capable of recognising him as their origin and uniting consciously with him to manifest him in the becoming. There is no other reason for the universe. The earth is a kind of symbolic crystallisation of universal life, a reduction, a concentration, so that the work of evolution may be easier to do and follow. And if we see the history of the earth, we can understand why the universe has been created. It is the Supreme growing aware of himself in an eternal Becoming; and the goal is the union of the created with the Creator, a union that is conscious, willing and free, in the Manifestation.

That is the secret of Nature. Nature is the executive Force, it is she who does the work.

And she takes up this creation, which appears to be totally inconscient but which contains the Supreme Consciousness and sole Reality and she works so that all this can develop, become self-aware and realise itself fully. But she does not show it from the very beginning. It develops gradually, and that is why at the start it is a secret which will be unveiled as it nears the end. And man has reached a point in the evolution high enough for this secret to be unveiled and for what was done in an apparent inconscience to be done consciously, willingly, and therefore much more rapidly and in the joy of realisation.

In man one can already see that the spiritual reality is being developed and that it is going to express itself totally and freely. Formerly, in the animal and the plant, it was... it was necessary to be very clear-sighted to see it, but man is himself conscious of this spiritual reality, at least in the higher part of his human existence. Man is beginning to know what the Supreme Origin wants of him and is collaborating in carrying it out.

Nature wants the creation to become conscious of being the Creator himself in an objectivisation, that is to say, there is no difference between the Creator and the Creation, and the goal is a conscious and realised union. That is the secret of Nature.[...]

Nature is not unconscious, but she has an *appearance* of unconsciousness. It began with the inconscience, but in the depths of the inconscience there was consciousness, and this consciousness is gradually developing.² For instance, mineral nature, stones, earth, metals, water, air, all this seems to be quite unconscious, although if one observes closely... And now science is discovering that this is only an appearance, that all this is only concentrated energy, and of course it is a conscious force which has produced all this. But apparently, when we see a rock, we don't think it is conscious, it does not give the impression of being conscious, it seems to be altogether unconscious.

It is the appearance that is inconscient. It becomes more and more

² When this talk was first published, the Mother made the following correction: "It is not the consciousness which is developing, it is the manifestation of consciousness which is developing its expression: it expresses itself more and more."

conscious. Even in the mineral kingdom there are phenomena which reveal a hidden consciousness, like certain crystals, for instance. If you see with what precision, what exactitude and harmony they are formed, if you are in the least open, you are bound to feel that behind there's a consciousness at work, that this cannot be the result of unconscious chanced...]

Indeed, in every being, the whole process of evolution is reproduced, as if at a dizzy speed one were reviewing all that has been done, and as if it were necessary to relive all that in a flash before taking the next step.

(*Silence*)

The start, the great journey in the unconscious, in darkness, oblivion, unconsciousness, the awakening... and the return to the light.

7 May 1958

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Q: "If the Divine that is all love is the source of the creation, whence have come all the evils abounding upon earth?"

A: "All is from the Divine; but the One Consciousness, the Supreme has not created the world directly out of itself; a Power has gone out of it and has descended through many gradations of its workings and passed through many agents. There are many creators or rather 'formateurs', form-makers, who have presided over the creation of the world. They are intermediary agents and I prefer to call them 'Formateurs' and not 'Creators'; for what they have done is to give the form and turn and nature to matter. There have been many, and some have formed things harmonious and benignant and some have shaped things mischievous and evil. And some too have been distorters rather than builders, for they have interfered and spoiled what was begun well by others."

(*The Mother*)

You say, "Many creators or rather 'formateurs', form-makers, have

presided over the creation of the world." Who are these formateurs?

That depends. They have been given many names. All has been done by gradations and through individual beings of all kinds. Each state of being is inhabited by entities, individualities and personalities and each one has created a world around him or has contributed to the formation of certain beings upon earth. The last creators are those of the vital world, but there are beings of the Overmind (Sri Aurobindo calls this plane the Overmind), who have created, given forms, sent out emanations, and these emanations again had their emanations and so on. What I meant is that it is not the Divine Will that acted directly on Matter to give to the world the required form, it is by passing through layers, so to say, planes of the world, as for example, the mental plane — there are so many beings on the mental plane who are form-makers, who have taken part in the formation of some beings who have incarnated upon earth. On the vital plane also the same thing happens.

For example, there is a tradition which says that the whole world of insects is the outcome of the form-makers of the vital world, and that this is why they take such absolutely diabolical shapes when they are magnified under the microscope. You saw the other day, when you were shown the microbes in water? Naturally the pictures were made to amuse, to strike the imagination, but they are based on real forms, so magnified, however, that they look like monsters. Almost the whole world of insects is a world of microscopic monsters which, had they been larger in size, would have been quite terrifying. So it is said these are entities of the vital world, beings of the vital who created that for fun and amused themselves forming all these impossible beasts which make human life altogether unpleasant.

Did these intermediaries also come out of the Divine Power?

Through intermediaries, yes, not directly. These beings are not in direct contact with the Divine (there are exceptions, I mean as a general rule), they are beings who are in relation with other beings, who are again in relation with others, and these with still others, and so on, in a hierarchy, up to the Supreme.

If they came out of the Divine, why are they evil?

Evil? That I think I have explained to you once: it is enough just not to remain under the direct influence of the Divine and not to follow the movement of creation or expansion as willed by the Divine; this rupture of contact is enough to produce the greatest of disorders, that of division. Well, even the most luminous, the most powerful beings may choose to follow their own movement instead of obeying the divine movement. And though in themselves they may be quite wonderful and if human beings saw them they would take them for the very Godhead, they can, because they follow their own will instead of working in harmony with the universe, be the source of very great evils, very great disorders, very great massive obstructions. But don't you see, the question is badly put, I laughed just now when I read the question. It is a childish way of speaking. This person says: "If God is everything in the world, why are there evil things in the world?" Now, if she had told me that, I would have simply answered: there is nothing which is not God, only it is in a disorder. One must try to remedy it — God is not love alone, He is all things, and if that appears to us — to us — altogether wrong, it is because it is not arranged properly. There have been movements exactly of the kind I spoke to you about.

You may ask why it happened. Well, certainly it is not the mind, you know, which can say why it happened. It happened, that is all. In reality the only thing that concerns us is that it has happened. It is perhaps an accident to begin with.... If you look at the thing from a philosophical point of view, it is evident that the universe in which we live is a movement among many others and this movement follows a law which is its own (and which is perhaps not the same in the others), and if the Will was for the world to be built on the principle of choice, of the freedom of choice, then one cannot prevent disorderly movements from taking place until knowledge comes and the choice is enlightened. If one is free to choose, one can also choose bad things, not necessarily the good, for if it were a thing decided beforehand, it would no longer be a free choice. You see, when such questions are put, the mind only answers and it reduces the problem, it reduces it to a more or less elementary mental formula; but that corresponds only very vaguely and superficially and incompletely with the reality of things.

To be able to understand, one must become. If you want to understand the why and how of the universe, you must identify yourself with the universe. It is not impossible but it is not very easy either, especially for children.

This was one of the most childish questions that she put — altogether childish: “If He is just, why is there injustice? If He is good, why is there wickedness? If He is love, why is there hatred?” — But He is all! So He is not merely this or that, or only, exclusively this — He is all. That is, to be more correct, it should be said that all is He.

There are notions about creation, very widespread upon earth, which have been accepted more or less for a long time in human thought, that are quite simplistic! There is “something” (truly speaking, one does not know what), and then there is a God who puts this something into form and creates the world out of it. So if you have such notions, you have a justifiable right to say to this God: “Well, you have indeed created a world, it’s a pretty one, that world of yours!” Although, according to the story, after seven days of labour, he declared that it was very good — but it was good for him. Perhaps it may have amused him immensely, but as for us who are in the world, we do not find it good at all! Don’t you see, the conception and the way of putting it are altogether childish. It is just like the story of the potter who puts his pot in shape — this God is a human being, formidable in proportions and power, but looking strangely like a man. It is man who makes God in his image, not God who makes man in his image! So each time a question is put in an incomplete or childish way, it is impossible to give an answer to it truly, for the question is badly put. You say something, you affirm it. But what right have you to assert it? Because you affirm that, you conclude: “Since that is this, how does it happen that it is so?” But “that is this” is your statement. It does not mean that it is so!

There is only one single solution to the problem — not to make any distinction between God and the universe at the origin. The universe *is* the Divine projected in space, and God *is* the universe at its origin. It is the same thing under one aspect or another. And you cannot divide them. It is the opposite conception to that of the “creator” and his “work”. Only, it is very convenient to speak of the creator and his work, it makes explanations very easy and the teaching quite elementary. But it is not the truth. And

then you say: "How is it that God who is all-powerful has allowed the world to be like this?" But it is your own conception! It is because you yourself happen to be in the midst of a set of circumstances that seems to you unpleasant, so you project that upon the Divine and you tell him: "Why have you made such a world?" — "I did not make it. It is you yourself. And if you become Myself once again, you will no longer feel as you do. What makes you feel as you do is that you are no longer Myself." This is what He could tell you in answer. And the fact is that when you succeed in uniting your consciousness with the divine consciousness, there is no problem left. Everything appears quite natural and simple and all right and exactly what it had to be. But when you cut yourself off from the origin and stand over against Him, then truly everything goes wrong, nothing can go right!

But if you ask for a logic that pushes things to the extreme end, you question how it is that the Divine has tolerated parts of his own self to be separated from him and all this disorder to be created. You may say that. And I then will reply: "If you want to know, it is better to unite yourself with the Divine, for that is the only way of knowing why He has done these things." It is not by questioning Him mentally, for your mind cannot understand. And I repeat it, when you reach such an identification, all problems are solved. And this feeling that things are not all right and that they should be otherwise, comes just because there is a divine will for a constant unfolding in perpetual progress and things that were must give place to things that shall be and shall be better than what the others were. And the world that was good yesterday is no longer good tomorrow. The whole world that could appear absolutely harmonious and perfect at one time, well, today it is discordant, no longer harmonious, because now we conceive and see the possibility of a better world. And if we were to find it all right we would not do what we ought to do, that is, make the effort needed for it to become better.

There comes a time when all these notions appear so childish! And this happens solely because one is shut up within oneself. With this consciousness which is your own, which is like a grain of sand in the infinite vastness, you want to know and judge the infinite? It is impossible. You must first of all come out of yourself, and then unite with the infinite and only afterwards can you begin to understand what it is, not before.

You project your consciousness — what you are, the thoughts you have, the capacity of understanding you have — you project this upon the Divine and then say: “That is all wrong.” I quite understand! But there is no possibility of knowing unless you identify yourself. I do not see how, for example, a drop of water could tell you what the ocean is like. That’s how it is.

14 October 1953

The Origin of the World

Sweet Mother, it is the separation of Sat, Chit and Ananda which has brought about ignorance, suffering. Then...

Why did they separate? (*Laughter*)

Probably they had no moral notions! (*Laughter*)

(*Long silence*)

It is probable that if they had not separated, there would have been no universe as we have it. It was perhaps a necessity. But what you are asking is how it was not foreseen that it would happen in this way. Perhaps it was foreseen. It could have turned out well, it turned out badly. There! There are accidents.

You know, so long as you want to apply your mental, moral notions to the creation of the universe, you will never understand anything about it, never. Because from all sides and in all ways it goes beyond these conceptions — conceptions of good and evil, and these things. All the mental, moral conceptions we have cannot explain the universe. And for this part of ourselves which indeed lives in a total ignorance, all that can be said is: “Things are like that because they are like that”, one can’t explain them, because the explanations one gives are those of ignorance and explain nothing at all.

The mind explains one thing by another, this other which needs to be explained is explained by another still, and that other which needs explanation is explained by another, and if you continue in this way you

can go all round the universe and return to the starting-point without having explained anything at all. (*Laughter*) Probably they had no moral notions! (*Laughter*)

(*Long silence*)

So you have to pierce a hole, rise in the air and see things in another way. Then like that one can begin to understand.

13 July 1955

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From where do the gods come?

That means? ... “From where” means what? What is their origin? Who has formed them? ... But everything, everything comes from the one Origin, from the Supreme, the gods also.

There is a very old tradition which narrates this. I am going to tell you the story as one does to children, for in this way you will understand:

One day “God” decided to exteriorise himself, objectivise himself, in order to have the joy of knowing himself in detail. So, first of all, he emanated his consciousness (that is to say, he manifested his consciousness) by ordering this consciousness to realise a universe. This consciousness began by emanating four beings, four individualities which were indeed altogether very high beings, of the highest Reality. They were the being of consciousness, the being of love (of Ananda rather), the being of life and the being of light and knowledge — but consciousness and light are the same thing. There we are then: consciousness, love and Ananda, life and truth — truth, that’s the exact word. And naturally, they were supremely powerful beings, you understand. They were what are called in that tradition the first emanations, that is, the first formations. And each one became very conscious of its qualities, its power, its capacities, its possibilities, and, suddenly forgot each in its own way that it was only an emanation and an incarnation of the Supreme. And so this is what happened: when light or Consciousness separated from the divine

Consciousness, that is, when it began to think it was the divine Consciousness and that there was nothing other than itself, it suddenly became obscurity and unconsciousness. And when Life thought that all life was in itself and that there was nothing else but its life and that it did not depend at all upon the Supreme, then its life became death. And when Truth thought that it contained all truth, and that there was no other truth than itself, this Truth became falsehood. And when love or Ananda was convinced that it was the supreme Ananda and that there was no other than itself and its felicity, it became suffering. And that is how the world, which was to have been so beautiful, became so ugly.

Now, that consciousness (if you like to call it the Divine Mother, the Supreme Consciousness), when she saw this she was very disturbed, you may be sure, she said to herself: "This has really not succeeded." So she turned back to the Divine, to God, the Supreme, and she asked him to come to her aid. She said to him: "This is what has happened. Now what is to be done?" He said: "Begin again, but try to manage in such a way that the beings do not become so independent!... They must remain in contact with you, and through you with me." And it was thus that she created the gods, who were quite docile and not so proud, and who began the creation of the world. But as the others had come before them, at every step the gods met the others. And it was in this way that the world changed into a battlefield, a place of war, strife, suffering, darkness and all the rest, and for each new creation the gods had to fight with the others who had gone ahead: they had preceded them, they had plunged headlong into matter; and they had created all this disorder and the gods had to put straight all this confusion. That is where the gods came from. They are the second emanations.

The first four who changed, was it by chance or was it deliberately?

No. What is chance?

It is said also — that is the continuation of the story or rather its beginning — that the Divine wanted his creation to be a free creation. He wanted all that went forth from him to be absolutely independent and free in order to be able to unite with him in freedom, not through compulsion. He did not want that they should be compelled to be faithful, compelled to be conscious, compelled to be obedient. They had to do it spontaneously,

through the knowledge and conviction that that was much better. So this world was created as a world of total freedom, freedom of choice. And it is in this way that at every moment everyone has the freedom of choice — but with all the consequences. If one chooses well, it is good, but if one chooses ill, ah well, what's to happen happens — that is what has happened!

The story may be understood in a much more occult and spiritual sense. But it is like all the stories of the universe: if you want to narrate them so that people may understand, they become stories for children. But if one knows how to see the truth behind the symbols, one understands everything. Even with what I have told you, which seems like a little story for children, even like that, if you understand what I have told you and the meaning of what I have told you, you can have the secret of things.

There are traditions which say that it is an “accident”, in the sense that it could have been otherwise, but it happened like that. It is true, it came about like that. Only, it was quite understandable that every one of these elements, having its origin in the Supreme, being quite close to the Emanation at that moment, quite close to the Origin, carried in itself the consciousness of its divinity and superiority, necessarily, since this is not a creation made with something foreign to the Divine: it is simply the Divine who has emanated himself, as though he were looking at himself— he objectivises himself in order to become aware of all that he is; instead of being in an inner static state of concentration in which all is unmanifested, he projects that outside himself “in order to see”, as though he wanted to see all that is within him, that is, all the infinity of possibilities. So, all was possible. It happened like that — it could have happened otherwise. Besides, nothing tells you that alongside our universe such as it is, there do not exist others which are so different that there cannot be any relation between one universe and another. It can very well be that our universe is not the only exteriorisation of the Divine. Ours is such as we know it; there may be others which are in much less sorry a state than this one! Besides, it is lamentable only in its appearance. If you go behind the appearance, you become aware that it is not lamentable at all. It is only one way of seeing.[...]

But [of these first four emanations] the one who does the greatest harm is the “Lord of Falsehood”. He it is indeed who is the biggest obstacle in

the universe, this constant negation of the truth. And he has a very strong hold on the terrestrial world, on the material world. Besides, here (on the earth), those who see him, see him as an absolutely marvellous, splendid being. He entitles himself the “Lord of the Nations”, and he appears formidable, luminous, powerful, very impressive.... Historically, he was the inspirer of certain heads of State, and he proclaims himself the Lord of the Nations because it is he who governs the peoples. He is evidently, at the source, the supreme organiser of these last two wars. It was on that occasion that he manifested himself as the Lord of the Nations. And he declared, besides, that he would never be converted. And he knows that his end will come — naturally, he will try to make it as late as possible. And he declared that he would destroy all he could before being destroyed.... We may expect all possible catastrophes.[...]

Was Stalin predestined to be what he was?

Stalin? I am not quite sure that he was a human being... in the sense that I don't think he had a psychic being. Or perhaps he did have one — in all matter, in every atom there is a divine centre — but I mean a conscious psychic being, formed, individualised. I don't think so. I believe it was a direct incarnation of a being of the vital world. And that was the great difference between him and Hitler. Hitler was simply a man, and as a man he was very weak-minded, very sentimental — he had the consciousness of a petty workman (some said of a petty shoemaker), in any case of a little workman or a little school-master, something like that, a very small consciousness, and extremely sentimental, what is called in French “*fleur bleue*”, very weak.

But he was possessed. He was rather mediocre by nature, very mediocre. He was a medium, a very good medium — the thing took hold of him, besides, during spiritism seances. It was at that moment that he was seized by those fits which were described as epileptic. They were not epileptic: they were attacks of possession. It was thus that he had a kind of power, which however was not very great. But when he wanted to know something from that power, he went away to his castle, and there, in “meditation”, there truly he invoked very intensely what he called his “god”, his supreme god, who was the Lord of the Nations. And everything seemed to him magnificent. It was a being... it was small — it appeared to

him all in silver armour, with a silver helmet and golden plume! It was magnificent! And a light so dazzling that hardly could the eyes see and bear that blaze. Naturally it did not appear physically — Hitler was a medium, he saw. He had a sort of clairvoyance. And it was at such times that he had his fits: he rolled on the ground, he drivelled, bit the carpet, it was frightful, the state he was in. The people around him knew it. Well, that being is the “Lord of the Nations”. And it is not even the Lord of the Nations in its origin, it is an emanation of the Lord of the Nations, and a very powerful emanation.

25 November 1953

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I am going to tell you [a story], very succinctly. Don't take it as a gospel! Take it rather... as a story.

When the Supreme decided to exteriorise Himself in order to be able to see Himself, the first thing in Himself which He exteriorised was the Knowledge of the world and the Power to create it. This Knowledge-Consciousness and Force began its work; and in the supreme Will there was a plan, and the first principle of this plan was the expression of both the essential Joy and the essential Freedom, which seemed to be the most interesting feature of this creation.

So intermediaries were needed to express this Joy and Freedom in forms. And at first four Beings were emanated to start this universal development which was to be the progressive objectivisation of all that is potentially contained in the Supreme. These Beings were, in the principle of their existence: Consciousness and Light, Life, Bliss and Love, and Truth.

You can easily imagine that they had a sense of great power, great strength, of something tremendous, for they were essentially the very principle of these things. Besides, they had full freedom of choice, for this creation was to be Freedom itself.... As soon as they set to work — they had their own conception of how it had to be done — being totally free, they chose to do it independently. Instead of taking the attitude of servant and instrument [...] they naturally took the attitude of the master, and this

mistake — as I may call it — was the first cause, the essential cause of all the disorder in the universe. As soon as there was separation — for that is the essential cause, separation — as soon as there was separation between the Supreme and what had been emanated, Consciousness changed into unconsciousness, Light into darkness, Love into hatred, Bliss into suffering, Life into death and Truth into falsehood. And they proceeded with their creations independently, in separation and disorder.

The result is the world as we see it. It was made progressively, stage by stage, and it would truly take a little too long to tell you all that, but finally, the consummation is Matter — obscure, inconscient, miserable.... The creative Force which had emanated these four Beings, essentially for the creation of the world, witnessed what was happening, and turning to the Supreme she prayed for the remedy and the cure of the evil that had been done.

Then she was given the command to precipitate her Consciousness into this unconsciousness, her Love into this suffering, and her Truth into this falsehood. And a greater consciousness, a more total love, a more perfect truth than what had been emanated at first, plunged, so to say, into the horror of Matter in order to awaken in it consciousness, love and truth, and to begin the movement of Redemption which was to bring the material universe back to its supreme origin.

So, there have been what might be called “successive involutions” in Matter, and a history of these involutions. The present result of these involutions is the appearance of the Supermind emerging from the unconsciousness; but there is nothing to indicate that after this appearance there will be no others... for the Supreme is inexhaustible and will always create new worlds.

That is my story.

16 October 1957

The Why of Things

If everything that is manifested in the physical world has its origin in the higher Truth, what is it that makes it ugly when it expresses itself? Why are there ugly things at all?

Because there are forces that intervene between the origin and the manifestation.

If I ask you, “Do you know the truth of your being?”, what will you say?... Do you know it? Well, the same holds for everything. And yet you are already a sufficiently evolved thinking being who has passed through all kinds of refinements. You are no longer quite like, let us say, a lizard that runs on the wall; and yet you would not be able to say what the truth of your being is. That is just the secret of all deformations in the world. It is because there is all the unconsciousness created by the fact of separation from the Origin. It is due to this unconsciousness that the Origin, though always there, is not able to manifest itself. It is there, that is why the world exists. But in its expression it is deformed because it manifests itself through the unconsciousness, ignorance and obscurity.[...]

In creating the universe as it was, the Will was an individual projection — individual, you understand, a scattering: instead of being a unity containing all, it was a unity made of innumerable small unities which are individualisations, that is, things that feel themselves separated. And the very fact of being separated from all others is what gives you the feeling that you are an individual. Otherwise you would have the feeling that you were a fluid mass. For example, instead of being conscious of your external form and of everything in your being which makes of you a separate individuality, if you were conscious of the vital forces which move everywhere or of the unconscious that is at the base of all, you would have the feeling of a mass moving with all kinds of contradictory movements but which could not be separated from each other; you would not have the feeling of being an individual at all: you would have the feeling of something like a vibration in the midst of a whole. Well, the original Will was to form individual beings capable of becoming conscious once again of their divine origin. Because of the process of

individualisation one must feel separate if one is to be an individual. The moment you are separated, you are cut off from the original consciousness, at least apparently, and you fall into the unconscious. For the only thing which is the Life of life is the Origin, if you cut yourself off from that, consciousness naturally is changed into unconsciousness. And then it is due to this very unconsciousness that you are no longer aware of the truth of your being.... It is a process. You cannot argue whether it is inevitable or avoidable; the fact is it is like that. This process of formation and creation is the reason why purity no longer manifests in its essence and in its purity but through the deformation of unconsciousness and ignorance.... If you had answered immediately: "Yes, of course, I know the truth of my being!" it would have finished there, there wouldn't have been any problem.

That is why there is all this ugliness, there is death; that is why there is illness; that is why there is wickedness; that is why there is suffering. There is no remedy, there is only one way for all these things. All this is there in different domains and with different vibrations, but the cause of all is the same. It is conscience produced because of the necessity of individual formation. Once again I do not say that it was indispensable. That is another problem which perhaps later on we shall be ready to solve; but for the moment we are obliged to state that that's how it is.

And so, the remedy? Since such is the cause, the only way of putting everything right is to become conscious once again. And this is very simple, very simple.

Suppose that there are in the universe two opposing and contradictory forces, as some religions have preached: there was good and evil, and there always will be good and evil, there will be a conflict, a battle, a struggle. The one that is stronger, whether it be the good or the evil, will win; if there is more of the good, the good will win and if there is more of the evil, the evil will win; but the two will always exist. If it were like that, it would be hopeless; one wouldn't have to say then that it is either difficult or easy, it would be impossible. One would not be able to get out of it. But actually that is not so.

Actually there is but one Origin and this origin is the perfection of Truth, for that is the only thing which truly exists; and by exteriorising,

projecting, scattering itself, it brings forth what we see, and a crowd of tiny heads, very gentle, very brilliant, in search of something they have not yet seized but which they can seize, because what they are in search of is within them. That is a certainty. It may take more or less time, but it is sure to come. The remedy is at the very core of the evil. *Voila.*

It has been called by various names, each one has presented it in his own way. According to the angle of seeing, one's experience differs. All those who have found the Divine within themselves have found Him in a certain way, following a certain experience and from a certain angle, and this angle was self-evident to them. But then, if they are not well on their guard, they begin to say: "To find the Divine, one must do this and do that. And it is like that and it is that path one should follow", because for them that was the path of success. When one goes a little further, has a little more experience, one becomes aware that it is not necessarily like that, it can be done through millions of ways.... There is only one thing that is certain, it is that what is found is always the same. And that's remarkable, that whatever the path followed, whatever the form given to it, the result is always the same. Their experience and everyone's is the same. When they have touched the Thing, it is for all the same thing. And this is just the proof that they have touched That, because it is the same thing for all. If it is not the same thing, it means that they have not yet touched That. When they have touched That, it is the same thing. And to That, you may give all the names you like, it makes no difference.

Words are words. After all, they mean nothing, unless there is something behind.

27 May 1953

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Why is there ill-will?

My child, it is as though you asked me why there is unconscience, ignorance, darkness in the nature! It is the why of the world you are asking me! Why is the world like this and not otherwise?... There are people who have written volumes on the subject. And each one explains it in his own

way and that changes nothing, in fact. You may ask me: Why is there ill-will? Why is there ignorance? Why is there stupidity? Why is there wickedness? Why is there all the evil? Why is the world not a very charming place?... All the philosophers explain it to you, each in his own way. The materialists explain it in their way, the scientists explain it in their way, but nobody in all that can find the means of getting out of it! and after all, the one thing that's truly important is, it would be just (you ask me: Why is there ill-will?) it would be to find the way so that there may no longer be any ill-will. That would be worth the trouble. If you tell me: Why is there suffering, why is there misery?... What can that do to you, this why, unless it be a means of finding a remedy? But I don't believe it would, for [...] if you seek for the why, you will find within yourself simply all sorts of explanations which will be more or less useless and will lead you nowhere.

The fact is that it *is* so, isn't it? and the second fact is that one doesn't want it thus, and the third is to find the means that it may no longer exist. That is our problem. The world is not as we think it ought to be. There are lots of things in the world which we do not approve of. Well, there are people who like what they call "knowledge" very much and begin to inquire why it is like that. In a way this is very well, but as I said, it would be much more important to find out what to do so that it may be otherwise. This is exactly the problem the Buddha put to himself. He sat under a tree, it is said, until he found the solution. But his solution is not very good, for when you tell me: "The world is bad", well, his solution is: "Do away with the world." — "For whose benefit?" as Sri Aurobindo has written somewhere. Then the world will no longer be bad, for it will not exist! But what is the use of its no longer being bad, since it will not exist? It is very simple logic. It is like those who want the whole world to return to its Origin; and so Sri Aurobindo answers: "You will be the all-powerful master of something that no longer exists, an emperor without an empire or a king without a kingdom", that's all.... It is one solution. But there are other better ones. I believe we have found better ones.

Some say that ill-will comes from ignorance (that was exactly what the Buddha claimed) and that if ignorance disappeared there would no longer be any ill-will. There are others who say that ill-will comes from division, separation, that if the universe were not cut off from its Origin there would

be no ill-will. Others still say that it is ill-will which is the cause of everything, of separation and ignorance; and so there arises the problem: Whence does it come, this ill-will? If it were at the origin of everything, it was then *in* the origin of everything. And there we are altogether at a loss, my children! We could speculate upon this for years, we shall never get out of it. And so those who push it so far finish by telling you: Ill-will doesn't exist, it is an illusion. And that's simply because they stop midway in their reasoning, for if they went a little farther they might say: Perhaps it is a human invention, this ill-will ... That is possible!

8 July 1953

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That is the first argument, that is the theory. The Divine is all-powerful, he can do whatever he likes; therefore he does not need anybody's help. And if you push your idea sufficiently far, you will see that if the Divine is truly all-powerful in this world and does always whatever he wants, well, I tell you, he is the greatest monster in the universe! Because One who is all-powerful and makes the world such as it is, looking with a smile at people suffering and miserable, and finding that all right, I would call a monster. [...]

Now, as you have a little more philosophical mind, I shall teach you how to come out of the difficulty. But, first of all, you must understand that that idea is a childish idea. I simply call on your common sense. You make of your Divine a person, because that way you understand him better. You make of him a person. And then this person has organised something (the earth, it is too big, it is difficult to understand — take anything else) and then this thing the Divine has organised with the full power to do exactly as he likes. And in this thing — that he has made with the full power to do as he likes — there is ignorance, stupidity, bad will, fear, jealousy, pride, wickedness, and also suffering, illness, grief, all the pains; and a set of people who cannot say that they have perhaps more than a few minutes of happiness in the whole day and the rest of it is a neutral condition, passing by like a thing that's dead — and you call that a creation!... I call it something like a hell! And one who would make that deliberately and not only make it but look at it and say: "Ah! it is very

good”, as it is narrated in some religious books, that after having made the world such as it is, the seventh day he looked at it and was extremely satisfied with his work and he rested.... Well, that never! I do not call that God. Or otherwise, follow Anatole France and say that God is a demiurge and the most frightful of all beings.

But there is a way out of the difficulty.[...] You will see all these conceptions and this idea that you have are based upon one thing, an entity that you call God and a world that you call his creation, and you believe these are two different things, one having made the other and the other being under the first, being the expression of what the first has made. Well, that is the initial error. If you could feel deeply that there is no division between that something you call God and this something you call his creation, if you said: “It is exactly the same thing” and if you could feel that what you call God (perhaps it is only a word), what you call God suffers when you suffer, he does not know when you do not know; and that it is through this creation, little by little, step by step, that he finds himself again, unites with himself, is realising himself, expressing himself, and it is not at all something he wanted in an arbitrary way or made like an autocrat, but that it is the growing expression, developing more and more, of a consciousness that is objectifying itself to itself.... Then there is no other thing but the sense of a collective advancing towards a more total realisation, a self-awareness of knowledge-consciousness — no other thing but that, a progressive self-awareness of knowledge-consciousness in a total unity which will reproduce integrally the First Consciousness.

That changes the problem.

Only, it is a little difficult to understand and one must make a little more progress. Instead of being like a little child that kneels down, joins its hands and says: “My God, I pray to Thee, make me a good child so that I may never hurt my mother.... ” That of course is very easy and indeed I cannot say that it is bad. It is very good. Only there are children with whom these things do not go, because they say: “Why should I ask You to make me good? You should make me good without there being any need of my asking You for it. Otherwise You are not nice!” It is very good when one has a simple heart and does not think much, but when one begins to think, it becomes more difficult. But if you had by your side someone to tell you: instead of that, instead of lighting a candle and kneeling down

before it with your hands folded, light a flame in your heart and then have a great aspiration towards “something more beautiful, more true, more noble, better than all that I know. I ask that from tomorrow I begin to know all these things, all that I cannot do I begin to do and every day a little more.” And then, if you throw yourself out a little, if, for one reason or another, you were put in the presence of much misery in the world, if you have friends who are unhappy or relatives who suffer or you meet any kind of difficulties, then you ask that the whole consciousness might be raised *all together* towards that perfection which must manifest and that all this ignorance that has made the world so unhappy might be changed into an enlightened knowledge and all this bad will be illumined and transformed into benevolence. And then as far as one can, as far as one understands, one wishes it with all one’s heart; and indeed that can take the form of a prayer and one can ask — ask of what? — ask of that which knows, ask of that which can, ask of all that is greater and stronger than oneself, to help so that it may be thus. And how beautiful those prayers would be!

15 July 1953

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When one is an enemy of the Divine, one is an enemy of what?

Oh!... That depends exclusively upon each one. Usually one is an enemy of one’s own idea of the Divine, and that is why it is said that one who denies the Divine is very often the greatest devotee. For if he did not have within himself the certitude that the Divine exists, he would not take the trouble of denying Him. And this is still stronger in one who hates Him, for if he did not have somewhere far within himself the certitude of the Divine’s existence, how could he hate Him?

This has been symbolised here in India in the stories of those who wanted to identify themselves with the divine Reality and chose to become His enemies, for the path of the enemy was more direct than the path of the worshipper. These are well-known stories here, all the old legends and Indian mythology speak about it. Well, this simply illustrates the fact that one who has never put the problem to himself and never given the faintest thought to the existence of the Divine is certainly farther away from the

Divine than one who hates Him or denies Him. For one can't deny something one has never thought about.

He who says or writes: "I declare, I certify, all my experience goes to prove that there is no Divine, no such thing exists, it is just man's imagination, man's creation...", that means he has already thought over the problem any number of times and that something within him is prodigiously interested in this problem.

As for the one who detests Him — there it is even more obvious: one can't be the enemy of an illusion.

So (*speaking to the disciple*), your question no longer holds. For perhaps, after all, this is one more form of meeting which may have its interest. One sometimes says in a lighter vein: "My intimate enemy", and it is perhaps not altogether wrong. Perhaps there is more intimacy in hatred than in ignorance. One is nearer to what one hates than to what one is ignorant of.

This doesn't mean I recommend hatred! That is not what I am saying, but I have very often happened to see more love in a look or an expression of fury and hatred than in an absolutely dull and inert state. It is deformed, spoilt, disfigured, whatever you like, but there is something living, a flame is there.

Of course, even in unconsciousness and immobility, in the complete inertia — apparently — of the stone, one may find a dazzling Light, that of the divine Presence. But then that is the state we were just speaking about: one sees Him everywhere, meets Him everywhere, and in so manifold and marvellously harmonised a way that all these difficulties disappear.

(Silence)

Truly speaking, to be practical, the problem could be expressed like this. If the Divine had not conceived His creation as progressive, there could have been from the beginning a beatific, immobile and unchangeable condition. But the minute... How shall I explain it, I don't know. Just because the universe had to be progressive, perfect identity, the bliss of this identity, the full consciousness of this identity had necessarily to be veiled, otherwise nothing would have ever stirred.

A static universe may be conceived. One could conceive of something which is “all at one and the same time”: that there is no time, only a kind of objectivisation — but not an unfolding in which things manifest progressively one after another, according to a special rhythm; that they are all manifested at the same time, all at once. Then all would be in a blissful state and there would be no universe as we see it, the element of unfolding would be missing, which constitutes... well, what we live in at present.

But once we admit this principle that the universe is progressive, the unfolding progressive, that instead of seeing everything together and all at once, our perception is progressive, then everything takes its right place within it. And inevitably, the future perfection must be felt as something higher than what was there before. The realisation towards which we are moving must necessarily seem superior to the one which was accomplished before.

And this opens the door to everything — to all possibilities.

Sri Aurobindo often said this: what appeared beautiful, good, even perfect, and marvellous and divine at a given moment in the universe, can no longer appear so now. And what now seems to us beautiful, marvellous, divine and perfect, will be an obscurity after some time. And in the same way, the gods who were all-powerful at a certain period belong to a lower reality than the gods who will manifest tomorrow.

And that is a sign that the universe is progressive.

This has been said, this has been repeated, but people don't understand, you know, when it concerns all those great ages, that they are like a reduction of the universal progress to the human measure.

That is why if one enters the state in which everything, as it is, appears perfectly divine, one necessarily goes out of the universal movement at the same time. This is what people like Buddha or Shankara had understood. They expressed in their own way that if you could realise the state in which everything appears to you perfectly divine or perfectly perfect, you necessarily go out of the universal movement and enter the Unmanifest.

This is correct. It is like that.

They were sufficiently dissatisfied with life as it was and had very little

hope that it could become better; so for them this was the ideal solution. I call it escaping, but still.... It is not so easy! But for them it was the ideal solution — up to a certain point, for... there is perhaps one more step to take.

But it is a fact. If one wants to remain in the universe, one must admit the principle of progress, for this is a progressive universe. If you want to realise a static perfection, well, you will inevitably be thrown out of the universe, for you will no longer belong to its principle.

It is a choice.

Only, Sri Aurobindo often used to say: people who choose the exit forget that at the same time they will lose the consciousness with which they could congratulate themselves on their choice! They forget that.

18 July 1956

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But why does the Divine want to manifest Himself on earth in this chaos?

Because this is why He has created the earth, not for any other motive; the earth is He Himself in a deformation and He wants to establish it back again in its truth. Earth is not something separated from Him and alien to Him. It is a deformation of Himself which must once again become what it was in its essence, that is, the Divine.

Then why is He a stranger to us?

But He is not a stranger, my child. You fancy that He is a stranger, but He is not, not in the least. He is the essence of your being — not at all alien. You may not know Him, but He is not a stranger; He is the very essence of your being. Without the Divine you would not exist. Without the Divine you could not exist even for the millionth part of a second. Only, because you live in a kind of false illusion and deformation, you are not conscious. You are not conscious of yourself, you are conscious of something which you think to be yourself, but which isn't you.

Then what is myself, Sweet Mother?

The Divine!

8 June 1955

The Experience of the Divine

There is something I was asked some time ago to which I have not yet replied. It is this. I have written somewhere:

"The absolute of every being is its unique relation with the Divine and its unique manner of expressing the Divine in the manifestation."

This is what is called here in India the truth of the being or the law of the being, the *dharma* of the being: the centre and the cause of the individuality.

Everyone carries his truth within himself, a truth which is unique, which is altogether his own and which he must express in his life. Now what is this truth? This is the question I have been asked:

"What is this truth of the being, and how is it expressed externally in physical life?"

It is expressed in this way: each individual being has a direct and unique relation with the Supreme, the Origin, That which is beyond all creation. It is this unique relation which must be expressed in one's life, through a unique mode of being in relation with the Divine. Therefore, each one is directly and exclusively in relation with the Divine — the relation one has with the Divine is unique and exclusive; so that you receive from the Divine, when you are in a receptive state, the *totality* of the relation it is *possible* for you to have, and this is neither a sharing nor a part nor a repetition, but exclusively and uniquely *the* relation which each one can have with the Divine. So, from the psychological point of view, one is *all alone* in having this direct relation with the Divine.

One is all alone with the Supreme.

The relation one has with Him will never have an equal, will never be

exactly the same as another's. No two are the same and therefore *nothing* can be taken away from you to be given to another, *nothing* can be withdrawn from you to be given to another. And if this relation disappeared from the creation, it would really disappear — which is impossible.

And this means that if one lives in the truth of one's being, one is an indispensable part of the creation. Naturally, I don't mean if one lives what one *believes* one should be, I am saying if one lives the truth of one's being; if, by a development, one is able to enter into contact with the truth of one's being, one is immediately in a unique and exclusive relation with the Divine, which hasn't its equal.

That's how it is.

And naturally, because it is the truth of your being, that is what you should express in your life.

22 August 1956

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Is there an experience which proves that one is living in the presence of the Divine?

Once one begins to live in the presence of the Divine, one does not question any longer. It carries its own certitude — one feels, one knows, and it becomes impossible to question. One lives in the presence of the Divine and it is for you an absolute fact. Till then you ask, because you do not have the experience, but once you have the experience, it has such an authority that it is indisputable. One who says, "I think I live in the presence of the Divine but I am not sure", has not had the true experience, for as soon as one has the inner shock of this experience, no more questioning is possible. It is like those who ask, "What is the divine Will?" As long as you have not glimpsed this Will, you cannot know. One may have an idea of it through deduction, inference, etc., but once you have felt the precise contact with the divine Will, this too is not disputable any longer — you know.

I add, so that there may not be any misunderstanding: all experience

has its worth only in the measure of the sincerity of the one who has it. Some are not sincere and fabricate wonderful experiences, and they imagine they have them. I put all that aside, it is not interesting. But for sincere people who have a sincere experience, once you have the experience of the divine presence, the whole world may tell you it is not true, and you will not budge.

22 February 1951

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If one were in contact with the Divine, what would be its effect?

For each one a different effect. Because we are in the presence of a fact: there is a universe, at least there is an earth, of that we are almost sure, you cannot dispute that, granted?... Have you ever asked yourself why there is an earth? No! Probably it was quite wise. Once I spoke to you of that occultist whom I knew. He was a wise man in his own way. People used to come and ask him:

First of all, why is there a universe? Answer: What is that to you?

Secondly, then why is it as it is? Reply: It is as it is. What does it matter to you?

Thirdly, I do not find it satisfactory.

That's very good. We begin to touch the practical. To those who do not find it satisfactory, I would say: There is only one thing to do, start working for its change, find a way for it to be otherwise and to be good. Things are as they are. Why are they so?... Perhaps one might know — it is not certain. In any case they are so. The most remarkable thing is that if you are sincere you will find out why they are so and how they are so: the cause, the origin and the process. For it is one single thing. There is what we call the Truth, the basis of everything; because if this were not there, there would be nothing. Once you have found the Truth, you find the origin, you find the means of changing the cause — how it is so, why it is so and the means of changing it. If you are in contact with the Divine, you have the key to everything. You know the how, the why and the process to change.

There is something to do: to work, it is so interesting. You represent a small agglomerated mass of substance that makes up yourself. Enter within and find the key. You have only to go down inside there. You cannot say: "That is beyond me, it is too big for me." Go within your little person and you will find the key which opens all the doors.

6 May 1953

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Can the Divine withdraw from us?

That is an impossibility. Because if the Divine withdrew from a thing, immediately it would collapse, for it would not exist. To put it more clearly: The Divine is the only existence.³

27 May 1953

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When one is identified with the Divine, does one see Him in the form one thinks He has?

Usually. It is very rare — unless one is able to get rid of one's mental formation completely — it is very rare to see Him quite objectively. Besides, Sri Aurobindo always used to say that the relation with the Divine depended on what one wanted it to be. Everyone aspires for a particular form of relation, and for him the relation takes that form.

Then, what is it in truth?

Probably something that escapes form totally — or that can take all forms. There is no limitation to the expression of the Divine. He can express Himself without form and He can express Himself in all forms. And He

³ At the time of the publication of this talk, the Mother added: "Now I would have answered: it is as if you asked whether the Divine would withdraw from Himself! (Mother laughs.) Well, that is the trouble: when you say 'Divine', they understand 'God'.... There is *only* That, That alone exists. That, what is it? That alone exists."

expresses Himself in everyone according to each one's need. For even if somebody succeeds in becoming sufficiently impersonal so as to identify himself completely with the Divine, at that moment he will not be able to express it. And as soon as he is in a condition to express it, there will be something of the limited personality intervening and through this the experience has to pass. The moment of the experience is one thing and the expression of this experience is another. It may be simultaneous: there are people who while having the experience express what they feel in some form or other. Then it is simultaneous. But that does not prevent that which has the experience in its purity and that which expresses it from being two fairly different modes of being. And this difference is enough for one to be able to say in truth that it is impossible to know the Divine unless one becomes the Divine.

21 October 1953

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What is meant by “the Divine gives Himself”?

It means exactly this: that the more you give yourself the more you have the experience — it is not just a feeling or impression or sensation, it is a total experience — that the more you give yourself to the Divine the more He is with you, totally, constantly, at every minute, in all your thoughts, all your needs, and that there's no aspiration which does not receive an immediate answer; and you have the sense of a complete, constant intimacy, of a total nearness. It is as though you carried... as though the Divine were all the time with you; you walk and He walks with you, you sleep and He sleeps with you, you eat and He eats with you, you think and He thinks with you, you love and He is the love you have. But for this one must give himself entirely, totally, exclusively, reserve nothing, keep nothing for himself and not keep back anything, not disperse anything also: the least little thing in your being which is not given to the Divine is a waste; it is the wasting of your joy, something that lessens your happiness by that much, and all that you don't give to the Divine is as though you were holding it in the way of the possibility of the Divine's giving Himself to you. You don't feel Him close to yourself, constantly with you, because

you don't belong to Him, because you belong to hundreds of other things and people; in your thought, your action, your feelings, impulses... there are millions of things which you do not give Him, and that is why you don't feel Him always with you, because all these things are so many screens and walls between Him and you. But if you give Him everything, if you keep back nothing, He will be constantly and totally with you in all that you do, in all that you think, all that you feel, always, at each moment. But for this you must give yourself absolutely, keep back nothing; each little thing that you hold back is a stone you put down to build up a wall between the Divine and yourself. And then later you complain: "Oh, I don't feel Him!" What would be surprising is that you could feel Him.

20 July 1955

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Are Divine Love and Grace the same thing?

Essentially, all things are the same. In its essence everything is the same, it is a phenomenon of consciousness; but Love can exist without Grace and Grace can exist without Love. But for the human consciousness all manifestation of Grace is a manifestation of the supreme Love, inevitably. Only it goes beyond human consciousness.

How can one become conscious of Divine Love and an instrument of its expression?

First, to become conscious of anything whatever, you must will it. And when I say "will it", I don't mean saying one day, "Oh! I would like it very much", then two days later completely forgetting it.

To will it is a constant, sustained, concentrated aspiration, an almost exclusive occupation of the consciousness. This is the first step. There are many others: a very attentive observation, a very persistent analysis, a very keen discernment of what is pure in the movement and what is not.[...] You must take up your search with a purity of aspiration and surrender which in themselves are already difficult to acquire. You must have worked much on yourself only to be *ready* to aspire to this Love. If you

look at yourself very sincerely, very straight, you will see that as soon as you begin to think of Love it is always your little inner tumult which starts whirling. All that aspires in you wants certain vibrations. It is almost impossible, without being far advanced on the yogic path, to separate the vital essence, the vital vibration from your conception of Love. What I say is founded on an assiduous experience of human beings. Well, for you, in the state in which you are, as you are, if you had a contact with pure divine Love, it would seem to you colder than ice, or so far-off, so high that you would not be able to breathe; it would be like the mountain-top where you would feel frozen and find it difficult to breathe, so very far would it be from what you normally feel. Divine Love, if not clothed with a psychic or vital vibration, is difficult for a human being to perceive. One can have an impression of grace, of a grace which is something so far, so high, so pure, so impersonal that... yes, one can have the feeling of grace, but it is with difficulty that one feels Love.

But, then, can it be said that the psychic vibration is the vibration of divine Love?

Each one of you should be able to get into touch with your own psychic being, it is not an inaccessible thing. Your psychic being is there precisely to put you in contact with the divine forces. And if you are in contact with your psychic being, you begin to feel, to have a kind of perception of what divine Love can be. As I have just said, it is not enough that one morning you wake up saying, "Oh! I would like to be in contact with divine Love", it is not like that. If, through a sustained effort, a deep concentration, a great forgetfulness of self, you succeed in coming into touch with your psychic being, you will never dream of thinking, "Oh! I would like to be in contact with divine Love" — you are in a state in which everything appears to you to be this divine Love and nothing else. And yet it is only a covering, but a covering of a beautiful texture.

So, Divine Love need not be sought and known apart from the psychic being?

No, find your psychic being and you will understand what divine Love is. Do not try to come into direct contact with divine Love because this will yet again be a vital desire pushing you; you will perhaps not be aware of it,

but it will be a vital desire.

You must make an effort to come into touch with your psychic being, to become aware and free in the consciousness of your psychic being, and then, quite naturally, spontaneously, you will know what Divine Love is.

24 March 1951

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Divine Love is there always in all its intensity, a formidable power. But most people — ninety-nine per cent — do not feel anything at all! What they feel of it is exclusively in proportion to what they are, to their capacity of receiving. Imagine, for instance, that you are bathing in an atmosphere all vibrant with divine Love — you are not at all aware of it. Sometimes, very rarely, for a few seconds there is suddenly the feeling of “something”. Then you say, “Oh, divine Love came to me!” What a joke! It is just that you were simply, for some reason or other, a wee bit open, so you felt it. But it is there, always, like the divine Consciousness. It is the same thing, it is there, all the time, in its full intensity; but one is not even aware of it; or else in this way, spasmodically: suddenly one is in a good state, so one feels something and says, “Oh, the divine Consciousness, divine Love have turned to me, have come to me!” It is not at all like that. One has just a tiny little opening, very tiny, at times like a pin-head, and naturally that force rushes in. For it is like an active atmosphere; as soon as there is a possibility of being received, it is received. But this is so for all divine things. They are there, only one does not receive them, for one is closed up, blocked, one is busy with other things most of the time. Most of the time one is full of oneself. So, as one is full of oneself, there is no place for anything else. One is very actively (*laughing*) busy with other things. One is filled with things, there is no place for the Divine.

But He is there.

It is like all the wonders that are there around you; you do not see them. [...] Sometimes, one moment when you are just a tiny bit more receptive, or else when in sleep you are less exclusively busy with your small affairs, you have a gleam of something and see, feel something. But usually, as soon as you are awake again, all this is obliterated — first, as you know,

by the formidable ego which is all full of itself, and the whole universe moves in accordance with this ego: you are at the centre, and the universe turns round you. If you look at yourself attentively, you will see it is like that. Your vision of the universe — that's you at the centre and the universe all around. So there is no place for anything else. It is not the universe you see: it is yourself you see in the universe.

19 May 1954

The Divine Mother

What is the “transcendent Mother”?

Don't you know that there are three principles: the transcendent, the universal and the individual or personal? No? — the transcendent which is above creation, at the origin of creation; the universal which is the creation, and the individual which is self-explanatory. There is a transcendent Divine, a universal Divine and an individual Divine. That is, one may put oneself in contact with the divine Consciousness within oneself, in the universe and, beyond all forms, in the transcendent. So these three aspects are also the three aspects of the divine Mother: transcendent, universal and individual.[...]

The divine Mother is the divine Shakti, that is, the creative Force. She is identified with the cosmos. How can she have a transcendent aspect?

But perhaps the divine Mother was there before the creation! She must certainly have existed before the creation, for she cannot be her own product. If it is she who has created, she must have existed before the creation, otherwise she could never have created.

She existed in the Supreme, then, before the creation?

“In” the Supreme.... It is a little difficult to speak of “within” and “without” when one is outside all forms! If you like, say that she is a movement of the Supreme (if that makes you understand better) or an action of the Supreme or a state of the Supreme, a mode... You may say what you like, what most gives you an understanding of the thing. You see,

the human mind likes to cut things into little bits.... I am going to tell you a little story meant for children.

The Supreme, having decided to create a universe, took a certain inner attitude which corresponded with the inner manifestation (unexpressed) of the divine Mother, the supreme Shakti. At the same time, he did this with the intention of its being the mode of creation of the universe he wanted to create, the creative power of the universe. Hence, first of all, he had to conceive the possibility of the divine Mother in order that this divine Mother could conceive the possibility of the universe. You are following? I tell you once again that it is not quite like that, but after all, it is meant for childish minds. So, we may very well say that there is a transcendent Divine Mother, that is, independent of her creation. She may have been conceived, formed (whatever you like) for the creation, with the purpose of creation, but she had to exist before the creation to be able to create, else how could she have created?

That is the transcendent aspect, and note that this transcendent aspect is permanent. We speak as though things had unfolded in time at a date which could be fixed: the first of January 0000, for the beginning of the world, but it is not quite like that! There is constantly a transcendent, constantly a universal, constantly an individual, and the transcendent, universal and individual are co-existent. That is, if you enter into a certain state of consciousness, you can at any moment be in contact with the transcendent Shakti, and you can also, with another movement, be in contact with the universal Shakti, and be in contact with the individual Shakti, and all this simultaneously — that does not unfold itself in time, it is we who move in time as we speak, otherwise we cannot express ourselves. We may experience it but we can express it only by saying one word after another (unfortunately, one cannot say all the words at the same time; if one could say them all at the same time, that would be a little more like the truth).

Finally, all that is said, all that has been said, all that will be said, is always only an extremely clumsy and limited way of expressing something which may be lived but which cannot be described. And there is a moment, when one lives the thing, in which one sees that the same thing can be expressed almost with the same exactness or the same truth in religious language, mystical language, philosophic language and materialistic

language and that from the point of view of the lived truth, it makes very little difference. It is only when one is in the mental consciousness that one thing seems true to you and another does not seem true; but all these are only ways of expression. The experience carries in itself its absolute, but words cannot describe it — one may choose one language or another to express oneself, and with just a very little precaution, one can always say something approaching the Truth in all instances.

I am telling you this not to throw you into confusion but simply to let you understand that there is a considerable difference between the truth of experience and the way of expressing it, whatever it may be, even the best.

7 May 1951

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Mother, suffering comes from ignorance and pain, but what is the nature of the suffering and pain the Divine Mother feels for her children[...]?

It is because she participates in their nature. She has descended upon earth to participate in their nature. Because if she did not participate in their nature, she could not lead them farther. If she remained in her supreme consciousness where there is no suffering, in her supreme knowledge and consciousness, she could not have any contact with human beings. And it is for this that she is obliged to take on the human consciousness and form, it is to be able to enter into contact with them. Only, she does not forget: she has adopted their consciousness but she remains in relation with her own real, supreme consciousness. And thus, by joining the two, she can make those who are in that other consciousness progress. But if she did not adopt their consciousness, if she did not suffer with their sorrow, she could not help them. Hers is not a suffering of ignorance: it is a suffering through identity. It is because she has accepted to have the same vibrations as they, in order to be able to enter into contact with them and pull them out of the state they are in. If she did not enter into contact with them, she would not be felt at all or no one could bear her radiance....

This has been said in all kinds of forms, in all kinds of religions, and

they have spoken very often of the divine Sacrifice, but from a certain point of view it is true. It is a voluntary sacrifice, but it is true: giving up a state of perfect consciousness, perfect bliss, perfect power in order to accept the state of ignorance of the outer world so as to pull it out of that ignorance. If this state were not accepted, there would be no contact with it. No relation would be possible. And this is the reason of the incarnations. Otherwise, there would be no necessity. If the divine consciousness and divine force could work directly from the place or state of their perfection, if they could work directly on matter and transform it, there would be no need to take a body like man's. It would have been enough to act from the world of Truth with the perfect consciousness and upon consciousness. In fact that acts perhaps but so slowly that when there is this effort to make the world progress, make it go forward more rapidly, well, it is necessary to take on human nature. By taking the human body, one is obliged to take on human nature, partially. Only, instead of losing one's consciousness and losing contact with the Truth, one keeps this consciousness and this Truth, and it is by joining the two that one can create exactly this kind of alchemy of transformation. But if one did not touch matter, one could do nothing for it.

9 December 1953

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But I could speak to you of a very old tradition, more ancient than the two known lines of spiritual and occult tradition, that is, the Vedic and Chaldean lines; a tradition which seems to have been at the origin of these two known traditions, in which it is said that when, as a result of the action of the adverse forces — known in the Hindu tradition as the Asuras — the world, instead of developing according to its law of Light and inherent consciousness, was plunged into the darkness, unconsciousness and ignorance that we know, the Creative Power implored the Supreme Origin, asking him for a special intervention which could save this corrupted universe; and in reply, to this prayer there was emanated from the Supreme Origin a special Entity, of Love and Consciousness, who cast himself directly into the most inconscient matter to begin there the work of awakening it to the original Consciousness and Love.

In the old narratives this Being is described as stretched out in a deep sleep at the bottom of a very dark cave, and in his sleep there emanated from him prismatic rays of light which gradually spread into the Inconscience and embedded themselves in all the elements of this Inconscience to begin there the work of Awakening.

If one consciously enters into this Inconscient, one can still see there this same marvellous Being, still in deep sleep, continuing his work of emanation, spreading his Light; and he will continue to do it until the Inconscience is no longer inconscient, until Darkness disappears from the world — and the whole creation awakens to the Supramental Consciousness.

And it is remarkable that this wonderful Being strangely resembles the one whom I saw in vision one day, the Being who is at the other extremity, at the confines of form and the Formless. But that one was in a golden, crimson glory, whereas in his sleep the other Being was of a shining diamond whiteness emanating opalescent rays.

In fact, this is the origin of all Avatars. He is, so to say, the first universal Avatar who, gradually, has assumed more and more conscious bodies and finally manifested in a kind of recognised line of Beings who have descended *directly* from the Supreme to perfect this work of preparing the universe so that, through a continuous progression, it may become ready to receive and manifest the supramental Light in its entirety.

In every country, every tradition, the event has been presented in a special way, with different limitations, different details, particular features, but truly speaking, the origin of all these stories is the same, and that is what we could call a direct, conscious intervention of the Supreme in the darkest matter, without going through all the intermediaries, in order to awaken this Matter to the receptivity of the Divine Forces.

The intervals separating these various incarnations seem to become shorter and shorter, as if, to the extent that Matter became more and more ready, the action could accelerate and become more and more rapid in its movement, more and more conscious too, more and more effective and decisive.

And it will go on multiplying and intensifying until the entire universe becomes the total Avatar of the Supreme. 28 May 1958

CHAPTER 2

The Universe

The Unfolding of the Universe

In the history of our universe there have been six consecutive periods which began by a creation, were prolonged by a force of preservation and ended by a disintegration, a destruction, a return to the Origin, which is called Pralaya.[...] But it has been said that the seventh creation would be a progressive creation, that is, after the starting-point of the creation, instead of its being simply followed by a preservation, it would be followed by a progressive manifestation which would express the Divine more and more completely, so that no disintegration and return to the Origin would be necessary. And it has been announced that the period we are in is precisely the seventh, that is, it would not end by a Pralaya [...] but it would be replaced by a constant progress, because it would be a more and more perfect unfolding of the divine Origin in its creation.

And this is what Sri Aurobindo says. He speaks of a constant unfolding, that is, the Divine manifests more and more completely, more and more perfectly, in a progressive creation. It is the nature of this progression which makes the return to the Origin, the destruction no longer necessary. All that does not progress disappears, and that is why physical bodies die, it's because they are not progressive; they are progressive up to a certain moment, then there they stop and most often they remain stable for a certain time, and then they begin to decline, and then disappear. It's because the physical body, physical matter as it is at present is not plastic enough to be able to progress constantly. But it is not impossible to make it sufficiently plastic for the perfecting of the physical body to be such that it no longer needs disintegration, that is, death.

Only, this cannot be realised except by the descent of the Supermind which is a force higher than all those which have so far manifested and which will give the body a plasticity that will allow it to progress constantly, that is, to follow the divine movement in its unfolding.

15 June 1955

“In the workings of the universe whatever happens is the result of all that has happened before.” (The Mother)
What do you mean by this?

The universe is in perpetual movement and it is the unfolding of the supreme Consciousness. So all that happens is conditioned by all that preceded it. The universe continues to be what it is because of what it has been, and what it has been was the result of what it was before. And what it will be... will be the consequence of what it is!

Is the unfolding of the universe continuous or does it stop somewhere?
What is it that gives us the impression of a beginning, of a decision to begin?

Where does the decision to begin come from?... (*laughing*) From the Supreme probably, I do not know! It may be that one day He decided to have a universe of the type we have and He began to objectify himself in order to have a universe.

Each element of this universe is eternal because the universe *is* the Eternal. Now, in the Eternal it is difficult to speak of a “beginning”. Evidently It has always been and It will always be. Only, take for example (this is an image, remember, do not make me say things I do not say), take a sphere which is full of infinitesimal things in an incalculable number. If you change the relation of all these elements, well, the number is so great, the possibilities of relations so many that you may easily speak of an infinite, although from a philosophical point of view it is not an infinite; yet from a descriptive point of view one may say that it is infinite. Each element is eternal. All the combinations are infinite, but the same combination never repeats itself twice. Thus the universe is eternally new and yet it is eternally the same.

According to tradition it is said...

Yes, yes, but it is not a question of tradition. There are people who speak of Pralaya, I know, but that simply means (excuse me, but one must speak a little lightly, otherwise this becomes insufferable) that one day perhaps the Supreme may feel tired, dissatisfied with the kind of universe He has made and may want to create another! Then, as it is He Himself, He takes

everything back into Himself and puts it out again! That is what people call “Pralaya”, but it changes nothing: all the elements of the universe are eternal and eternally will the combinations be different.

According to science, our physical world of three dimensions is not infinite: it is bent back upon itself in a space of more than three dimensions. This closed universe of three dimensions is continually expanding and all the objects of the universe are running away from each other at a speed increasing with their distance. If one goes back into the past, one reaches a time when the universe was almost condensed at one point and that would give the key to the constitution of Matter of which the ninety-two elements have never been explained till now. This “condensed point” or “primitive atom” goes back three or four billion years. This is what the Indian tradition calls “the golden egg”. But before that? Nothing is known. Quite recently an American scientist has put forth the theory that this movement of infinite expansion will not continue, that a contrary movement will set in and all will be gathered back again.

A universal respiration.

If one could travel with a ray of light coming from the sun to the earth, the departure and arrival would be simultaneous, for the traveller’s “proper time” would be stopped.

Light seems to me to be too material for this consciousness of simultaneity.

Evidently when one emerges from form and enters the “frontier” state between form and the Formless, everything is simultaneous, but this is very far from the density of light.

I wonder (it is possible, it is to be seen), but I doubt whether something physical could be capable of giving this simultaneous consciousness of the universe.

Of course, no material object or being can travel at the speed of light, but supposing it to be possible, as the number of light-rays is practically infinite and covers the whole material universe, one would

be able to know everything, apprehend everything.

But that would not be a simultaneous integral knowledge of the universe, not even of the earth. For one who remembers the extra-terrestrial light, remembers the movements of the higher light, terrestrial light is slow, as it is dim. But this would already be an expression of something higher.... I don't know.

Light is a very good symbol, but I do not think it to be a total one.

Is light faster than thought?... You cannot make a concrete experiment with thought. Sound is something very, very slow, but thought is already something quicker than light... perhaps not. Thought gives the sensation of the instantaneous. Do you perceive thought in the physical body, for example? Do you perceive thought apart from a material quality? It remains to be seen, doesn't it? Let me explain: if you go out of your body, if you go out of the vital world and enter the mental world, all relations are different from what they are for thought when in the body. Compared with the body, thought seems an immediate thing like light, for example, even more than light. But when you have nothing to do with the physical any longer and you enter the mind itself, there are relations which may be rendered by a certain time and certain space which do not exist for the physical consciousness but which exist for the mental consciousness. That then would be, if you like, the explanation of what you were saying, that Time changes; for it is evident that in the universal formation there is an infusion of progressive consciousness which is psychologically translated by a relation with new worlds or new "dimensions".

For example, it is said that for a certain period the terrestrial world was ruled by "overmental" forces and that this rule is going to be transcended, that the world will be governed by supramental forces; well, each time new forces descend upon earth, a change is produced and a change of consciousness must have a corresponding change of movement. You say that the movement of expansion becomes more and more swift; this means that the world is filled with a consciousness which makes the movements of the world more and more rapid.

This would be altogether the material transcription of the spiritual phenomenon. The earth is being charged more and more with forces coming from ever higher regions (for our consciousness), which means

that they come faster and faster, giving more and more the sense of the instantaneous. What has been discovered is a kind of physical symbolism of this phenomenon which would tend to prove scientifically that the universe is in progress.

The other possibility is that it is a matter of a vibratory movement of inhaling and exhaling — this is quite possible; but the phenomenon of concentration would not necessarily mean a retrogression; it is simply a passage from one movement to another.

The stars are receding from one another at a speed that increases with their distance.... What does this imply?

These are images, aren't they? You can conceive a universe becoming bigger and bigger, but then what is it that will contain this universe? What would there be beyond this universe?... Immediately our small human mind conceives of something quite empty and a universe occupying more and more place in this void, which means that there would be a space in this void, which is an absurdity. In fact, one should say, "It is as though", because that is not really what happens, it is only a way of expressing it. To catch hold of a notion ever so little accurate, one must pass from the material to the psychological explanation, and even if you arrive at the psychological, you are still very far from the truth, which is neither psychological nor spatial, but something else which evidently finds it difficult to express itself in our terms. It is a well-known experience: each time one goes into a consciousness beyond our consciousness (I cannot say spatial), our terrestrial consciousness (not even positively terrestrial, but rather individual), each time one has an experience which transcends the individual consciousness, that is to say, transcends the consciousness of the part to enter a consciousness of the Whole, when one wants to translate this experience, one finds all words empty of sense, because language has been formed to translate human experience for the human mind. We have all the necessary words, even with many shades and niceties, to express human experience, since language has been made for that, but what language will you use to explain what is outside all language? It is extremely difficult. So you say, "It is like this, it is like that", and while you are speaking you realise that the experience is being so completely distorted that at times you are understood to mean entirely the opposite.

For this reason science is full of paradoxes.

Yes, and all spiritual books which speak of the experiences of another world are always full of paradoxes. They say, “It is like this, it is like that”, in an attempt to give you a suppleness which will allow you to understand — but even so you do not understand.

The truth is that these experiences can be communicated only in silence.

And yet, it has been said (and it is a true fact) that these worlds, like the supramental world, are going to express themselves physically. Then what is going to happen? Will they find new words? New words must be found for them.... It is difficult, for if new words are found, they have to be explained!

After all, the ancient initiatory systems were good in a way, in the sense that they revealed the Knowledge only to those who had reached a stage where they could receive it directly without the help of words. And I’m afraid it may come to the same thing now — perhaps even one who has this supramental knowledge will never be able to make himself understood by people, unless they themselves become capable of entering into this knowledge. And so the logical result is that people will say, as I have heard it said: “Oh! it is just as in ordinary life.” Precisely because all that is not of the ordinary life completely escapes our perception, it cannot be transmitted by words.

Take a place like this [the Sri Aurobindo Ashram], which is surcharged with certain forces, certain vibrations; these vibrations do not show themselves in visible and tangible things — they can produce changes, but as these changes occur according to a method (as all physical things do), you pass almost logically from one state to another and this logic prevents you from perceiving that there is something here which does not belong to normal life. Well, those who have no other perception than that of the ordinary mind, who see things working out as they habitually do or seem to do in ordinary life, will tell you, “Oh that, that is quite natural.” If they have no other perception than the purely physical perception, if they are not capable of feeling the quality of a vibration (some feel it vaguely, but those who are not even capable of feeling that, who have nothing in them corresponding to that or, if they have something, it is not awakened), they

will look at the life here and tell you, “It is like the physical life — you have perhaps some ideas of your own, but there are many who have their own ideas; perhaps you do things in a special way, but there are lots of people who also do things in a special way. After all, it is a life like the one I live.” ...

And so, it may very well happen that at a given moment the supramental Force manifests, that it is conscious here, that it acts on Matter, but those who do not consciously participate in its vibration are incapable of perceiving it. People say, “When the supramental force manifests, we shall know it quite well. It will be seen” — not necessarily. They will not feel it any more than those people of little sensitivity who may pass through this place, even live here, without feeling that the atmosphere is different from elsewhere — who among you feels it in such a precise way as to be able to affirm it?... You may feel in your heart, in your thought that it is not the same, but it is rather vague, isn’t it? But to have this precise perception... Listen, as I had when I came from Japan: I was on the boat, at sea, not expecting anything (I was of course busy with the inner life, but I was living physically on the boat), when all of a sudden, abruptly, about two nautical miles⁴ from Pondicherry, the quality, I may even say the physical quality of the atmosphere, of the air, changed so much that I knew we were entering the aura of Sri Aurobindo. It was a *physical* experience and I guarantee that whoever has a sufficiently awakened consciousness can feel the same thing.

I had the contrary experience also, the first time that I went out in a car after many many years here. When I reached a little beyond the lake,⁵ I felt all of a sudden that the atmosphere was changing; where there had been plenitude, energy, light and force, all that diminished, diminished... and then... nothing. I was not in a mental or vital consciousness, I was in an absolutely physical consciousness. Well, those who are sensitive in their physical consciousness ought to feel that quite concretely. And I can assure you that the area we call “the Ashram” has a condensation of force which is not at all the same as that of the town [Pondicherry], and still less that of

⁴ Ten nautical miles? The transcriber of this talk in French may have misheard the word *dix* (ten) as *deux* (two). In another account of this incident, the Mother spoke of “ten nautical miles”.

⁵ Lake Ousteri, situated west of Pondicherry about ten kilometres from the Ashram.

the countryside.

So, I ask you: this kind of condensation of force (which gives you quite a special vibration of consciousness), who is there that is really conscious of it?... Many among you feel it vaguely, I know, even people from outside feel it vaguely; they get an impression, they speak of it, but the precise consciousness, the scientific consciousness which could give you the exact measure of it, who has that? I'm not alluding to anyone in particular, each one can look into himself. And this, this condensation here is only a far-off reflection of the supramental force. So when this supramental force will be installed here definitively, how long will it take for people to perceive that it is there?... And that it changes everything, do you understand? And when I say that the mind cannot judge, it is on facts like these that I base myself — the mind is not an instrument of knowledge, it cannot know. A scientist can tell you the proportion of the different components in any particular atmosphere, he analyses it. But as for this proportion here, who can give it? Who can say: There is such a vibration, such a proportion of this, such a proportion of that, such a proportion of the supramental?... I put the question to you so that you may ponder over it.

17 March 1951

*

Mother, are Time and Space particular only to the physical world or to other worlds also?

As there are forms, there is necessarily a Time, a Space, but it is not at all the same as the physical. It is neither the same Time nor the same Space.

For example, as soon as you come to the vital there is a Time and Space which are similar to the physical but without that fixity and hardness and irremediability which are here. That is, for instance, in the vital a strong intelligent will has an immediate action; here, in the physical, it takes sometimes extremely long to be realised, an entire process has to be followed. In the vital it is direct, the will acts directly on the circumstances, and if it is truly of a very strong kind, it is instantaneous. But there is still a Space, that is, one has the impression of moving to go from one place to

another, and that necessarily, as one moves, a certain time intervenes; but it is an extremely short time compared with physical time.

On the mental plane the notion of Time disappears almost totally. For example, you are in your mental consciousness, you think of someone or something or of a place, and immediately you are there. There is no need of any time between the thought and the realisation. It is only when the mind is mingled with the vital that the notion of time is introduced; and if they go down into the physical, before a mental conception can be realised a whole process is necessary. You do not have a direct mental action on matter. For instance, if you think of someone who lives in Calcutta, well, physically you have to take a plane and some hours must pass before you can be there; while mentally if you are here and think of someone in Calcutta, instantaneously you are there with him. Instantaneously, you see. But if you go out in the vital from your body and want to go somewhere, well, you have the feeling of moving, and of the time it takes you to reach the place you are going to. But it is incomparably fast in relation to the physical, to the time necessary to do things physically.

Only right at the top of the ladder, when one reaches what could be called the centre of the universe, the centre and origin of the universe, everything is instantaneous. The past, present and future are all contained in a total and simultaneous consciousness, that is, what has always been and what will be are as though united in a single instant, a single beat of the universe, and it is only there that one goes out of Time and Space.

Mother, you said that if we think mentally of something we are immediately in the presence of that thing, but if, for example, we think mentally of something higher, of the Divine, for example...

Yes?

Are we immediately in His Presence?

Yes, but only that part of the thought, not your body. That's just what I said. In the mental domain it is like that; if one concentrates on the Divine and thinks of the Divine, the part... I don't say the whole thought, because thought is multiple and divided, but the part which is sincerely concentrated on the Divine is with Him. It does some good but not very

much when this part is mixed with all the others which think of hundreds of different things at the same time, or when it goes down into the body, is all tied up precisely to that frightful slowness of material things, and when we have to take so many steps only to go from here to the door.

In the vital with a leap one can be there; mentally there is no need even of a leap.

29 June 1955

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Why is it that “All the Timeless presses towards the play in Time; all in Time turns upon and around the timeless Spirit”?

(*Sri Aurobindo*)

Because it is like that, my child. All that is unmanifested wants to manifest, and all that is manifested tries to return to its Origin.

It is as if you asked me, “Why is the earth round and why are the sun and the planets there?” It is like that, the law of the universe is like that.

Most of these things are simply statements of fact; but there are no explanations, for one can’t give mental explanations. One can give some, but each thing one wants to explain is explained by another, which has to be explained by another, which has to be explained by another — indefinitely. And you can go right round the universe, and with one thing explaining another, it explains nothing at all.

The only thing one can do is to say, “It is like that.”

That is why it is said that the mind can know nothing: it can know nothing because it needs explanations. An explanation is valuable only to the extent it gives you a power to act on the thing explained, otherwise what’s the good of it? If explaining something does not give you the power to change it, it is absolutely useless, because, as I said, the explanation you give entails another explanation, and so on. But if through an explanation you obtain some power over a thing, to make it different from what it is, then it’s worth the trouble.

28 March 1956

The Unity of the Universe

If you look from one plane of consciousness, the individual will appear to you as if he were not only an instrument and recorder, but a creator. But look from another and higher plane of consciousness with a wider view of things and you will see that this is only an appearance. In the workings of the universe whatever happens is the result of all that has happened before. How do you propose to separate one being from the integral play of the manifestation or one movement from the whole mass of movements? Where are you going to put the origin of a thing or its beginning? The whole play is a rigidly connected chain; one link merges imperceptibly into another. Nothing can be taken out of the chain and explained by itself as if it were its own source and beginning.

And what do you mean when you say that the individual creates or originates a movement? Does he do it all out of himself or out of nothing as it were? If a being were able to create in that way a thought or feeling or action or anything else, he would be the creator of the world. It is only if the individual goes back in his consciousness into the greater Consciousness which is the origin of things, that he can be an originator; he can initiate a movement only by identifying himself with the conscious Power which is the ultimate source of all movements.

There are many planes of consciousness; and the determinism of one plane is not the same as the determinism of another. So, when you speak of the creative individual, of what part of him are you thinking? For he is a very composite entity. Is it his psychic being of which you speak, or the mental or the vital or the physical? Between the unseen source of a movement and its manifestation, its external expression through the individual, there are all these steps and many others; and on each many modifications of it take place, many distortions and deformations. It is these changes that give the illusion of a new creation, a new origin, or a new starting-point for a movement. It is like when you put a stick into water; you see the stick, not in its true line, but bent into an angle. But it is an illusion, a distortion by the sight; it is not even a real angle.

Each individual consciousness, you can say, brings into the universal movement something that you can call from a certain point of view its own deformation or from another its own quality of the movement. These

individual motions are part of the play of the Divine movement; they are not themselves origins, they are a transformation of things whose origin you must seek in the universe as a whole.

The sense of separation is spread everywhere, but it is an illusion; it is one of those false moods of which we must be cured if we want to enter into the true consciousness. The mind cuts the world into small bits: it says, here this stops, there that begins, and by this fragmentation it succeeds in distorting the universal movement. There is one great flow of a single, all-embracing, all-containing consciousness which manifests in an ever unrolling universe. This is the truth that stands behind everything here; but there is too this illusion which masks the truth from you, the illusion of these many movements which imagine that they are separate from one another, that they stand by themselves, in themselves and for themselves and that each is a thing in itself apart from the rest of the universe. They have the impression that their action and reaction upon one another is something external, as if they were like different worlds standing in each other's presence but with no point of contact except some external relations at a distance. Each sees himself as if he were a separate personality existing in its own right. This error of the separative sense has been allowed as part of the universal play, because it was necessary that the one consciousness should objectify itself and fix its forms. But because it has been allowed in the past, it does not follow that the illusion of separateness must always continue.

In the universal play there are some, the majority, who are ignorant instruments; they are actors who are moved about like puppets, knowing nothing. There are others who are conscious, and these act their part, knowing that it is a play. And there are some who have the full knowledge of the universal movement and are identified with it and with the one Divine Consciousness and yet consent to act as though they were something separate, a division of the whole. There are many intermediary stages between that ignorance and this full knowledge, many ways of participating in the play.

26 May 1929

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The law of each being is different, yes, otherwise how would a distinction be made?—from top to bottom, the nature, appearance, actions, all would be the same. If there were only one law, there would be only one law and every one would repeat the same thing. There would be no need at all to manifest a universe because it would be one single law. The very characteristic of the universe is an infinite multiplicity of laws which together, in their totality, reproduce the One. And it is this which is particularly marvellous in the physical world (in man and in the physical world, for it is proper to the terrestrial being), that it can be one of the innumerable elements which in their totality reproduce the One, and yet at the same time have a personal relation with the One — that is to say, contain in itself the consciousness of the One and the relation with the One, and at the same time be an element of the whole. But if the fact of becoming conscious of the One and identifying oneself with it stopped one from being particular, one would cease existing as a personality.

This is precisely what the Buddhists and the disciples of Shankara try to realise; they wish to abolish totally their personality, their individuality, abolish the truth of their being, the special law of their being. This is what they consider as a fusion with the Divine. But this is the negation of this creation. And as I was saying, the miracle of this creation, as far as the terrestrial individuality goes, is that we may achieve this union, this complete identification with the Supreme, the One, and at the same time keep the consciousness of our diversity, of the particular law we have to express. It is more difficult but infinitely more complete, and it is the very truth of this universe. The universe has not been made for anything else but that, to unite these two poles, the two extremes of consciousness. And when they are united, one understands that these two extremes are exactly the same thing — a whole, at once one and innumerable.

But one feels very different from others!

Externally, this is evident.

It is ignorance.

No, the ignorance is to deny the essential identity, the one origin. And I consider it an ignorant absurdity to want to deny the external differences of

the manifestation. Why should there be a manifestation then? What purpose would it serve? This would mean there has been an absurdity at the beginning of creation. If this had not been done on purpose, it would mean that things are not done on purpose or that He has made a mistake or even that He has not understood what He wanted to do! that He thought of doing one thing and did another! Besides, I hasten to tell you that if there were a universe in which all the elements were identical, truly one would immediately ask why it existed. If all of you in front of me, all, were all the same, speaking in the same way, thinking in the same way, reacting in the same way, I believe I should immediately run away!

17 April 1951

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“The whole universe explains everything at every moment and a particular thing happens because the whole universe is what it is.” (The Mother)

How does the universe explain at every moment the universe?

That is not what I have said. If you want an explanation of something, it is the universe that explains this something. And each thing is explained by everything; and you can explain nothing except by the whole universe and the entire universe is explained by everything.... Just see: if you read all the explanations given in all the sciences, all the branches of human knowledge, always one thing is explained by another, and if you want to explain this other you explain it by yet another and if you want to explain this other one too, you explain it by yet another. So you continue in this way and go round the universe in order to explain one thing. Only, usually people get tired after a time, they accept the last explanation and stick to it. Otherwise, if they continued to find an explanation, they would have to make the full round of all things and would come back always to the same point. Things are so because they are so, because they had to be so, otherwise they would not be. Things are so, because they are as they are. There's no doubt about it. And that indeed is supreme wisdom.

Is there not a physical law that is able to explain everything in the

universe?

Find it out, I shall be very glad.

Can it be found by science?

Yes, if it moves in a very definite direction, if it progresses sufficiently, if it does not stop on the way, scientists will find the same thing the mystics have found, and all religious people, everybody, because there is only one thing to find, there are no two. There is only one. So one can go a long way, one can turn round and round and round, and if one turns and turns long enough without stopping, one will be obliged to come to the same spot. Once there, one feels as though there is nothing at all to find. As I have just told you, there is nothing to find. It is That, the Power.⁶

27 May 1953

But what does “cosmic spirit” mean?

Cosmic spirit? It is the cosmic spirit, it is the universal spirit, it is the spirit that's in the whole universe. There is a universe. You know what the universe is? Well, this universe has a spirit, and this spirit is the cosmic spirit; this universe has a consciousness and its consciousness is the cosmic, universal consciousness.

One may very well imagine that the universe is only an entity in something which is still vaster, as the individual is only an entity in a much vaster totality. Now, each unit has its consciousness and its own spirit which contains all the others, as a group consciousness is made up of all the individual consciousnesses which constitute it and as a national consciousness is made up of all the individual consciousnesses which constitute it, and something more. The individual is only an element in the whole, even as the earth is a part of the solar system, and the solar system makes a part of all the systems of the universe. So just as there is an individual consciousness, there is a group consciousness and a

⁶ Later on, a disciple asked the Mother what she meant by, “It is That, the Power.” The Mother answered, “Yes, they will find the same thing the mystics have found and — religious people have found, as everybody has found — it is That, the Power. What one finds is the Power. And to That, essentially, you can give neither a name nor a definition.”

consciousness of the system, a universal consciousness which is made up of the set of all the consciousnesses composing it, plus something, something — something more subtle. Just like you: you have lots of cells in your body; each cell has its own consciousness and you have a consciousness which is the consciousness of your total individuality, though made up of all these small cellular consciousnesses.

Mother, here [in Sri Aurobindo's letter] it is written: "... there is a wall of separative ignorance between the individual and the cosmic consciousness." Then how to break down this wall?

Get rid of the ignorance, enter the knowledge.

First of all you must know what I have just told you, that you are a part of the whole, that this whole is a part of a greater whole, and that this greater whole is a part of a still greater whole, right up to its forming one single totality. Once you know that, you begin to become aware that in reality there cannot be any separation between you and something greater than you of which you are a part. This is the beginning. Now, you must come to the point not only of thinking this but of feeling it and even living it, and then the wall of ignorance tumbles: one feels this unity everywhere and realises that he is only a more or less fragmentary part of a whole much vaster than he, which is the universe. Then one begins to have a more universal consciousness.

13 July 1955

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How are our thoughts created by the forces of the universal Mind?

Because the forces of the universal Mind enter into our heads. We are bathed in forces, we are not aware of it. We are not something enclosed in a bag and independent from the rest: all forces, all vibrations, all movements enter into us and pass through us. And so we have a certain mental force held in, that is to say, ready to be used by the formative or creative mental power. These are, as it were, free forces. As soon as a thought coming from outside or a force or movement enters our

consciousness, we give it a concrete form, a logical appearance and all kinds of precise details; but in fact all this belongs to a domain one is rarely conscious of.

But this is not a special instance which occurs only from time to time: it is something constant. If a current of force is passing, with a particular thought formation, one sees it passing from one into another, and in each one it forms a kind of centre of light or force which keeps the imprint — more or less pure, more or less clear, more or less mixed — of the initial current; and the result is what we call “our” thought.

But our thought is something which hardly exists. It can be “our” thought only if, instead of being like a public place as we generally are in our normal state — we are like a public place and all the forces pass there, come and go, enter, depart, jostle each other and even quarrel — if instead of being like that, we are a concentrated consciousness, turned upwards in an aspiration, and open beyond the limits of the human mind to something higher; then, being open like this brings down that higher something across all the layers of reality, and this something may enter into contact with our conscious brain and take a form there which is no longer the creation of a universal force or a personal mind stronger than ours, but the *direct* expression and creation of a light which is above us, and which may be a light of the highest kind if our aspiration and opening allow it. That is the only case in which one can say that the thought is our own. Otherwise, all the rest is simply a passing notation: we note down, we invest a force with words, a force that’s altogether universal and collective, which enters, goes out, moves and passes freely from one person to another.

But how is the thought formed in the universal Mind? [...] You say that it comes from outside, don’t you?

Ideas have a higher origin than the mind. There is a region of the mind, higher than the ordinary mind, in which there are ideas, typal ideas, really prototypes; and these ideas descend and are clothed in mental substance. So, in accordance with — how to put it? — the quality of the receiver, they either keep all their own qualities and original nature or become distorted, coloured, transformed in the individual consciousness. But the idea goes far beyond the mind; the idea has an origin much higher than the mind. So, the functioning is the same from both the universal and the individual point

of view; the individual movement is only representative of the universal one. The *scale* is different, but the phenomenon is the same. Of course, these are no longer “thoughts” as we conceive thoughts; they are universal principles — but it’s the same thing — universal principles on which the universes are built.

The universe, after all, is only one person, only one individuality in the midst of the eternal Creation. Each universe is a person who takes form, lives, dissolves, and another takes shape — it is the same thing. For us, the person is the human individual; and from the universal point of view the person is the universal individual; it is one universe in the midst of all the universes.

7 November 1956

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If we never forget that there cannot be, should not be two things exactly alike in the universe, for the second would be useless since there would already be one of the same kind, and that the universe is constituted for the harmony of an infinite multiplicity in which two movements — and even more, two consciousnesses — are never alike, then what right have we to intervene and want that somebody should conform to our own thought?... For if you think in a particular way, it is certain that the other won’t be able to think in the same way. And if you are a person of a certain type, it is absolutely certain that the other cannot be of the same type. And what you ought to learn is to harmonise, synthesise, combine all the disparate things in the universe by putting each one *in its place*. Total harmony does not at all lie in an identity, but in a harmonisation which can come only by putting each thing in its place.

13 March 1957

The Earth and the Universe

You say, “Love is everywhere. Its movement is there in plants, perhaps in the very stones....” If there is love in a stone, how can one see it?

Perhaps the different elements constituting the stone are coordinated by the spark of love. I am sure that when the Divine Love descended into Matter, this Matter was quite unconscious, it had absolutely no form; it may even be said that forms in general are the result of the effort of Love to bring consciousness into Matter. If one of you (I have my doubts, but still) went down into the Inconscient, what is called the pure Inconscient, you would realise what it is. A stone will seem to you a marvellously conscious object in comparison. You speak disdainfully of a stone because you have just a wee bit more consciousness than it has, but the difference between the consciousness of the stone and the total Inconscient is perhaps greater than that between the stone and you. And the coming out of the Inconscient is due exclusively to the sacrifice of the Divine, to this descent of divine Love into the Inconscient. Consequently, when I said “perhaps in the stone”, I could have removed the “perhaps” — I can assert that *even* in the stone it is there. There would be nothing, neither stone nor metal nor any organisation of atoms without this presence of divine Love.

Most people say there is “consciousness” when they begin to think — when one doesn’t think one is not conscious. But plants are perfectly conscious and yet they do not think. They have very precise sensations which are the expression of a consciousness, but they do not think. Animals begin to think and their reactions are much more complex. But both plants and animals are conscious. One can be conscious of a sensation without having the least thought.

Did material substance exist before the descent of Divine Love?

I don’t think it could be said that there was a material substance. The Inconscient... it is the Inconscient. I don’t know how to explain this to you. If there is a negation of something, it is truly the Inconscient, it is the negation of everything. It has not even the capacity of emptiness. One needs to have descended there to know what it is and explain it. Words

cannot describe it. It is the negation of all things because everything begins with consciousness. Without consciousness there is nothing.

Were there any beings before this descent of Love? Were they conscious?

There were no terrestrial beings. The terrestrial world, the earth came into existence after the descent into the Inconscient, not before.

The gradual formation of the different stages of being, from the Supreme to the most material region, is subsequent to the Inconscient. When, precisely, the Consciousness “began” its creation (don’t take what I say quite literally as though it were a little history of another country, for it is not that, I am trying to make you understand, that’s all), the first manifestation of the creative Consciousness was just an emanation of consciousness — of conscious light — and when this emanation separated itself from its origin, the Inconscient was born, through opposition; how to put it? ... yes, really through opposition.

Consequently, the birth of the Inconscient is prior to the formation of the world, and it was only when the perception came that the whole universe was going to be created uselessly that there was a call and Divine Love plunged into the Inconscient to change it into consciousness. Therefore, it can be said that the formation of the material worlds as we know them is the result of the descent of the supreme Consciousness into the Inconscient. It cannot be said that there was something prior to that, things as we know them in the material world (I apologise for the ambiguity of my words, but you understand one cannot express these things in our usual words).

The formation of the earth as we know it, this infinitesimal point in the immense universe, was made precisely in order to concentrate the effort of transformation upon one point; it is like a symbolic point created in the universe to make it possible, while working directly upon one point, to radiate it over the entire universe.

If we want to make the problem a little more comprehensible, it is enough to limit ourselves to the creation and the history of the earth, for it is a good symbol of universal history.

From the astronomical point of view the earth is nothing, it is a very small accident. From the spiritual point of view, it is a symbolic willed formation. And as I have already said, it is only upon earth that this Presence is found, this direct contact with the supreme Origin, this presence of the divine Consciousness hidden in all things.

The other worlds have been organised more or less hierarchically, if one may say so, but the earth has a special formation due to the direct intervention, without any intermediary, of the supreme Consciousness in the Inconscient.

Have the solar fragments the same matter as the earth?

I have taken care to tell you that this radiation was a symbolic creation, and that all action on this special point had its radiation in the whole universe; remember this, instead of beginning to say that the formation of the earth comes from an element projected from the sun or that a nebula must have been scattered giving birth to the sun and all its satellites, etc.

But is it true that there is no difference between solar matter and terrestrial matter? Were the sun and the other worlds of the solar system formed at the same time as the earth ?

Necessarily, everything was formed at the same time, the creation was simultaneous, with a special concentration of the Consciousness upon the earth.

Have the beings of the other worlds and planets a psychic being?

No, it is a purely terrestrial phenomenon. Only, there is nothing against the idea that psychic beings may go to the other worlds if it so pleases them. There is no reason to think that one cannot, if one went to another planet, meet psychic beings; it is not impossible; but these would be psychic beings formed upon earth who have become free in their movement, going here and there at will for some reason or other. All knowledge in all traditions, from every part of the earth, says that the psychic formation is a terrestrial formation and that the growth of the psychic being is something that takes place upon earth. But once they are formed and free in their movement, they can go anywhere in the universe, they are not limited in

their movement; but their formation and growth belong to the terrestrial life, for reasons of concentration.

24 March 1951

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You said that this physical world was a projection of invisible worlds. Then why should the divine Emanations come into the physical world to transform it? They have only to do the work in the invisible planes; then the projections will be good.

That indeed is a serious question!... You know the image sometimes given to the universe: a serpent biting its tail? And it is taken as the symbol of the infinite, of the universe. Well, it is a fact. In the creation there is a progressive, a greater and greater materialisation. But we could take another image (I am taking an approximate image): the universe is a circle or rather a sphere (but for the convenience of explanation, let us take a circle). There is a progressive descent from the most subtle to the most material. But the most material happens to touch the point of origin of the most subtle. Then, if you understand the image, instead of going all the way round to change matter, it is much more easy to do the thing directly, for the two extremities meet. [...] It is precisely for the convenience of work that all has been concentrated or concretised at one point so that instead of having to spread oneself out in the infinite to change things, one can work just on the point that serves as the symbol of the whole universe. And from the occult standpoint, earth (which is nothing from the astronomical standpoint; in the immensity of the astronomical skies, earth is a thing absolutely without interest and without importance), but from the occult and spiritual point of view, earth is the concentrated symbol of the universe. For it is much more easy to work on one point than in a diluted vastness. This all people who work know. Well, for the convenience and necessity of work, the whole universe has been concentrated and condensed symbolically in a grain of sand which is called the earth. And therefore it is the symbol of all; all that is to be changed, all that is to be transformed, all that is to be converted is there. This means that if one concentrates on this work and does it there, all the rest will follow

automatically, otherwise there will be no end — and no hope.

But that is also why this point appears as particularly bad! Because the whole thing is concentrated. And that can be particularly good also. For always there are the two, the two opposites are together. And always the best borders on the worst, or the worst borders on the best (it depends on the side you look from). But it is because of the worst that you can find the best and it is because of the best that you can transform the worst — the two act and react upon each other. [...] It is always said that there is a dark double of all the stars and a luminous double of all the planets. In the occult way, it is said that there is a luminous earth.

23 September 1953

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There is a very interesting fact, it is that somewhere in the terrestrial mind, somewhere in the terrestrial vital, somewhere in the subtle physical, one can find an exact, perfect, automatic recording of everything that happens. It is the most formidable memory one could imagine, which misses nothing, forgets nothing, records all. And if you are able to enter into it, you can go backward, you can go forward, and in all directions, and you will have the “memory” of all things — not only of things of the past, but of things to come. For everything is recorded there.

In the mental world, for instance, there is a domain of the physical mind which is related to physical things and keeps the memory of physical happenings upon earth. It is as though you were entering under innumerable vaults, one following another indefinitely, and these vaults are filled with small pigeon-holes, one above another, one above another, with tiny doors. Then if you want to know something and if you are conscious, you look, and you see something like a small point — a shining point; you find that this is what you wish to know and you have only to concentrate there and it opens; and when it opens, there is a sort of an unrolling of something like extremely subtle manuscripts, but if your concentration is sufficiently strong you begin to read as though from a book. And you have the whole story in all its details. There are thousands of these little holes, you know; when you go for a walk there, it is as

though you were walking in infinity. And in this way you can find the exact facts about whatever you want to know.

But I must tell you that what you find is never what has been reported in history — histories are always planned out; I have never come across a single “historical” fact which is like history. This is not to discourage you from learning history, but things are like that. Events have been quite different from the way in which they have been reported, and for a very simple reason: the human brain is not capable of recording things with exactitude; history is built upon memories and memories are always vague. If you take, for example, written memories, he who writes chooses the events which have interested him, what he has seen, noticed or known, and that is always only a very small portion of the whole. When the historian narrates, the same thing happens as with dreams where you take one point, then another, then another, and at last you can have an almost exact vision of what has taken place and with a little imagination you fill up the gaps; but historians relate a continuous story; between the events or moments there are gaps which they fill up as best they can or rather as they wish, according to their mental, vital and other preferences. And that comprises the history you are made to learn. The same story, narrated in one language and in another, in one country or in another, you cannot imagine how comic it is! This is particularly true if one of the countries is interested because of its vanity, its prestige. And finally the two pictures presented to you are so different that you could believe that two different things were being spoken about. It is unbelievable.

But I have noticed that even for altogether external, concrete facts where there is no question of evaluation, it is still the same thing. No human brain is capable of understanding a thing in its totality; even the most scholarly, the most learned, even the most sincere person does not see a subject — and especially many subjects — totally. He will say what he knows, what he understands, and all that he does not know, all that he does not understand is not there, and this absolutely changes everything.

But if you can acquire this capability of entering into the terrestrial memory, I assure you it is worth the trouble. It is quite different from Yoga; it is not necessary to have a spiritual life for that, you must have a special ability.

For everything — I would repeat it to you eternally if I had the time — for everything, one must be absolutely sincere. If you are not sincere, you will begin by deceiving yourself and all your experiences will be worth nothing at all. But if you are sincere and by discipline (for it is not easy) you succeed in entering this mental memory of the world, you will make discoveries which are really worth the trouble.

15 February 1951

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To be able to enter the “earth-memory” consciously, a discipline is needed. What discipline?

A discipline much more difficult than the discipline of Yoga! It is an occult discipline.

First of all, one must learn to go out of one's body consciously and to enter into another more subtle body; to use one's will to go where one wants to go, never to fear and sometimes to face unexpected and even terrible things; to remain calm, to develop the mind's visual sense, to accustom one's mind to be altogether peaceful and quiet.... You know, the list is long and I could continue like this for hours!

19 February 1951

CHAPTER 3

The Human Species in Evolution

Progression of Forms

If you take terrestrial history, all the forms of life have appeared one after another in a general plan, a general programme, with the addition, always, of a new perfection and a greater consciousness. Take just animal forms — for that is easier to understand, they are the last before man. Each animal that appeared had an additional perfection in its general nature — I don't mean in all the details — a greater perfection than the preceding ones, and the crowning point of the ascending march was the human form which, for the moment, from the point of view of consciousness, is the form most capable of manifesting consciousness; that is, the human form at its height, at the height of its possibilities, is capable of more consciousness than all preceding animal forms.

This is *one* of Nature's ways of evolution.

Sri Aurobindo told us [...] that this Nature was following an ascending progression in order to manifest more and more the divine consciousness contained in all forms. So, with each new form that it produces, Nature makes a form capable of expressing more completely the spirit which this form contains. But if it were like this, a form comes, develops, reaches its highest point and is followed by another form; the others do not disappear, but the individual does not progress. The individual dog or monkey, for instance, belongs to a species which has its own peculiar characteristics; when the monkey or the man arrives at the height of its possibilities, that is, when a human individual becomes the best type of humanity, it will be finished; the individual will not be able to progress any farther. He belongs to the human species, he will continue to belong to it. So, from the point of view of terrestrial history there is a progress, for each species represents a progress compared with the preceding species; but from the point of view of the individual, there is no progress: he is born, he follows his development, dies and disappears. Therefore, to ensure the progress of the

individual, it was necessary to find another means; this one was not adequate.

But within the individual, contained in each form, there is an organisation of consciousness which is closer to and more directly under the influence of the inner divine Presence, and the form which is under this influence — this kind of inner concentration of energy — has a life independent of the physical form — this is what we generally call the “soul” or the “psychic being” — and since it is organised around the divine centre it partakes of the divine nature which is immortal, eternal. The outer body falls away, and this remains throughout every experience that it has in each life, and there is a progress from life to life, and it is the progress of the *same* individual. And this movement complements the other, in the sense that instead of a species which progresses relative to other species, it is an individual who passes through all the stages of progress of these species and can continue to progress even when the species have reached the limit of their possibilities and... stay there or disappear — it depends on the case — but they cannot go any farther, whereas the individual, having a life independent of the purely material form, can pass from one form to another and continue his progress *indefinitely*. That makes a double movement which completes itself. And that is why each individual has the possibility of reaching the utmost realisation, independent of the form to which he momentarily belongs.[...]

It is this double movement of evolution intersecting and complementing itself which gives the utmost possibilities of realisation to the divine light within each being. This is what Sri Aurobindo has explained. (*Turning to the child*) This means that in your outer body you belong to the animal species in the course of becoming a supramental species — you are not that yet! but within you there's a psychic being which has already lived in many, many, countless species before and carries an experience of thousands of years within you, and which will continue while your human body remains human and finally decomposes.

We shall see later whether this psychic being has the possibility of transforming its body and itself creating an intermediate species between the animal man and superman — we shall study this later — but still, for the moment, it is an immortal soul which becomes more and more conscious of itself in the body of man.[...]

In Nature we often see the disappearance of an entire species. What is that due to?

Probably Nature thought that it was not a success!... You see, she throws herself into action with abundance and a total lack of sense of economy. We can see this. She tries everything she can, in every way she can, with all sorts of inventions which are obviously very remarkable, but at times... it's like a blind alley. Pushing forward in that direction, instead of progressing, one would reach things that are absolutely unacceptable. She throws out her creative spirit in an abundance without any calculation, and when the combination is not very successful, well, she just does this (*gesture*), then rejects it; she doesn't mind. For Nature, you see, there is a limitless abundance. I believe she doesn't shrink from any kind of experiment. Only if something has a chance of leading to a successful issue does it continue. Certainly there have been intermediaries or parallel forms between the ape and man; traces of them have been found — perhaps with some wishful thinking! but anyway, traces have been found — well, those species have disappeared. So, if we like to speculate, we may wonder whether the species which is now to come and which is an intermediary between animal man and superman will remain or whether it will be considered uninteresting and rejected.... That we shall see later. The next time we meet we shall speak about it again!

It is quite simply the activity of a limitless abundance. Nature has enough knowledge and consciousness to act like someone with innumerable and countless elements which can be mixed, separated again, reshaped, taken to pieces once more and... It is a huge cauldron: you stir it, and something comes out; it's no good, you throw it back in and take something else. Imagine the dimension... just take the earth: you understand, one or two forms or a hundred, for her this is of no importance at all, there are thousands and thousands and thousands of them; and then a few years, a hundred, a thousand, millions of years, it is of no importance at all, you have eternity before you!

Simply, when we look at things on the human scale, in space and time, oh! it seems enormous, but for Nature it is nothing. It is just a pastime. One may like it or not, this pastime, but still it is a pastime.

It is quite obvious that Nature enjoys it and is in no hurry. If she is told

to press on without stopping and to finish one part of her work or another quickly, the reply is always the same: "But what for, why? Doesn't it amuse you?"

30 October 1957

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Everybody is progressing, always, isn't that so?

In a certain way, yes. Only it may not be apparent in one lifetime, because when there is no conscious participation of the being, the movement is relatively slow, even relative to the short duration of human life. And so it is quite possible, for example, that at the moment of death a being seems not to have progressed, and even sometimes it seems to have been going backwards, to have lost what it had at the beginning of its life. But if we take the great life-curve of its psychic being through many lives, there is always a progress. Each experience it had in one of its physical lifetimes helps it to make some progress. But it is the psychic being which always progresses.

The physical being, in the state in which it is at present — well, having reached a certain point of ascent, it comes down again. There are elements which may not come down again grossly; but still it does come down, one can't deny it.

The vital being — not necessarily, nor the mental being. The vital being, if it knows how to get connected with the universal force, can very easily have no retrogression; it can continue to ascend. And the mental being, it's absolutely certain, is completely free from all degeneration if it continues to develop normally. So these always make progress so long as they remain co-ordinated and under the influence of the psychic.

It is only the physical being which grows and decomposes. But this comes from its lack of plasticity and receptivity and by its very nature; it is not inevitable. Therefore there is room to think that at a given moment, as the physical consciousness itself progresses consciously and deliberately, well, to a certain extent and increasingly the body itself will be able, first to resist decay — which, obviously, must be the first movement — and

then gradually begin to grow in inner perfection till it overcomes the forces of decomposition.[...]

But this substance *itself*— that is, this material physical substance which forms it constitutes an organism which lives for a certain length of time in a given form and then this form declines and dissolves — the substance itself constituting these successive forms progresses through all these forms. That is, the molecular, cellular substance — perhaps even the cellular — the molecular and atomic, is progressing in its capacity to express the divine Force and Consciousness. Through all these organisms this substance becomes more and more conscious, more and more luminous, more and more receptive, until it reaches a perfection sufficient for it to become a possible vehicle for the divine Force itself which will be able to use it as it uses the elements of the other parts of the creation, like the mind or the vital.

And at that moment the physical substance will be ready to manifest in the world the new Consciousness, new Light, new Will. Through all the centuries, through countless lives, passing through innumerable organisms, using countless experiences it, so to speak, becomes refined; it is prepared, and becomes more and more receptive and open to the divine Forces.

So, a man as a momentary individual being may not appear to progress. But the progress is continued through him, as through all organisms.

28 December 1955

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How did the first man appear?

Sri Aurobindo says here,⁷ precisely, that if we take the scientific point of view, we see that theories follow one another with great instability, and seem more like a kind of series of imaginations than things which can be proved — if one takes the purely materialist point of view. People believe

⁷ “ ... if the facts with which Science deals are reliable, the generalisations it hazards are short-lived; it holds them for some decades or some centuries, then passes to another generalisation, another theory of things. This happens even in physical Science where the facts are solidly ascertainable and verifiable by experiment....”

that because it is a materialist point of view, it is the easiest to prove, but quite obviously it is the most difficult. If we take the occult standpoint, there have been traditions, based perhaps on certain memories, but as they are altogether beyond any material proof, this knowledge is considered to be even more problematic than scientific imaginations and deductions. For any inner logic, it is easier to understand and admit, but one has no more proof than one has material proof that there was *one* first man or that there were several first men or that there was something which was not yet a man but almost a man. These are speculations.

Traditions — which of course are only oral traditions and from the scientific point of view quite questionable, but which are based on individual memories — say that the first man or the first human pair or the first human individuals were materialised in accordance with an occult method, something like the one Sri Aurobindo foretells for the future supramental process; that is, that beings belonging to higher worlds have, by a process of concentration and materialisation, built or formed for themselves bodies of physical matter. It probably wasn't the lower species which progressively produced a body which became the first human body.

According to spiritual and occult knowledge, consciousness precedes form; consciousness by self-concentration produces its form; whereas, according to the materialist idea, it is form which precedes consciousness and makes it possible for consciousness to manifest. For those who have some knowledge of the invisible worlds and a direct perception of the play of forces, there is no possible doubt: it is *necessarily* consciousness which produces a form in order to manifest. Now, the way things are arranged on earth, it is quite certainly a consciousness of a higher order which penetrates a form and helps to transform it, so that this form may become — either immediately or through successive generations — capable of manifesting that consciousness. For those who have the inner vision and knowledge, this is absolutely beyond doubt. It is impossible for it to be otherwise. But those who start from the other end, from below, will not admit it — but all the same it is not for ignorance to dictate knowledge to wisdom! And yet, this is what it does at present. As it is easier to doubt than to know, the human mind is accustomed to doubt everything; that is its first movement, and of course that is why it knows nothing.

Conception precedes manifestation and expression, that is quite certain.

And all those who have had a direct contact with the past have the memory of a kind of human prototype, far superior to mankind at present, who came on earth as an example and a promise of what humanity will be when it reaches its acme.

There is in life a certain tendency to imitate, a sort of effort to copy “something”. One can find very striking examples of this in animal life — it even begins already in plant life, but in animal life it is very striking. One could give numerous examples. And so, in that sense, one might very well conceive of a sort of effort of animal life to attempt to copy, to imitate, to create some resemblance to this ideal type which would be manifested on earth by occult means, and it was probably through successive attempts, by a more and more successful effort that the first human types were produced.

11 December 1957

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Sweet Mother, is there a spiritual being in everybody?

That depends on what we call “being”. If for “being” we substitute “presence”, yes, there is a spiritual presence in everyone. If we call “being” an organised entity, fully conscious of itself, independent, and having the power of asserting itself and ruling the rest of the nature — no! The possibility of this independent and all-powerful being is in everybody, but the realisation is the result of long efforts which sometimes extend over many lives.

In everyone, even at the very beginning, this spiritual presence, this inner light is there.... In fact, it is everywhere. I have seen it many a time in certain animals. It is like a shining point which is the basis of a certain control and protection, something which, even in half-consciousness, makes possible a certain harmony with the rest of creation so that irreparable catastrophes may not be constant and general. Without this presence the disorder created by the violences and passions of the vital would be so great that at any moment they could bring about a general catastrophe, a sort of total destruction which would prevent the progress of

Nature. That presence, that spiritual light — which could almost be called a spiritual consciousness — is within each being and all things, and because of it, in spite of all discordance, all passion, all violence, there is a minimum of general harmony which allows Nature's work to be accomplished.

And this presence becomes quite obvious in the human being, even the most rudimentary. Even in the most monstrous human being, in one who gives the impression of being an incarnation of a devil or a monster, there is something within exercising a sort of irresistible control — even in the worst, some things are impossible. And without this presence, if the being were controlled exclusively by the adverse forces, the forces of the vital, this impossibility would not exist.

Each time a wave of these monstrous adverse forces sweeps over the earth, one feels that nothing can ever stop the disorder and horror from spreading, and always, at a certain time, unexpectedly and inexplicably a control intervenes, and the wave is arrested, the catastrophe is not total. And this is because of the Presence, the supreme Presence, in matter.

But only in a few exceptional beings and after a long, very long work of preparation extending over many, many lives does this Presence change into a conscious, independent, fully organised being, all-powerful master of his dwelling-place, conscious enough, powerful enough, to be able to control not only this dwelling but what surrounds it and in a field of radiation and action that is more and more extensive... and effective.

11 June 1958

The Human Problem

It is obvious that what especially characterises man is this mental capacity of watching himself live. The animal lives spontaneously, automatically, and if it watches itself live, it must be to a very minute and insignificant degree, and that is why it is peaceful and does not worry. Even if an animal is suffering because of an accident or an illness, this suffering is reduced to a minimum by the fact that it does not observe it, does not project it in its consciousness and into the future, does not imagine things about its illness or its accident.

With man there has begun this perpetual worrying about what is going to happen, and this worry is the principal, if not the sole cause of his torment. With this objectivising consciousness there has begun anxiety, painful imaginations, worry, torment, anticipation of future catastrophes, with the result that most men — and not the least conscious, the most conscious — live in perpetual torment. Man is too conscious to be indifferent, he is not conscious enough to know what will happen. Truly it could be said without fear of making a mistake that of all earth's creatures he is the most miserable. The human being is used to being like that because it is an atavistic state which he has inherited from his ancestors, but it is truly a miserable condition. And it is only with this spiritual capacity of rising to a higher level and replacing the animal's unconsciousness by a spiritual super-consciousness that there comes into the being not only the capacity to see the goal of existence and to foresee the culmination of the effort but also a clear-sighted trust in a higher spiritual power to which one can surrender one's whole being, entrust oneself, give the responsibility for one's life and future and so abandon all worries.

Of course, it is impossible for man to fall back to the level of the animal and lose the consciousness he has acquired; therefore, for him there is only one means, one way to get out of this condition he is in, which I call a miserable one, and to emerge into a higher state where worry is replaced by a trusting surrender and the certitude of a luminous culmination — this way is to change the consciousness.

Truly speaking there is no condition more miserable than being responsible for an existence to which one doesn't have the key, that is, of which one doesn't have the threads that can guide and solve the problems. The animal sets itself no problems: it just lives. Its instinct drives it, it relies on a collective consciousness which has an innate knowledge and is higher than itself, but it is automatic, spontaneous, it has no need to will something and make an effort to bring it about, it is quite naturally like that, and as it is not responsible for its life, it does not worry. With man is born the sense of having to depend on himself, and as he does not have the necessary knowledge the result is a perpetual torment. This torment can come to an end only with a total surrender to a higher consciousness than his own to which he can totally entrust himself, hand over his worries and

leave the care of guiding his life and organising everything.

How can a problem be solved when one doesn't have the necessary knowledge? And the unfortunate thing is that man believes that he has to resolve all the problems of his life, and he does not have the knowledge needed to do it. That is the source, the origin of all his troubles — that perpetual question, "What should I do?..." which is followed by another one still more acute, "What is going to happen?" and at the same time, more or less, the inability to answer.

That is why all spiritual disciplines begin with the necessity of surrendering all responsibility and relying on a higher principle. Otherwise peace is impossible.

And yet, consciousness has been given to man so that he can progress, can discover what he doesn't know, develop into what he has not yet become; and so it may be said that there is a higher state than that of an immobile and static peace: it is a trust total enough for one to keep the will to progress, to preserve the effort for progress while ridding it of all anxiety, all care for results and consequences. This is one step ahead of the methods which may be called "quietist", which are founded on the rejection of all activity and a plunging into an immobility and inner silence, which forsake all life because it has been suddenly felt that without peace one can't have any inner realisation and, quite naturally, one thought that one couldn't have peace so long as one was living in outer conditions, in the state of anxiety in which problems are set and cannot be solved, for one does not have the knowledge to do so.

The next step is to face the problem, but with the calm and certitude of an absolute trust in the supreme Power which knows, and can make you act. And then, instead of abandoning action, one can act in a higher peace that is strong and dynamic.

This is what could be called a new aspect of the divine intervention in life, a new form of intervention of the divine forces in existence, a new aspect of spiritual realisation.

26 March 1958

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I have seen pet animals which truly had a sort of inner *need* to become something other than what they were. I knew dogs which were like that, cats, horses and even birds like that. The outer form was inevitably what it was, but there was something living and perceptible in the animal which was making an obvious effort to achieve another expression, another form. And every man who has gone beyond the stage of the animal man and become the human man truly has what I might call an “incorrigible” need to be something other than this thoroughly unsatisfactory semi-animal — unsatisfactory in its expression, its means of expression and its means of life. So the problem is this: Will this imperious need be effective enough in its aspiration for the form itself, the species, to develop and transform itself, or will it be only this thing, this imperishable consciousness in the being, which will leave this form when it perishes to enter into a higher form which, besides, as far as we can see now, does not yet exist?

And the problem before us is: How will this higher form be created? If we consider the problem, it becomes very interesting. Is it by some process which we have to imagine, that this form will gradually transform itself in order to create a new one, or is it by some other means, a means still unknown to us, that this new form will appear in the world?

That is, will there be a continuity or will there be a sudden appearance of something new? Will there be a progressive transition between what we now are and what our inner spirit aspires to become, or will there be a break, that is, shall we be obliged to drop this present human form and wait for the appearance of a new form — an appearance the process of which we do not foresee and which will have no relation with what we are now? Can we hope that this body which is our present means of earthly manifestation, will have the possibility of transforming itself progressively into something which will be able to express a higher life, or will it be necessary to give up this form entirely to enter into another which does not yet exist on Earth?

That is the problem. It is a very interesting problem.

(When this talk was first published, the Mother added the following remarks:)

Why not both? Both will be there at the same time; the one does not

exclude the other.

Yes, but will one be transformed into the other?

One will be transformed and will be like a rough outline of the other. And the other, the perfect one, will appear when this one comes into being. For both have their beauty and their purpose, therefore they will both be there.

The mind always tries to choose — but it's not like that. Even all that we can imagine is much less than what will be. Truly speaking, everyone who has an intense aspiration and an inner certitude will be called upon to realise it.

Everywhere, in all the fields, always, eternally, everything will be possible. And everything that is possible, everything will exist at a given moment — a given moment that will be more or less delayed, but everything will exist.

Just as all sorts of possibilities have been found between the animals and man, possibilities which have not remained, so there will be all sorts of possibilities: each individual will try in his own way. And all this together will help to prepare the future realisation.

The question might be asked: Will the human species be like some species which have disappeared from the earth?... Certain species have disappeared from the earth — but not species which have lasted as long as the human species. I don't think so; and certainly not the species which had in them the seed of progress, this possibility of progress. Rather one has the impression that evolution will follow a curve which will draw closer and closer to a higher species and, maybe, everything that is still too close to the lower species will fall away, just as those species have.

We always forget that not only is everything possible — everything, even the most contradictory things — but all the possibilities have at least one moment of existence.

4 December 1957

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The difficulty of the problem is that only a mental being could take an

interest in this process of transformation and creation, and that the mental consciousness in the animal species was not sufficient for it to take an interest in this process.

Animals had no means of noting what was happening, of taking it into consideration and remembering it. And that is why this part of the earth's history has almost disappeared. A mental capacity like man's must intervene to make it possible to follow the course of this transformation and retain a memory of it.... In fact, more is imagined than remembered. It is quite obvious that the psychic being has gone through all that, but it has not kept a mental memory of it. The memory of the psychic being is a psychic memory which is of an altogether different kind; it is not historical like mental memory which can keep a precise record of what takes place.

But now that we are on the threshold of the new transformation [...] and now that we are going to witness the process of transformation between the human mental being and the supramental being, we shall profit by this historical ability of the mind which will follow what happens and take note of it. So, from that point of view also, the phenomenon which is taking place now is absolutely unique in the history of the earth, and probably — almost certainly — when we have followed the process of this transformation to the very end, we shall have the key to all the former transformations; that is, everything that we are trying to understand at present, we shall know for certain when the process is repeated, this time between the mental and the supramental being.

You are therefore invited to a very special development of the capacity for observation, so that all this may not take place in a half-dream and you awaken to a new life without even knowing how things have happened.

One must be very vigilant, wide awake, and instead of being interested in little inner psychological phenomena which are... quite antiquated — they belong to an entire period of human history which anyway has lost all its novelty — it would be better to be more attentive to things of greater general import, things more subtle, more impersonal which would put you in the midst of new discoveries of a very special interest.

Open the eyes of the subtle intelligence, and without prejudice or preference, without egoism and without attachment, look at what is happening day by day.

12 March 1958

The Collaboration of Nature

“O Nature, Material Mother, Thou hast said that thou wilt collaborate and there is no limit to the splendour of this collaboration.”

*New Year Message of 1958
The Mother*

Sweet Mother, will you explain the message for this year?

[...] It is an experience, something that happened, and when it happened I noted it down, and as it turned out, it occurred just at the moment when I remembered that I had to write something for the year — which was next year at that time, that is, the year which begins today. When I remembered that I had to write something — not because of that, but simultaneously — this experience came, and when I noted it down, I realised that it was... it was the message for this year!

(*Silence*)

I will tell you only one thing: you should not misinterpret the meaning of this experience and imagine that from now on everything is going to take place without any difficulties and always in a manner that favours our personal desires. It is not on this plane. It does not mean that when we do not want it to rain, it will not rain! that when we want something to happen in the world, it will happen immediately; that all difficulties will be done away with and everything will be as it is in fairy-tales. It is not that. It is something much deeper: Nature, in her play of forces, has accepted the new Force which has manifested and included it in her movements. And as always, the movements of Nature are on a scale which is infinitely beyond the human scale and not visible to an ordinary human consciousness. It is an inner, psychological possibility which has come into the world rather than a spectacular change in earthly events.

I am saying this because you might be tempted to believe that fairy-tales were going to be realised on earth. It is not yet time for that.

One must have much patience and a very wide and very complex

vision to understand how things happen.

The miracles which take place are not what could be called story-book miracles, in the sense that they don't happen as in stories. They are visible only to a very deep vision of things — very deep, very comprehensive, very vast.

One must already be capable of following the methods and ways of the Grace in order to recognise its action. One must already be capable of not being blinded by appearances in order to see the deeper truth of things.

We could usefully, this evening, just take this resolution: to try throughout the year to do our best, so that the time may not pass in vain.

1 January 1958

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In the course of one of our classes I spoke of the limitless abundance of Nature, the inexhaustible creatrix who takes the multitude of forms and mixes them together, separates them again and remoulds them, unmakes and destroys them, to move on to ever new combinations. It is a huge cauldron, I said: she stirs things inside and brings out something; it's no good, she throws it in again and takes something else.... One or two forms or a hundred have no importance for her, there are thousands and thousands of forms, and then as for years, a hundred years, a thousand, millions of years, it is of no importance, you have eternity before you! It is quite obvious that Nature enjoys all this and that she is not in a hurry. If she is told to rush rapidly through and finish this or that part of her work quickly, the reply is always the same: "But why should I do so, why? Doesn't it amuse you?"

The evening I told you about these things, I identified myself totally with Nature, I joined in her game. And this movement of identification provoked a response, a sort of new intimacy between Nature and myself, a long movement of a growing closeness which culminated in an experience which came on the eighth of November [1957].

Suddenly Nature understood. She understood that this new

Consciousness which has just been born⁸ does not seek to reject her but wants to embrace her entirely, she understood that this new spirituality does not turn away from life, does not recoil in fear before the formidable amplitude of her movement, but wants on the contrary to integrate all its facets. She understood that the supramental consciousness is here not to diminish but to complete her.

Then from the supreme Reality came this order, “Awake, O Nature, to the joy of collaboration.” And the whole of Nature suddenly rushed forward in a great surge of joy, saying, “I accept, I shall collaborate.” And at the same time, there came a calm, an absolute tranquillity so that the bodily vessel could receive and contain, without breaking, without losing anything, the mighty flood of this Joy of Nature which rushed forward as in a movement of gratitude. She accepted, she saw with all eternity before her that this supramental consciousness was going to fulfil her more perfectly, give a still greater strength to her movement, a greater amplitude, more possibilities to her play.

And suddenly I heard, as if they came from all the corners of the earth, those great notes one sometimes hears in the subtle physical, a little like those of Beethoven’s Concerto in D-major, which come in moments of great progress, as though fifty orchestras had burst forth all in unison, without a single false note, to express the joy of this new communion between Nature and Spirit, the meeting of old friends who come together again after having been separated for so long.

Then these words came, “O Nature, Material Mother, thou hast said that thou wilt collaborate and there is no limit to the splendour of this collaboration.”

And the radiant felicity of this splendour was sensed in perfect peace.

That is how the message for the new year was born.

⁸ The Mother is referring to the supramental consciousness, which, she said, manifested upon earth on 29 February 1956.

A Transitional Species

"If a spiritual unfolding on earth is the hidden truth of our birth into Matter, if it is fundamentally an evolution of consciousness that has been taking place in Nature, then man as he is cannot be the last term of that evolution: he is too imperfect an expression of the Spirit, Mind itself a too limited form and instrumentation; Mind is only a middle term of consciousness, the mental being can only be a transitional being. If, then, man is incapable of exceeding mentality, he must be surpassed and Supermind and superman must manifest and take the lead of the creation. But if his mind is capable of opening to what exceeds it, then there is no reason why man himself should not arrive at Supermind and supermanhood or at least lend his mentality, life and body to an evolution of that greater term of the Spirit manifesting in Nature." (Sri Aurobindo)

Anyway, we have now reached a certitude since there is already a beginning of realisation. We have the proof that in certain conditions the ordinary state of humanity can be exceeded and a new state of consciousness worked out which enables at least a conscious relation between mental and supramental man.

It can be asserted with certainty that there will be an intermediate specimen between the mental and the supramental being, a kind of superman who will still have the qualities and in part the nature of man, that is, who will still belong in his most external form to the human being with its animal origin, but will transform his consciousness sufficiently to belong in his realisation and activity to a new race, a race of supermen.

This species may be considered a transitional species, for one can foresee that it will discover the means of producing new beings without going through the old animal method, and these beings — who will have a truly spiritual birth — will constitute the elements of the new race, the supramental race.

So we could call supermen those who, in their origin, still belong to the old method of generation but in their achievement are in conscious and active contact with the new world of supramental realisation.

It seems — it is even certain — that the very substance which will constitute this intermediate world that is already being built up, is richer, more powerful, more luminous, more resistant, with certain subtler, more penetrating new qualities, and a kind of innate capacity of universality, as if its degree of subtlety and refinement allowed the perception of vibrations in a much wider, if not altogether total way, and it removes the sensation of division one has with the old substance, the ordinary mental substance. There is a subtlety of vibration which makes global, universal perception a spontaneous and natural thing. The sense of division, of separation, disappears quite naturally and spontaneously with that substance. And that substance is at present almost universally diffused in the earth atmosphere. It is perceptible in the waking state, simply with a little concentration and a kind of absorption of consciousness, if this is retracted, withdrawn from the ordinary extenalisation which seems more and more artificial and false. This extenalisation, this perception which formerly was natural, now seems false, unreal and completely artificial; it does not at all answer to things as they are, it belongs to a movement which does not correspond to anything really true.

This new perception is asserting itself more and more, becoming more and more natural, and it is even sometimes difficult to recapture the old way of being, as though it were vanishing into a misty past — something which is on the point of ceasing to exist.

One may conclude from this that the moment a body, which was of course formed by the old animal method, is capable of living this consciousness naturally and spontaneously, without effort, without going out of itself, it proves that this is not one single exceptional case but simply the forerunner of a realisation which, even if it is not altogether general, can at least be shared by a certain number of individuals who, besides, as soon as they share it, will lose the perception of being separate individuals and become a living collectivity.

This new realisation is proceeding with what one might call a lightning speed, for if we consider time in the ordinary way, only two years have passed — a little more than two years — from the time the supramental substance penetrated into the earth atmosphere to the time the change in the quality of the earth atmosphere took place.

If things go on advancing at this speed, it seems more than possible, almost evident, that what Sri Aurobindo wrote in a letter is a prophetic announcement: The supramental consciousness will enter a phase of realising power in 1967.⁹

16 April 1958

⁹ “4-5-67 is the year of complete realisation.”

CHAPTER 4

Plants and Animals

Trees and Flowers

Sweet Mother, can a plant grow otherwise than physically?

In plants there is a great vital force. And this vital force has a considerable action. And there is also the genius of the species, which is a consciousness. There is already an active consciousness at work in plants.

And in the genius of the species there is a beginning — quite embryonic, but still — there is a beginning of response to the psychic influence, and certain flowers are clearly the expression of a psychic attitude and aspiration in the plant, not very conscious of itself, but existing like a spontaneous impetus.

It is quite certain, for instance, that if you have a special affection for a plant, if, in addition to the material care you give it, you love it, if you feel close to it, it feels this; its blossoming is much more harmonious and happy, it grows better, it lives longer. All this means a response in the plant itself. Consequently, there is the presence there of a certain consciousness; and surely the plant has a vital being.

Mother, does a plant have its own individuality and does it also reincarnate after death?

This may happen, but it is accidental.

There are trees — trees especially — which have lived long and can be the home of a conscious being, a vital being. Generally it is vital entities which take shelter in trees, or else certain beings of the vital plane which live in forests — as certain beings of the vital live in water. There were old legends like that, but they were based on facts.

The plant serves as home and shelter, but the being is not created by the

plant itself!

18 January 1956

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Is there a sense of beauty in flowers?

Directly there is organic life, the vital element comes in, and it is this vital element which gives to flowers the sense of beauty. It is not perhaps individualised in the sense we understand it, but it is a sense of the species and the species always tries to realise it. I have noticed a first rudiment of the psychic presence and vibration in vegetable life, and truly this blossoming one calls a flower is the first manifestation of the psychic presence. The psychic is individualised only in man, but it was there before him; but it is not the same kind of individualisation as in man, it is more fluid: it manifests as force, as consciousness rather than as individuality. Take the rose, for example; its great perfection of form, colour, scent expresses an aspiration and a psychic giving. Look at a rose opening in the morning at the first touch of the sun, it is a magnificent self-giving in aspiration.

Each flower has its special significance, hasn't it?

Not as we understand it mentally. There is a mental projection when one gives a precise meaning to a flower. It may answer, vibrate to the touch of this projection, accept the meaning, but a flower has no equivalent of the mental consciousness. In the vegetable kingdom there is a beginning of the psychic, but there is no beginning of the mental consciousness. In animals it is different; mental life begins to form and for them things have a meaning. But in flowers it is rather like the movement of a little baby — it is neither a sensation nor a feeling, but something of both; it is a spontaneous movement, a very special vibration. So, if one is in contact with it, if one feels it, one gets an impression which may be translated by a thought. That is how I have given a meaning to flowers and plants — there is a kind of identification with the vibration, a perception of the quality it represents and, little by little, through a kind of approximation (sometimes this comes suddenly, occasionally it takes time), there is a coming together

of these vibrations (which are of a vital-emotional order) and the vibration of the mental thought, and if there is a sufficient harmony, one has a direct perception of what the plant may signify.

In some countries (particularly here [in India]) certain plants are used as the media for worship, offering, devotion. Certain plants are given on special occasions. And I have often seen that this identification was quite in keeping with the nature of the plant, because spontaneously, without knowing anything, I happened to give the same meaning as that given in religious ceremonies. The vibration was really there in the flower itself.... Did it come from the use that had been made of it or did it come from very far, from somewhere deep down, from a beginning of the psychic life? It would be difficult to say.

1 March 1951

Insects and Animals

Animals don't have ill-will, do they?

I do not think so. I can't say for sure since I don't know all the animal species, but I have heard things which to us seem monstrosities, yet are not at all instances of ill-will. For example, take the world of insects; of all the animal species it is this which most contains the sense of what we call wickedness — and what may be called ill-will, but it could very well be that this is our consciousness applied to their movements which sees a movement of wickedness or ill-will.... There are insects whose larvae can live only on a living being. They can feed only on a living being; dead flesh does not nourish these. So the parent insect that is going to lay its eggs (which will change into larvae) begins by stinging a nervous centre of another insect or small lower animal which it paralyses, and after that gently lays its eggs inside in such a way that when the eggs are hatched the larvae feed on that paralysed but not dead animal. It is Machiavellian, isn't it? Evidently it is not the result of reasoning, it is an instinct. Can this be called ill-will? Is this ill-will?... It is simply the instinct of procreation.

Perhaps, if we say that these insects are moved by the spirit of the species which in itself is conscious and has a conscious will, we can then

say that all these imaginations (I give you this one instance, but there are any number of them as terrible, as monstrous for our human consciousness), all these beings, fashioners, who have created these insects must be frightful beings (don't you think so?) and have a perverse and diabolical imagination. It is quite possible, for indeed it is said that the origin of the insect species is a vital origin, that the fashioners are those of a vital type, that is, beings who not only symbolise but represent and live upon the ill-will in the world. These are very conscious of their ill-will, and it is deliberate. The ill-will of men is usually only a kind of reflection — an imitation or a reflection — of the will of the beings of the vital, a will clearly hostile to creation, a will to make things as painful, as ugly, as sorrowful, as monstrous as possible. It is said that it is these who have created insects, and so the insect species would perhaps be... But they do not wilfully represent evil, you understand, they are moved by an unconscious instinct. They do not do evil intentionally. They do it because it is in their nature.

What I call ill-will is truly the will to do evil for the sake of doing evil, destroying for the sake of destroying, harming for harming's sake and taking pleasure in the fact of doing evil. That really is ill-will. Egoism, I do believe, begins with the birth of mind. I can't tell for certain, for always new things are being found. But what I have seen of the animal species, specially of the higher animals, may be the instinct of preservation, may be violence, obscure and brutal reactions, but is that truly what is called ill-will?... It is possible. If someone were to tell me a story he has witnessed which proves the opposite, I am ready to admit it but for the time being — I haven't seen it. All that I know of animals is their instinct which pushes them into action, but they don't have that perversity that's in the human mind. I believe it is with this kind of mental functioning and under the direct influence of the vital that man has become an ill-willed being. The Titans are ill-willed beings but the Titans are beings of the vital world manifested in the forces of Nature: they want to do evil for the pleasure of doing it, to destroy for the pleasure of destroying.

People always speak about the wickedness of cats, for instance, playing with the mouse before eating it. That's an example given to children; but I have seen cats. I know what they do. It is not at all true. They don't do this at all through malice. Usually it happens like this: the mother-cat hunts for

the little ones and catches a mouse. If it were to give the mouse immediately to the kittens to eat, they wouldn't be able to eat it, for it is hard, tough, and they don't have the capacity to eat such hard, tough flesh. Besides, it is also bad when it is like that. So they play with it (they seem to be playing with it), they toss it about, roll it, catch it, let it run, run after it, until it is very nicely softened. And then, when it is well softened, ready for eating, and the meat already worked upon, then they give it to the little ones who can now eat it. But certainly they don't go and play with the mouse for the pleasure of playing! They hunt first, you see, and then prepare the dinner. They have neither furnace nor fire to cook and soften the thing. They must prepare it and make it ready for eating.

But it is also said that the first expression of love in living beings is the desire to devour. One wants to absorb, desires to devour. There is one instance which would seem to prove that this is not altogether false — that is when the tiger catches its prey or the snake its victim, it happens that both the tiger's and the snake's victims give themselves up in a kind of delight of being eaten. An experience is narrated of a man who was in the bush with his friends and had lagged behind and was caught by a tiger, a man-eater. The others came back when they saw that he was missing. They saw the tracks. They ran after him, just in time to prevent the tiger's eating him. When he came to himself a little, they told him he must have had a frightful experience. He said: "No, just imagine, I don't know what happened to me, as soon as that tiger caught me and while it was dragging me along, I felt an intense love for it and a great desire to be eaten by it!"

This is quite true, it is not an invention. It is a true story.

Well, I have seen with my own eyes.... I believe I have already narrated this to you — the story of the little rabbit which had been put in a python's cage. It was in the cage in the Jardin des Plantes in Paris. It was the breakfast day. I happened to be there. The cage was opened, the little white rabbit put inside. It was a pretty little white rabbit and it immediately fled to the other end of the cage and trembled like anything. It was horrible to see this, for it knew very well what was happening, it had felt the snake, it knew very well. The serpent was simply coiled up on its mat. It seemed to be asleep, and very quietly it stretched out its neck and head, and then began looking at the rabbit. It looked at it without stirring —just looked at it. I saw the rabbit which at first stopped trembling; it no longer was afraid.

It was quite doubled up and it began to recover. And then I saw it lift its head, open its eyes wide, and look at the snake, and slowly, very slowly it went forward towards it till it was just at the right distance. Then the snake with a single leap — without any disturbance, without even uncoiling itself, just remaining where it was, you understand — hop! it took it. And then it began rolling it, preparing it for its dinner. It was not in order to play with it. It prepared the thing. It crushed all its bones nicely, made them crack; then it smeared it with a kind of gluey substance to make it quite slippery. And when it was all quite ready, it began swallowing it slowly, comfortably.... But it didn't have to disturb itself, it didn't have to make the least movement, except the last swift one just to catch it when it was right in front. It was the other creature that had come to it.

There you are. Indeed there are many things in Nature. There is this, there is perhaps ill-will also. But I am not quite sure that it is not one of those presents that mental activity has given to man... as soon as he was separated from his instinct and wanted to act independently....

What exactly is instinct?

It is the consciousness of Nature. Nature is conscious of its action, but this is not an individual consciousness. There is an instinct of the species. Some have said that there were even “spirits of the species”, conscious beings for each species. Instinct depends on the way Nature works, and Nature is a conscious force which knows what it wants, does it in its own way, knowing where it is going and its roads: it chooses them itself. For man this appears incoherent, for his own consciousness is too narrow (he can't see the whole well enough; when one sees only the small details of things or little fragments, one can't understand at all), but Nature has a plan, it has a conscious will, it is altogether a conscious entity — it can't be called a being, for it is not in the same proportion. When we speak of a being with our human consciousness, we immediately imagine a human being, perhaps a little larger or much larger, but still functioning always in the same way. That is why I don't call it a being, but it is a conscious entity, a conscious will doing things consciously, deliberately, and having formidable forces at its disposal.

It is also said that the forces of Nature are blind and violent. But it is not at all that! It is man in his relative proportion with Nature who judges

like that. Wait a little, let us take this example. When there is an earthquake, many islands are engulfed and millions of people killed. People say: "This Nature is monstrous." From the human point of view this Nature is monstrous. What has it done? It has wrought a cataclysm. But just think how in jumping or running or doing something or other, you get a good knock and turn black and blue. It is the same thing for our cells as an earthquake; you destroy a huge number of cells! It is a question of proportion. For us, our little consciousness, ever so little, this appears something formidable but after all it is quite simply a contusion somewhere upon earth (not even in the universe). We are speaking only of the earth. What is it? Nothing at all, just a tiny little plaything in the universe. If we speak of this universe, then the disappearance of the worlds — these are just contusions. It is nothing.

One must, if one can, widen one's consciousness.

8 My 1953

Animals and Men

There are animals with very developed senses, aren't there?

Ah! yes, there are animals which are much more advanced than we.

I knew an elephant which led us straight to the water when we were tiger-shooting.

Animals have much more perfect senses than those of men. I challenge you to track a man as a dog does, for instance!

This means that in the curve or rather the spiral of evolution, animals (and more so those we call "higher" animals, because they resemble us more closely) are governed by the spirit of the species which is a highly conscious consciousness. Bees, ants, obey this spirit of the species which is of quite a special quality. And what is called "instinct" in animals is simply obedience to the spirit of the species which always knows what ought and ought not to be done. There are so many examples, you know. You put a cow in a meadow; it roams around, sniffs, and suddenly puts out its tongue and snatches a blade of grass. Then it wanders about again, sniffs and gets

another tuft of grass, and so it goes on. Has anyone ever known a cow under these conditions eating poisonous grass? But shut this poor animal up in a cow-shed, gather and put some grass before it, and the poor creature which has lost its instinct because it now obeys man (excuse me), eats the poisonous grass along with the rest of it. We have already had three such cases here, three cows which died of having eaten poisonous grass. And these unfortunate animals, like all animals, have a kind of respect (which I could call unjustifiable) for the superiority of man — if he puts poisonous grass before the cow and tells it to eat, it eats it! But left to itself, that is, without anything interfering between it and the spirit of the species, it would never do so. All animals which live close to man lose their instinct because they have a kind of admiration full of devotion for this being who can give them shelter and food without the least difficulty — and a little fear too, for they know that if they don't do what man wants they will be beaten!

It is quite strange, they lose their ability. Dogs, for instance the sheep-dog which lives far away from men with the flocks and has a very independent nature (it comes home from time to time and knows its master well, but often does not see him), if it is bitten by a snake, it will remain in a corner, lick itself and do all that is necessary till it gets cured. The same dog, if it stays with you and is bitten by a snake, dies quietly like man.

I had a very sweet little cat, absolutely civilised, a marvellous cat. It was born in the house and it had the habit all cats have, that is to say, if something moved, it played with that. Just then there was in the house a huge scorpion; as was its habit, the cat started playing with the scorpion. And the scorpion stung it. But it was an exceptional cat; it came to me, it was almost dying, but it showed me its paw where it was bitten — it was already swollen and in a terrible state. I took my little cat — it was really sweet — and put it on a table and called Sri Aurobindo. I told him, "Kiki has been stung by a scorpion, it must be cured." The cat stretched its neck and looked at Sri Aurobindo, its eyes already a little glassy. Sri Aurobindo sat before it and looked at it also. Then we saw this little cat gradually beginning to recover, to come round, and an hour later it jumped to its feet and went away completely healed.... In those days, I had the habit of holding a meditation in the room where Sri Aurobindo slept [...] and it was regularly the same people who came; everything was arranged. But there

was an arm-chair in which this very cat always settled beforehand — it did not wait for anyone to get into the chair, it got in first itself! And regularly it went into a trance! It was not sleeping, it was not in the pose cats take when sleeping: it was in a trance, it used to start up, it certainly had visions. And it let out little sounds. It was in a profound trance. It remained thus for hours together. And when it came out from that state, it refused to eat. It was awakened and given food, but it refused: it went back to its chair and fell again into a trance! This was becoming very dangerous for a little cat.... But this was not an ordinary cat.

To finish my story, if you leave an animal in its normal state, far from man, it obeys the spirit of the species, it has a very sure instinct and it will never commit any stupidities. But if you take it and keep it with you, it loses its instinct, and it is then you who must look after it, for it no longer knows what should or should not be done. I was interested in cats to make an experiment, a sort of inverse metempsychosis, if one can call it that, that is, to see if this could be their last incarnation as animals, if they were ready to enter a human body in the next life. The experiment succeeded fully, I had three absolutely striking instances; they left with a psychic being sufficiently conscious to enter a human body. But this is not what men ordinarily do; what they usually do is to spoil the consciousness or rather the instinct of animals.

22 March 1951

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What kind of love do animals have for men?

It is almost the same as that of rather unintellectual men for the Divine. It is made of admiration, trust and a sense of security. Admiration: it seems to you something really very beautiful. And it is not reasoned out: an admiration from the heart, so to speak, spontaneous.

For instance, dogs have this in a very high degree. And then, trust — naturally this is sometimes mixed with other things: with the feeling of some need and dependence, for it is that person who will give me to eat when I am hungry, give me shelter when it is rough weather, who will look after me. This is not the most beautiful side. And then, unfortunately, it gets mixed up (and I believe — I consider it entirely man's fault) with a

kind of fear; a feeling of dependence and a kind of fear of something which is much stronger, much more conscious, much more... which can harm you, and you have no strength to defend yourself. It is a pity, but I believe it is altogether man's fault.

But if men really deserved the love of animals, it would be made of a feeling of wonder and of the sense of security. It is something very fine, this sense of security; something that's able to protect you, to give you all that you need, and near which you can always find shelter.

Animals have an altogether rudimentary mind. They are not tormented by incessant thoughts like human beings. For example, they feel a spontaneous gratitude for an act of kindness towards them, whilst men, ninety-eight times out of a hundred, begin to reason and ask themselves what interest one could have in being good. This is one of the great miseries of mental activity. Animals are free from this and when you are kind to them they are grateful to you, spontaneously. And they have trust. So their love is made of that, and it turns into a very strong attachment, an irresistible need to be near you.

There is something else. If the master is really a good one and the animal faithful, there is an exchange of psychic and vital forces, an exchange which becomes for the animal something wonderful, giving it an intense joy. When they like to be quite close to you in that way, when you hold them, it is that they vibrate internally. The force one gives them — the strength of affection, of tenderness, protection, all that — they feel it, and it creates a deep attachment in them. Even fairly easily, in some of the higher animals like dogs, elephants, and even horses, it creates quite a remarkable need for devotion (which indeed is not thwarted by all the reasonings and arguments of the mind), which is spontaneous and very pure in its essence, something that's very beautiful.

The working of the mind in man in its rudimentary form, its first manifestation has spoilt many things which were much finer before.

Naturally, if man rises to a higher level and makes good use of his intelligence, then things can take on a much greater value. But between the two, there is a passage where man makes the most vulgar and low use of his intelligence; he makes it an instrument for calculation, domination, deception, and there it becomes very ugly. I have known in my life animals

I considered much higher than a large number of men, for that sordid calculation, that wish to cheat and profit was precisely not there in them. There are others that catch it — through contact with man they catch it — but there are those who don't have it.

The unselfish movement, uncalculating, is one of the most beautiful forms of psychic consciousness in the world. But the higher one rises in the scale of mental activity, the rarer it becomes. For with intelligence come all the skill and cleverness, and corruption, calculation. For instance, when a rose blossoms it does so spontaneously, for the joy of being beautiful, smelling sweet, expressing all its joy of living, and it does not calculate, it has nothing to gain out of it: it does so spontaneously, in the joy of being and living. Take a human being, well, apart from a very few exceptions, the moment his mind is active he tries to get some advantage out of his beauty and cleverness; he wants it to bring him something, either men's admiration or even much more sordid gains yet. Consequently, from the psychic point of view, the rose is better than human beings.

Only, if you climb a rung higher and consciously do what the rose does unconsciously, then it is much more beautiful. But it must be the same thing: a spontaneous flowering of beauty, uncalculating, simply for the joy of being. Little children have this at times (at times, not always). Unfortunately, under the influence of their parents and the environment, they learn to be calculating when yet very young.

But this kind of wish to gain by what one has or does is truly one of the ugliest things in the world. And it is one of the most widespread and it has become so widespread, that it is almost spontaneous in man. Nothing can turn its back on the divine love more totally than that, that wish to calculate and profit.

Do flowers love?

This is their form of love, this blossoming. Certainly, when one sees a rose opening to the sun, it is like a need to give its beauty. Only, for us, it is almost unintelligible, for they do not think about what they do. A human being always associates with everything he does this ability to see himself doing it, that is, to think about himself, think of himself doing it. Man knows that he is doing something. Animals don't think. It is not at all the

same form of love. And flowers, so to speak, are not conscious: it is a spontaneous movement, not a consciousness that is conscious of itself, not at all. But it is a great Force which acts through all that, the great universal Consciousness and the great Force of universal love which makes all things blossom in beauty. That is what I have written there also:

"Is it not love, under an erring and obscure form, that is associated with all the impulsions of the physical and vital nature as the push towards every movement and every grouping and which has become quite visible in the plant world?" (The Mother)

You know, crystals which are formed in matter already obey a movement of love: but this becomes quite perceptible in the vegetable kingdom, in the tree and plant. It is the need to grow to get more light. All these trees which are always growing higher — always growing, the smaller ones trying to catch up with the taller, the taller ones trying to climb yet higher; you put two plants side by side, they both try to find an orientation that gives them the maximum light possible — that is the need to grow to get more air, more light, more space.

"In the flower it is the gift of beauty and fragrance in a loving efflorescence. And in the animal is it not there behind hunger and thirst, the need for appropriation, expansion, procreation, in brief, behind all desire, whether conscious or not? and, among the higher orders, in the self-sacrificing devotion of the female for her young ones?" (The Mother)

... which in human beings becomes maternal love. The only difference is that it is conscious of itself. And in animals it is often even purer than in human beings. There are instances of the devotion, care, self-forgetfulness of animals for their young, which are absolutely wonderful. Only, it is spontaneous, not thought out, not reflected upon; the animal does not think about what it is doing. Man thinks. At times this spoils the movement (at times — most often), sometimes it can give it a higher worth but that is rare. There is less spontaneity in man's movements than in an animal's.

26 August 1953

Aren't dogs more faithful than men?

Certainly! Because it is their nature to be faithful, and they have no mental complications. What prevents men from being faithful are their mental complications. Most men are not faithful because they fear being duped. You don't know what it is to be duped? They fear being deceived, being exploited. They fear... Behind their faithfulness there is still a very big egoism which is more or less hidden, and there is always that bargaining, more or less conscious, of give-and-take: one gives oneself to someone but whether one tells oneself this or not, one expects something in exchange. You are faithful, but also want others to be faithful to you, that is, look after you, to be quite sweet to you, and, especially not to try to profit by your faithfulness. None of these complications are there in the dog, for its mind is very rudimentary. It does not have this marvellous capacity of reasoning that men have, a capacity which has made them commit so many stupidities.

Only one cannot turn and go back. One cannot become a dog again. So one must become a higher man and have the quality of the dog on a higher plane; that is, instead of its being a half-conscious fidelity, and in any case very instinctive, a sort of need that ties it down, it must be a willed, conscious fidelity, and especially above all egoism. There is a point where all the virtues are united: it is a point that goes beyond the ego. If we take this faithfulness, if we take devotion, take love, the meaning of service, all these things, when they are above the egoistic level, they meet, in the sense that they give themselves and do not expect anything in exchange. And if you climb one step higher, instead of its being done with the idea of duty and abnegation, it is done with an intense joy which carries within itself its own reward, which needs nothing in exchange, for it carries its joy in itself. But then, for that you must have climbed quite high and must no longer have that turning back upon yourself which, of all things, pulls you down lowest. That kind of... that sympathy, full of self-pity, wherein one cajoles and caresses oneself and says, "Poor me!", that, indeed, is something terrible, and one does this so constantly, without being aware of it. This turning back upon oneself, a kind of degrading self-compassion, in

which one tells oneself in a tone so full of pity, "Nobody understands me! No one loves me! No one cares for me as people should!" etc., and one goes on and on.... And now this is really terrible, it draws you down into a hole immediately.

One must have gone far beyond all that, left it very far behind oneself, in order to truly have the joy of faithfulness, the joy of self-giving, which does not care at all, no, indeed, not at all, in any way, whether it is properly received or gets the adequate response. Not to expect anything in exchange for what one does, not to expect anything, not through asceticism or a sense of sacrifice but because one has the joy of the consciousness one is in and that is enough; this is much better than all one can receive, from whomsoever it be; but that again is something else. There are quite a few stages between the two.

23 June 1954

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There are movements of certain vibrations which are vibrations of the species, you see, movements peculiar to the species to which you belong — there is the human species as there are all kinds. Now, some of these movements are not personal movements at all, they are movements of the species.

The human species has certain ways of being which are particular to it, which we reproduce almost automatically, as for example, walking upright, like this (*gesture*), whereas a cat goes on four feet, you see. This instinct of standing on one's two hind feet, upright, is peculiar to man, it is a movement that belongs to the species; to sit as we do with the head up, you see, to lie down as we do on the back...

You have only to watch animals: they lie down curled up, don't they? Almost all. It is with man that this way of lying on one's back, stretched out, begins, I think; I don't at all think that monkeys sleep like that, I think they sleep doubled up, that it is man who has started habits of this kind. And this reminds me...

I had a cat — in those days I used to sleep on the floor — which always came and slipped under the mosquito-net and slept beside me. Well, this

cat slept quite straight, it did not sleep as cats do, it put its head here and then lay down like this (*gesture*), alongside my legs with its two forepaws like this, and its two little hind legs quite straight. And there was something very, very curious about it which I saw one night, like that. I used to ask myself why it was like this, and one night I saw a little Russian woman of the people with a fur bonnet and three little children, and this woman had a kind of adoration for her children and always wanted to look for a shelter for them; I don't know, I don't know the story, but I saw that she had her three little children, very small ones, with her... one like this, one like that, one like that (*Mother shows the difference in height*), and she was dragging them along with her and looking for a corner to put them in safety. Something must have happened to her, she must have died suddenly with a kind of very animal maternal instinct of a certain kind, but all full of fear — fear, anguish and worry — and this something must have come from there and in some way or other had reincarnated. It was a movement — it was not a person, you know, it was a movement which belonged to this person and must have come up in the cat. It was there for some reason or other, you see, I don't know how it happened, I know nothing about it, but this cat was completely human in its ways. And very soon afterwards it had three kittens, like that; and it was extraordinary, it didn't want to leave them, it refused to leave them, it was entirely... it did not eat, did not go to satisfy its needs, it was always with its young. When one day it had an idea — nobody had said anything, of course — it took one kitten, as they take them, by the skin of the neck, and came and put it between my feet; I did not stir; it returned, took the second, put it there; it took the third, it put it there, and when all three were there, it looked at me, mewed and was gone. And this was the first time it went out after having had them; it went to the garden, went to satisfy its needs and to eat, because it was at peace, they were there between my feet. And when it had its young, it wanted to carry them on its back like a woman. And when it slept beside me, it slept on the back. It was never like a cat.

23 March 1955

CHAPTER 5

The Gradations of Existence and Their Expression in the Human Being

The Origin of Individuality

Who will tell me what constitutes an individual? What is it that gives you the impression that you are a person existing in himself?

One can say with Descartes: “I think, therefore I am.”

Ah, no! that does not prove that you are individualised.

What is it that gives you the impression that you are an individual?... When you were ten, you were very different from what you were when you were born, and now you are very different from what you were at ten, aren't you? The form grows within certain limits and there is a similarity, but even so, it is quite different from what it was at your birth; you may almost say, "It was not I." So much for the physical. Now, take your inner consciousness when you were five and now. Nobody would say it is the same person. And your thoughts, at five and now? All are different. But in spite of everything, what is it that gives you the impression that it is *the same person* who is thinking?

Let us take the example of a river following its course: it is never the same water which flows. What is a river? There is not a drop that ever is the same, no stability is there, then where is the river? (Some take this example to prove that there is no personality — they are very anxious to prove that there is no personality.) For beings it is the same thing: the consciousness changes, ideas change, sensations change, what then is the being? Some say that individuality is based upon memory, remembrance: you remember therefore you are an individual being. This is absolutely wrong, for even if you had no memory you would still be an individual being.

The river's bed constitutes the river.

The bed localises the river, but the bed also changes much; which means that all is inconstant, all is fugitive, and this is true. But it is only one part of the truth, it is not the whole. You feel quite clearly that there is something "stable" in you, don't you, but where does this sensation of stability come from?

If I were to place it physically, I would say it is somewhere in the chest. When I say "I am going to do something", it is not the true "I" which speaks. When I say "I think", it is not the true "I" which thinks — the true "I" looks at the thinking, it looks at the thoughts coming. Naturally this is a way of speaking.

When the vast majority of people say "I", it is a part of them, of their feeling, their body, their thought, indifferently, which speaks; it is something that always changes. Therefore, their "I" is innumerable, or the "I" always varies. What is the constant thing therein?... The psychic being, evidently. For, to be constant a thing must first be immortal. Otherwise it cannot be constant. Then, it must also be independent of the experiences through which it passes; it cannot be the experiences themselves. Hence, it is certainly not the bed of the river which constitutes the river; the bed is only a circumstance. If the comparison is carried a little farther (besides, comparisons are worthless, people find in them whatever they want), it can be said that the river is a good symbol of life, that what is constant in the river is the species "water". It is not always the same drop of water, but it is always water — without water there would be no river. And what endures in the human being is the species "consciousness". It is because it has a consciousness that it endures. It is not the forms which last, it is the consciousness, the power of binding together all these forms, of passing through all these things, not only keeping a memory of them (memory is something very external), but keeping the same vibration of consciousness.

And that is the great mystery of creation, for it is the same consciousness, the Consciousness is one. But the very moment this Consciousness manifests itself, exteriorises itself, deploys itself, it divides itself into innumerable fragments for the need of expansion, and each one of these fragmentations has been the beginning, the origin of an individual

being. The origin of every individual form is the law of this form or the truth of this form. If there were no law, no truth of each form, there would be no possibility of individualisation. It would be something extending indefinitely; there would be perhaps points of concentration, assemblages, but no individual consciousness. Each form then represents one element in the changing of the One into the many. This multiplicity implies an innumerable quantity of laws, elements of consciousness, truths which spread out into the universe and finally become separate individualities. So the individual being seems constantly to go farther and farther away from its origin by the very necessity of individualisation. But once this individualisation, that is, this awareness of the inner truth is complete, it becomes possible, by an inner identification, to re-establish in the multiplicity the original unity; that is the *raison d'être* of the universe as we perceive it. The universe has been made so that this phenomenon may take place. The Supreme has manifested Himself to Himself so as to become aware of Himself.

In any case, that is the rationale of *this* creation. Let us be satisfied with our universe, let us make the best use possible of our life upon earth and the rest will come in its time.

It is purposely, mind you, that I have not mentioned the ego as one of the causes of the sense of individuality. For the ego being a falsehood and an illusion, the sense of individuality would itself be false and illusory (as Buddha and Shankara affirm), whereas the origin of individualisation being in the Supreme Himself, the ego is only a passing deformation, necessary for the moment, which will disappear when its utility is over, when the Truth-Consciousness will be established.

3 March 1951

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Almost totally, everybody lives on the surface, all the time, all the time on the surface. And for them it's even the only thing which exists — the surface. And when something compels them to draw back from the surface, some people feel that they are falling into a hole. There are people who, if they are drawn back from the surface, suddenly feel that they are

crumbling down into an abyss, so unconscious they are!

They are conscious only of a kind of small thin crust which is all that they know of themselves and things and the world, and it is so thin a crust! Many! I have experienced, I don't know how often... I tried to interiorise some people and immediately they felt that they were falling into an abyss, and at times a black abyss. Now this is the absolute inconscience. But a fall, a fall into something which for them is like a non-existence, this happens very often. People are told: "Sit down and try to be silent, to be very quiet"; this frightens them terribly.

A fairly long preparation is needed in order to feel an increase of life when one goes out of the outer consciousness. It is already a great progress. And then there is the culmination, that when one is obliged for some reason or other to return to the outer consciousness, it is there that one has the impression of falling into a black hole, at least into a kind of dull, lifeless greyness, a chaotic mixture of disorganised things, with the faintest light, and all this seems so dull, so dim, so dead that one wonders how it is possible to remain in this state — but this of course is the other end — unreal, false, confused, lifeless!

24 August 1955

The Subconscious and the Subliminal

What does “subconscious” mean, exactly?

Subconscious? It is what is half conscious, you see. And we say “sub”, because that means “below” the consciousness. It is something more obscure than the consciousness, but which, at the same time, is like a lower substratum supporting the consciousness. It is like those stores from which one would draw out something quite unformed, a formless substance which could be translated into forms or translated into actions or translated into impulses or even into feelings. But it is like those stores containing a considerable number of fairly mixed things, not very distinct, but which would be very rich in possibilities; only they would have to be drawn out into the light and organised, classified, put into shape so as to give them a value.

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

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

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

15 September 1954

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Sweet Mother, is the subconscious stronger than the mind, vital and physical? [...]

It has a greater power. Well, just because it is subconscious it is everywhere, everything seems steeped in the subconscious. And so, "subconscious" means half conscious: not conscious and not unconscious.

It is just between the two; it is like that, half-way; so things slide down into it, one doesn't know that they are there, and from there they act; and it is because one doesn't know that they are there that they can remain there. There are many things which one doesn't wish to keep and drives out from the active consciousness, but they go down there, hide there, and because it is subconscious one doesn't notice them; but they haven't gone out completely, and when they have a chance to come up again, they come up. For example, there are bad habits of the body, in the sense that the body is in the habit of upsetting its balance — we call that falling ill, you know; but still, the functioning becomes defective through a bad habit. You manage by concentrating the Force and applying it on this defect, to make it disappear but it doesn't disappear completely, it enters the subconscious. And then, when you are off your guard, when you stop paying attention properly and preventing it from showing itself, it rises up and comes out. You thought for months perhaps or even for years, you thought you were completely rid of a certain kind of illness which you suffered from, and you no longer paid any attention, and suddenly one day it returns as though it had never gone; it springs up again from the subconscious, and unless one enters into this subconscious and changes things there, that is, unless one changes the subconscious into the conscious, it always happens like this. And the method is to change the subconscious into the conscious — if each thing that rises to the surface becomes conscious, at that moment it must be changed. There is a more direct method still: it is to enter the Subconscious in one's full consciousness and work there, but this is difficult. Yet so long as this is not done, all the progress one has made — I mean physically, in one's body — can always be undone.

11 May 1955

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“More than a third of our existence is passed in sleep....”
(The Mother)

Physical sleep therefore well deserves our attention. I said “physical sleep”, for we are inclined to believe that the whole of our being goes to sleep when the body is asleep.

“It is often said that in sleep men’s true nature is revealed.” (The Mother)

Their true nature does not mean their deeper nature but their spontaneous nature which is not under control, for the control of the will ceases during sleep. And all that one does not do in the waking state, one does during sleep because the control of the will is removed.

“All the desires that have been repressed without being dissolved ... try to seek satisfaction while the will is asleep. And as desires are veritable dynamic centres of formation, they tend to organise in and around us an assemblage of circumstances most favourable to their satisfaction (The Mother)

In another lesson we spoke of the power of mental formation: the mind shapes entities which have a more or less independent life and try to manifest themselves. Here I do not speak of thought but of desire. Desire belongs to the vital domain but at the core of this desire there is always a thought, and the desire becomes all the more active and dynamic when it holds in itself this power of mental formation and the power of vital realisation. The vital is the centre of dynamism of the being, of active energy, and the two combined make something very strong which has a considerable tendency towards realising itself — besides, everything in the universe tends towards manifestation, and things which are prevented from manifesting lose, by that very fact, their force and capacity.

Most of the methods aiming at self-control have indeed made use of repression, of the suppression of movements with the idea that if one continues this suppression long enough, one succeeds in killing the element that is not wanted. This would be quite true if it were a question only of the physical world, but behind the physical world there is the subconscious world and behind the subconscious world there lies the immensity of the Inconscient. And what you do not know is this that unless you destroy within you the desire itself, that is, the seed of the formation, this formation which you are preventing from manifesting is so to say repressed in the subconscious — driven down and repressed right at the bottom — and if you go and search in the subconscious you will find that it is waiting there to do its work. That is why so many people who have for

years and years been able to control an unwanted movement are suddenly taken by surprise when this movement rushes up from below with all the greater force the longer it has been repressed. Hence dreams are of great use because this movement of repression exists no longer, the conscious will not being there (for it falls asleep or goes elsewhere) and the desire repressed below leaps up and manifests itself in the form of dreams, so much so that you come to know a good many things about your own nature; that is why it is said that man can discover in sleep and dreams his true nature; it is not his true nature, his deeper nature, which is his psychic nature, but the spontaneous, uncontrolled nature.

27 January 1951

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Sweet Mother, what does “the subliminal being” mean, exactly?

[...] It's what is behind. I think it is what could be called the subtle physical, the subtle vital, the subtle mind. It is something that's behind what is manifested. One can imagine that what is manifested is like a layer or like a crust or a bark; it is that which we see and with which we are in touch. And it clothes something, it clothes or expresses something which is more subtle and serves as its support.

When one dreams, one goes very often into his subliminal being, and there things are almost the same and yet not absolutely the same; there is a great resemblance and yet there is a difference; and usually this is greater. One has the impression of entering into something that's vaster; and, for example, one feels that one can do more, that one knows more, one has a power and clear-sightedness which one doesn't have in the ordinary consciousness; one has the impression while dreaming that one knows many more things than when one is awake. No? Doesn't this happen? You don't have dreams like that?... when one dreams and knows a lot, for example, about the secret causes of things, about what a movement expresses... all that, one feels that one knows it. For instance, when one dreams of someone, one knows better what he thinks, what he wants, all these things, better than when one is in waking contact with him. This happens when one has entered the subliminal. Very often one dreams in

the subliminal.

Has the subliminal a contact with the psychic?

Not directly, not more directly than the outside being. If externally, in your ordinary consciousness you have a contact with the psychic, that also has a contact with the psychic, or rather one can put it the other way round: if that has a contact with the psychic, it helps you to have a contact with the psychic, but not necessarily, not always; it depends on the degree of development of the being. It is not necessarily more enlightened, more balanced — no. It is more subtle, it is less dull than our outer consciousness. Our external consciousness is so dull, it has no depth; as our outer understanding has no depth, our sensations have no depth; all this is something as though flat. So here it is fuller, but not necessarily more true.

6 April 1955

Matter and the Body

“Each spot of the body is symbolical of an inner movement; there is there a world of subtle correspondences. But this is a long and complex subject and we cannot enter into its details just now. The particular place in the body affected by an illness is an index to the nature of the inner disharmony that has taken place. It points to the origin, it is a sign of the cause of the ailment. It reveals too the nature of the resistance that prevents the whole being from advancing at the same high speed. It indicates the treatment and the cure. If one could perfectly understand where the mistake is, find out what has been unreceptive, open that part and put the force and the light there, it would be possible to reestablish in a moment the harmony that has been disturbed and the illness would immediately go.” (The Mother)

Why is “each spot of the body symbolical of an inner movement” ?

Because the whole physical world is the symbol of universal movements. So our body is the symbol of our inner movements. The whole world, the

whole physical world is like a crystallisation — it is a materialisation, a crystallisation — of the movements in other planes of the universe. It is like a finalisation, it is as though a projection on something that retains the image, fixes the image. Therefore, at every point it is the same thing as in the whole material universe.

The material is a plane, isn't it?

Yes, it is a final result. There is an increasing materiality and a decreasing materiality, and the physical plane is at the centre: it is like a screen on which all the intervening vibrations are projected and held, as upon a screen — it is an image, an image of all that is happening. We notice it because it is a thing done, something concrete. It is as though you viewed the whole universe as a movement of force and this movement of force were projected till it met a screen and on the screen it made an image, and this image on the screen is the physical world. And it is a mere image. The physical world which everyone takes as the only reality is simply an image. It is the image of all that happens in what we call the invisible. It becomes visible to us because there is a screen which intervenes and stops the vibrations and that produces an image. If there were no such screen the vibrations would move on and nothing would be seen. And yet all the movements would exist. But for us they would be invisible, if there were no screen to stop the vibrations.

For the ordinary consciousness it is the image alone that is true, and what happens behind it is more or less problematical, but in the true consciousness, all that happens behind or before is the true thing and what one sees externally is only an image, that is to say, a projection on a screen, of something which exists altogether independently. So, our body represents a small fragment in this set of images that is projected and it is a fragment which expresses exactly all the vibrations of the inner state corresponding to this little point that is the body.

23 September 1953

*Sweet Mother, here it is written: “there is ... a true physical being.”
What does this mean?*

There is a physical Nature which is perfectly harmonious, which has an absolutely... how to put it... yes, harmonious working, without any disorder, without disequilibrium, without any rupture of harmony, which would be expressed, if it existed upon earth, by a perfect health, a growing force, a continuous progress; and then all that one would like to obtain from one's body one would obtain; and this can go as far as an almost unimaginable progress of perfection.

The physical state as we see it with all its disharmonies, its weaknesses, its uglinesses, is the same deformation as that which has changed the higher vital, the true vital, into the kind of vital we see. And this comes from the same cause: it is cut off from its Origin, with an acute sense of separation which makes one live in an absolutely obscure consciousness which has become totally ignorant, instead of living constantly in the consciousness of one's Origin. Now, to ask why it is like that is to ask too much.

That's all?

I didn't understand very well, Sweet Mother.

You haven't understood what the true physical is, because it is not a question of understanding. One is not conscious of it because one is not inside it, one doesn't live in it. But can't you conceive of a body which would be perfectly beautiful, perfectly harmonious, which would function perfectly well and would never be ill, never tired, and would be in a state of constant progress? First it would become taller and taller until it reaches its maximum height, and then it would become stronger and stronger, more and more skilful, more and more conscious, and always in a perfect harmony: never any illness and never any fatigue, never any error, making no mistakes, knowing exactly at each moment what ought to be done and why.

29 June 1955

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What is the nature of these influences from outside? Could you give us an explanation of their working?

Naturally these influences are of very diverse kinds. They may be studied from a psychological point of view or from an almost mechanical standpoint, the one usually translating the other, that is, the mechanical phenomenon occurs as a sort of result of the psychological one.

In very few people, and even in the very best at very rare moments in life, does the will of the being express that deep inner, higher truth.

(*After a silence Mother continues:*) The individual consciousness extends far beyond the body; we have seen that even the subtle physical which is yet material compared with the vital being and in certain conditions almost visible, extends at times considerably beyond the visible limits of the physical body. This subtle physical is constituted of active vibrations which enter into contact or mingle with the vibrations of the subtle physical of others, and this reciprocal contact gives rise to influences — naturally the most powerful vibrations get the better of the others. For example, as I have already told you several times, if you have a thought, this thought clothes itself in subtle vibrations and becomes an entity which travels and moves about in the earth-atmosphere in order to realise itself as best it can, and because it is one among millions, naturally there is a multiple and involved interaction as a result of which things don't take place in such a simple and schematic fashion.

What you call yourself, the individual being enclosed within the limits of your present consciousness, is constantly penetrated by vibrations of this kind, coming from outside and very often presenting themselves in the form of suggestions, in the sense that, apart from a few exceptions, the action takes place first in the mental field, then becomes vital, then physical. I want to make it clear that it is not a question of the pure mind here, but of the physical mind; for in the physical consciousness itself there is a mental activity, a vital activity and a purely material activity, and all that takes place in your physical consciousness, in your body consciousness and bodily activity, penetrates first in the form of vibrations of a mental nature, and so in the form of suggestions. Most of the time these suggestions enter you without your being in the least conscious of them; they go in, awaken some sort of response in you, then spring up in

your consciousness as though they were your own thought, your own will, your own impulse; but it is only because you are unconscious of the process of their penetration.

These suggestions are very numerous, manifold, varied, with natures which are very, very different from each other, but they may be classified into three principal orders. First — and they are hardly perceptible to the ordinary consciousness; they become perceptible only to those who have already reflected much, observed much, deeply studied their own being — they are what could be called collective suggestions.

When a being is born upon earth, he is inevitably born in a certain country and a certain environment. Due to his physical parents he is born in a set of social, cultural, national, sometimes religious circumstances, a set of habits of thinking, of understanding, of feeling, conceiving, all sorts of constructions which are at first mental, then become vital habits and finally material modes of being. To put things more clearly, you are born in a certain society or religion, in a particular country, and this society has a collective conception of its own and this nation has a collective conception of its own, this religion has a collective “construction” of its own which is usually very fixed. You are born into it. Naturally, when you are very young, you are altogether unaware of it, but it acts on your formation — that formation, that slow formation through hours and hours, through days and days, experiences added to experiences, which gradually builds up a consciousness. You are underneath it as beneath a bell-glass. It is a kind of construction which covers and in a way protects you, but in other ways limits you considerably. All this you absorb without even being aware of it and this forms the subconscious basis of your own construction.

This subconscious basis will act on you throughout your life, if you do not take care to free yourself from it. And to free yourself from it, you must first of all become aware of it; and the first step is the most difficult, for this formation was so subtle, it was made when you were not yet a conscious being, when you had just fallen altogether dazed from another world into this one (*laughing*) and it all happened without your participating in the least in it. Therefore, it does not even occur to you that there could be something to know there, and still less something you must get rid of. And it is quite remarkable that when for some reason or other you do become aware of the hold of this collective suggestion, you realise

at the same time that a very assiduous and prolonged labour is necessary in order to get rid of it. But the problem does not end there.

You live surrounded by people. These people themselves have desires, stray wishes, impulses which are expressed through them and have all kinds of causes, but take in their consciousness an individual form. For example, to put it in very practical terms: you have a father, a mother, brothers, sisters, friends, comrades; each one has his own way of feeling, willing, and all those with whom you are in relation expect something from you, even as you expect something from them. That something they do not always express to you, but it is more or less conscious in their being, and it makes formations. These formations, according to each one's capacity of thought and the strength of his vitality, are more or less powerful, but they have their own little strength which is usually much the same as yours; and so what those around you want, desire, hope or expect from you enters in this way in the form of suggestions very rarely expressed, but which you absorb without resistance and which suddenly awaken within you a similar desire, a similar will, a similar impulse.... This happens from morning to night, and again from night to morning, for these things don't stop while you are sleeping, but on the contrary are very often intensified because your consciousness is no longer awake, watching and protecting you to some extent.

And this is quite common, so common that it is quite natural and so natural that you need special circumstances and most unusual occasions to become aware of it. Naturally, it goes without saying that your own responses, your own impulses, your own wishes have a similar influence on others, and that all this becomes a marvellous mixture in which might is always right!

If that were the end of the problem, one could yet come out of the mess; but there is a complication. This terrestrial world, this human world is constantly invaded by the forces of the neighbouring world, that is, of the vital world, the subtler region beyond the fourfold earth-atmosphere;¹⁰ and this vital world which is not under the influence of the psychic forces or the psychic consciousness is essentially a world of ill-will, of disorder, disequilibrium, indeed of all the most anti-divine things one could imagine.

¹⁰ Consisting of physical, vital, mental and psychic elements.

This vital world is constantly penetrating the physical world, and being much more subtle than the physical, it is very often quite imperceptible except to a few rare individuals. There are entities, beings, wills, various kinds of individualities in that world, who have all kinds of intentions and make use of every opportunity either to amuse themselves if they are small beings or to do harm and create disorder if they are beings with a greater capacity. And the latter have a very considerable power of penetration and suggestion, and wherever there is the least opening, the least affinity, they rush in, for it is a game which delights them.

Besides, they are very thirsty or hungry for certain human vital vibrations which for them are a rare dish they love to feed upon; and so their game lies in exciting pernicious movements in man so that man may emanate these forces and they be able to feed on them just as they please. All movements of anger, violence, passion, desire, all these things which make you abruptly throw off certain energies from yourself, project them from yourself, are exactly what these entities of the vital world like best, for, as I said, they enjoy them like a sumptuous dish. Now, their tactics are simple: they send you a little suggestion, a little impulse, a small vibration which enters deep into you and through contagion or sympathy awakens in you the vibration necessary to make you throw off the force they want to absorb.

There it is a little easier to recognise the influence, for, if you are the least bit attentive, you become aware of something that has suddenly awakened within you. For example, those who are in the habit of losing their temper, if they have attempted ever so little to control their anger, they will find something coming from outside or rising from below which actually takes hold of their consciousness and arouses anger in them. I don't mean that everybody is capable of this discernment; I am speaking of those who have tried to understand their being and control it. These adverse suggestions are easier to distinguish than, for instance, your response to the will or desire of a being who is of the same nature as yourself, another human being, who consequently acts on you without this giving you a clear impression of something coming from outside: the vibrations are too alike, too similar in their nature, and you have to be much more attentive and have a much sharper discernment to realise that these movements which seem to come out from you are not really yours

but come from outside. But with the adverse forces, if you are in the least sincere and observe yourself attentively, you become aware that it is something in the being which is responding to an influence, an impulse, a suggestion, even something at times very concrete, which enters and produces similar vibrations in the being.

12 December 1956

The Vital (The Life Force)

The vital body surrounds the physical body with a kind of envelope which has almost the same density as the vibrations of heat observable when the day is very hot. And it is this which is the intermediary between the subtle body and the most material vital body. It is this which protects the body from all contagion, fatigue, exhaustion and even from accidents. Therefore if this envelope is wholly intact, it protects you from everything, but a little too strong an emotion, a little fatigue, some dissatisfaction or any shock whatsoever is sufficient to scratch it as it were and the slightest scratch allows any kind of intrusion. Medical science also now recognises that if you are in perfect vital equilibrium, you do not catch illness or in any case you have a kind of immunity from contagion. If you have this equilibrium, this inner harmony which keeps the envelope intact, it protects you from everything. There are people who lead quite an ordinary life, who know how to sleep as one should, eat as one should, and their nervous envelope is so intact that they pass through all dangers as though unconcerned. It is a capacity one can cultivate in oneself. If one becomes aware of the weak spot in one's envelope, a few minutes' concentration, a call to the force, an inner peace is sufficient for it to be all right, get cured, and for the untoward thing to vanish.

27 January 1951

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If you have a strong desire for something you cannot get, you project your desire outside yourself. It goes off like a tiny personality separated from you and roams about in the world. It will take a little round, more or less

large, and return to you, perhaps when you have forgotten it. People who have a kind of passion, who want something, — that goes out from them like a little being, like a little flame into the surroundings. This little being has its destiny. It roams about in the world, tossed around by other things perhaps. You have forgotten it, but it will never forget that it must bring about that particular result.... For days you tell yourself: "How much I would like to go to that place, to Japan, for instance, and see so many things", and your desire goes out from you; but because desires are very fugitive things, you have forgotten completely this desire you had thrown out with such a force. There are many reasons for your thinking about something else. And after ten years or more, or less, it comes back to you like a dish served up piping hot. Yes, like a piping-hot dish, well arranged. You say: "This does not interest me any longer." It does not interest you ten or twenty years later. It was a small formation and it has gone and done its work as it could.... It is impossible to have desires without their being realised, even if it be quite a tiny desire. The formation has done what it could; it took a lot of trouble, it has worked hard, and after years it returns. It is like a servant you have sent out and who has done his best. When he returns you tell him: "What have you done?" — "Why? But, sir, it was because you wanted it!"

You cannot put forth a strong thought without its going out from you like a little balloon, as it were. We have certain stories which are not unbelievable, like the one about that miser who thought of nothing but his money; he had hidden his hoard somewhere and always used to go to see it. After his death he continued to come as a ghost (that is to say, his vital being), to watch over his money. Nobody could go near the place without meeting with a catastrophe. It is like that, if you have worked to bring out something, it is always realised. It may be realised even after your death! Yes, for when your body ceases to exist, none of the vibrations stops existing. They are realised somewhere. That was what the Buddha said: the vibrations continue to exist, to be perpetuated. They are contagious. They continue in others, pass into others, and everyone adds a little to them.

8 April 1953

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Can't the vital be converted?

Convert the vital? Surely one can. It is a difficult task, but it can be done. If it could not be done, then there would be no hope. But generally the mind is not sufficient. For, I have known very many people who could see very clearly, understand very well, were mentally thoroughly convinced, could even describe to you and tell you extraordinary things, could easily give excellent lessons to others, but their vital was up to all sorts of tricks and would not listen at all to all that. It said, "It is all the same to me, say what you may; as for myself, I go my own way!"

It is only when contact with the psychic has been established that this can convert anything at all — even the worst criminal — in a moment. These are those "illuminations" which seize you and turn you inside out completely. After that, all goes well. There may be slight difficulties of adjustment, but still things go well.

But the mind is a big preacher, that is its nature: it gives speeches, sermons, as it is done in the churches. So the vital usually gets impatient and answers the mind, not very politely: "You are a nuisance! what you say is very good for you, but for me it won't do." Or, at the best, when the mind is gifted with especially remarkable capacities and the vital is of a little higher kind, it may say: "Oh! how beautiful it is, what you tell me (sometimes this happens), but you see, I, I am unable to do it; it is very beautiful, but it is beyond my capacity."

But this vital is a curious creature. It is a being of passion, enthusiasm and naturally of desire; but, for example, it is quite capable of getting enthusiastic over something beautiful, of admiring, sensing anything greater and nobler than itself. And if really anything very beautiful occurs in the being, if there is a movement having an exceptional value, well, it may get enthusiastic and it is capable of giving itself with complete devotion — with a generosity that is not found, for example, in the mental domain nor in the physical. It has that fullness in action that comes precisely from its capacity to get enthused and throw itself wholly without reserve into what it does. Heroes are always people who have a strong vital, and when the vital is enthused over something, it is no longer a reasonable being but a warrior; it is wholly in its action and can perform exceptional things because it does not calculate, does not reason, does not

say "One must take precautions, one must not do this, must not do that." It is not prudent, it flares up, as people say, it gives itself totally. Therefore, it can do magnificent things if it is guided in the right way.

A converted vital is an all-powerful instrument. And sometimes it gets converted by something exceptionally beautiful, morally or materially. When it witnesses, for example, a scene of total self-abnegation, of uncalculating self-giving — one of those things so exceedingly rare but splendidly beautiful — it can be carried away by it, it can be seized by an ambition to do the same thing. It begins by an ambition, it ends with a consecration.

There is only one thing the vital abhors; it is a dull life, monotonous, grey, tasteless, spiritless. Faced with that, it goes to sleep, falls into inertia. It likes extremely violent things, it is true; it can be extremely wicked, extremely cruel, extremely generous, extremely good and extremely heroic. It always goes to extremes and can be on one side or the other, yes, as the current flows.

And this vital, if you place it in a bad environment, it will imitate the bad environment and do bad things with violence and to an extreme degree. If you place it in the presence of something wonderfully beautiful, generous, great, noble, divine, it can be carried away with that also, forget everything else and give itself wholly. It will give itself more completely than any other part of the being, for it does not calculate. It follows its passion and enthusiasm. When it has desires, its desires are violent, arbitrary, and it does not at all take into account the good or bad of others; it doesn't care the least bit. But when it gives itself to something beautiful, it does not calculate either, it will give itself entirely without knowing whether it will do good or harm to it. It is a very precious instrument.

It is like a horse of pure breed: if it lets itself be directed, then it will win all the races, everywhere it will come first. If it is untamed, it will trample people and cause havoc and break its own legs or back!

It is like that. The one thing to know is to which side it will turn. It loves exceptional things — exceptionally bad or exceptionally good, it loves the exceptional. It does not like ordinary life. It becomes dull, it becomes half inert. And if it is shut up in a corner and told: "Keep quiet there", it will remain there and become more and more like something

crumbling away, and finally just like a mummy: there is no more life in it, it is dried up. And one will no longer have the strength to do what one wants to do. One will have fine ideas, excellent intentions, but one won't have the energy to execute them.

So do not wail if you have a powerful vital, but you must have strong reins and hold them quite firmly. Then things go well.

9 September 1953

The Mental

Mind is one movement, but there are many varieties of the movement, many strata, that touch and even press into each other. At the same time the movement we call mind penetrates into other planes. In the mental world itself there are many levels. All these mind-planes and mind-forces are interdependent; but yet there is a difference in the quality of their movements and for facility of expression we have to separate them from one another. Thus we can speak of a higher mind, an intermediary mind, a physical and even a quite material mind; and there are many other distinctions that can be made.

Now, there are mental planes that stand high above the vital world and escape its influence; there are no hostile forces or beings there. But there are others — and they are many — that can be touched or penetrated by the vital forces. The mind-plane that belongs to the physical world, the physical mind, as we usually call it, is more material in its structure and movement than the true mind and it is very much under the sway of the vital world and the hostile forces. This physical mind is usually in a kind of alliance with the lower vital consciousness and its movements; when the lower vital manifests certain desires and impulses, this more material mind comes to its aid and justifies and supports them with specious explanations and reasonings and excuses. It is this layer of mind that is most open to suggestions from the vital world and most often invaded by its forces.

But there is in us a higher mind which moves in the region of disinterested ideas and luminous speculations and is the originator of forms, and there is a mind of pure ideas that have not yet been put into form; these greater mind-levels are free from the vital movements and the

adverse forces, because they stand far above them. There may be contradictory movements there; there may be movements and formations that come into clash with the Truth or are in conflict with one another; but there is no vital disturbance, nothing that can be called hostile. The true philosopher mind, the mind that is the thinker, discoverer, maker of forms, and the mind of pure ideas that are not yet put into form, are beyond this inferior invasion and influence. But this does not mean that their motions cannot be imitated or their creations misused by perverse or hostile beings of a greater make and higher origin than those of whom I have till now spoken.

26 May 1929

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Mother, if the heart can be the means of a more direct knowledge, what is the role of the intellect as an intermediary of knowledge?

As an intermediary, did you say?

For the true role of the mind is the formation and organisation of action. The mind has a formative and organising power, and it is that which puts the different elements of inspiration in order, for action, for organising action. And if it would only confine itself to that role, receiving inspirations — whether from above or from the mystic centre of the soul — and simply formulating the plan of action — in broad outline or in minute detail, for the smallest things of life or the great terrestrial organisations — it would amply fulfil its function.

It is not an instrument of knowledge.

But it can use knowledge for action, to organise action. It is an instrument of organisation and formation, very powerful and very capable when it is well developed.

One can feel this very clearly when one wants to organise one's life, for instance — to put the different elements in their place in one's existence. There is a certain intellectual faculty which immediately puts each thing in its place and makes a plan and organises. And it is not a knowledge that comes from the mind, it is a knowledge which comes, as I

said, from the mystic depths of the soul or from a higher consciousness; and the mind concentrates it in the physical world and organises it to give a basis of action to the higher consciousness.

One has this experience very clearly when one wants to organise one's life.

Then, there is another use. When one is in contact with one's reason, with the rational centre of the intellect, the pure reason, it is a powerful control over all vital impulses. All that comes from the vital world can be very firmly controlled by it and used in a disciplined and organised action. But it must be at the service of something else — not work for its own satisfaction.

These are the two uses of the mind: it is a controlling force, an instrument of control, and it is a power of organisation. That is its true place.

20 June 1956

*

Sweet Mother, what is meant by “the substance of the mental being”?

My child, the substance means... how shall I put it?... it means the stuff of which the mental being is made. It could be said, for instance, that the cells are the substance of your body. It is not exactly matter, the mind is not quite material, but it is the very thing of which the mind is made. If there were no mental substance, there would be no mental being. It would be only a vibration; and even a vibration needs a medium to manifest itself.

But if your body were not made of material substance, you wouldn't have a body. This is what is called substance. It is the thing of which something is made. And precisely, what is important is that people usually think that mind is just a mode of activity, whereas there is a mental substance as there is a vital substance and physical substance. And as there is a substance, there is a corresponding world with an autonomous existence, that is to say, there can be a mind without any physical support. The physical body may disappear and the mind can continue to exist. It is here that it is important to understand that there is a mental substance

which, obviously, is much more... (*silence*) how to put it?... immaterial than physical matter.

[...] Well, you see, we say that substance has different densities, and the more material it becomes, the denser it is, the farther it moves away from matter, the less dense it is. But it is, a substance all the same. There is even an etheric substance. I don't say that this conforms with scientific theories; I don't guarantee that I am not talking scientific heresies! But this is a *cosmic fact*. (*Mother laughs.*) It is exactly — I think I said this when I spoke about occultism — I said the first thing one must know before being able to practise occultism is that the different states of being have a different density, and they have an individual independent existence of their own, that they are existing realities, that they are truly real substances, that it is not just a way of being. There can be a mental being and mental activity and, for instance, a thought that is completely independent of the brain, whereas the materialistic theories say that it is the brain which creates mental activity. But this is not correct. The brain is the material transcription of the mental activity, and mental activity has its own domain; the mental domain has its reality, its own substance. One can think outside one's brain, think, act, make formations outside one's brain. One can even live, move, go from one place to another, have a direct knowledge of mental things in the mental world, in a word, absolutely independent of a body which, indeed, can be in a state of complete inertia, not only asleep but also in a cataleptic state. And moreover, it is quite certain that so long as one has not understood that one is made up of different states of being which have their own independent life, one can't have a complete control over one's being. There will always be something that escapes you.

8 September 1954

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Mother, we sometimes have sudden ideas. Where do they come from and how do they work in the head?

Where do they come from? — From the mental atmosphere.

Why do they come?... Perhaps you meet them on your way as one meets a passer-by in a public square. Most often it is that; you are on a road where ideas are moving about and it so happens that you meet this particular one and it passes through your head. Obviously, those who are in the habit of meditating, of concentrating, and for whom intellectual problems have a very concrete and tangible reality, by concentrating their minds they attract associated ideas, and a “company of ideas” is formed which they organise so as to solve a problem or clarify the question they are considering. But for this, one must have the habit of mental concentration and precisely that philosophical mind I was speaking about, for which ideas are living entities with their own life, which are organised on the mental chess-board like pawns in a game of chess: one takes them, moves them, places them, organises them, one makes a coherent whole out of these ideas, which are individual, independent entities with affinities among themselves, and which organise themselves according to inner laws. But for this, one must also have the habit of meditation, reflection, analysis, deduction, mental organisation. Otherwise, if one is just “like that”, if one lives life as it comes, then it is exactly like a public square: there are roads and on the roads people pass by, and then you find yourself at cross-roads and it all passes through your head — sometimes even ideas without any connection between them, so much so that if you were to write down what passes through your head, it would make a string of admirable nonsense! [...]

The speculative mind needs discipline for its development. If it is not disciplined methodically, one is always in a sort of a cloud. The vast majority of human beings can harbour the most contradictory ideas in their brains without being in the least troubled by them.

Well, until you try to organise your mind clearly, you risk at the very least having no control over what you think. And very often, you must come down to action before you begin to realise the value of what you think! Or, if not as far as action, at least as far as the feelings: suddenly you become aware that you have feelings which are not very desirable; then you realise you have not controlled your way of thinking at all.

Sweet Mother, do people have bad thoughts because they have no control over their minds?

Bad thoughts?... There can be several reasons for that. In fact there are several reasons. It may be due to a bad nature — if people have nasty feelings, these nasty feelings can be the cause of nasty thoughts. It may be the opposite. Perhaps they are wide open to all sorts of suggestions from outside and, as I said, these suggestions enter them and gradually create nasty feelings. It may be due to subconscious influences which are conflicting precisely because they are uncontrolled. When these influences rise to the surface, instead of being controlled and those which are undesirable refused, everything is allowed to enter as it likes, the doors are open.

You are *bathed* in all kinds of things — good, bad, neutral, luminous, dark; it's all there, and each one's consciousness should, in principle, act as a filter. You should receive only what you want to receive, you should think only what you want to think; and then, you should not allow these thoughts to be changed into feelings and actions without formal authorisation.

In fact, this is the very purpose of physical existence. Each person is an instrument for controlling a certain set of vibrations which represent his particular field of work; each one must receive only the ones which are in conformity with the divine plan and refuse the rest.

8 January 1958

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Are there beings in the mental worlds?

Yes, many. They are completely independent; they have their own life, their own relations among themselves, as in other worlds. Only for a physical consciousness, time and space are not the same in the vital or the mental worlds as in the physical world. For example, those who are in the physical consciousness have the impression that shiftings in the mind are instantaneous — compared with the higher consciousness they are not instantaneous, but compared with the physical consciousness, they are

instantaneous, of an extreme rapidity.

The beings of the mental world also have an individuality of their own, even a form that can be permanent if they choose to keep one. Their form is the expression of their thought and is sufficiently plastic to be able to change with their thought, yet has a sufficient continuity to enable one to recognise them. If you go out of your body and enter the mental world, you can meet these beings, speak to them, even make an appointment with them for the next time!

Can they exercise their influence on a human being, as the beings of the vital worlds do?

Many mental formations try to realise themselves upon earth, but these are generally created by human beings; they then continue to work in the mental world with the intention of influencing the mind of human beings. But the beings of the mental plane proper are generally creators, and because they are creators of form, they are not much concerned with influencing other forms — they are satisfied with expressing themselves through the forms they have made.

19 March 1951

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There is one thing certain about the mind and its workings; it is that you can understand only what you already know in your own inner self. What strikes you in a book is what you have already experienced deep within you. Men find a book or a teaching very wonderful and often you hear them say, "That is exactly what I myself feel and know, but I could not bring it out or express it as well as it is expressed here." When men come across a book of true knowledge, each finds himself there, and at every new reading he discovers things that he did not see in it at first; it opens to him each time a new field of knowledge that had till then escaped him in it. But that is because it reaches layers of knowledge that were waiting for expression in the subconscious in him; the expression has now been given by somebody else and much better than he could himself have done it. But, once expressed, he immediately recognises it and feels that it is the truth.

The knowledge that seems to come to you from outside is only an occasion for bringing out the knowledge that is within you.

19 May 1929

Imagination

How can human thought create forms?

In the mental world human thought is constantly creating forms. Human thought is very creative in the mental world. All the time when you are thinking, you are creating forms and you send them out in the atmosphere and they go and do their work. Constantly you are surrounded by a heap of small formations.

Naturally, there are people who can't even think clearly. So they form nothing at all except faint eddies. But people who think clearly are surrounded by a heap of little forms which, sometimes, go out to do some work in others; and when one thinks of them again, they return.

And we have instances of people who are troubled by their own formations, which return constantly as though to take possession of them, and which they can't get rid of because they don't know how to undo the formations they have made. There are more cases of this kind than one would think. When they have made a particularly strong formation [...] this formation is always tied up with the one who makes it and returns to knock at the brain to receive forces and ends up by truly acting as a necessity. It is a whole world to know; one truly lives in ignorance, one has powers one doesn't know about, so naturally one uses them very badly. One uses them somewhat unconsciously and very badly.

I don't know if you have ever heard of Madame David-Neel who went to Tibet and has written books on Tibet, and who was a Buddhist; and Buddhists — Buddhists of the strictest tradition — do not believe in the Divine, do not believe in his Eternity and do not believe in gods who are truly divine, but they know admirably how to use the mental domain; and Buddhist discipline makes you a good master of the mental instrument and mental domain.

We used to discuss many things and once she told me: "Listen, I made an experiment." (She had studied a bit of theosophy also.) She said: "I formed a *mahatma*; with my thought I formed a *mahatma*." And she knew (this has been proved) that at a given moment mental formations acquire a personal life independent of the fashioner — though they are linked with him — but independent, in the sense that they can have their own will. And so she told me: "Just imagine, I had made my *mahatma* so well that he became a personality independent of me and constantly came to trouble me! He used to come, scold me for one thing, give me advice for another, and he wanted to direct my life; and I could not succeed in getting rid of him. It was extremely difficult, and I didn't know what to do!"

So I asked her how she had tried. She told me how. She said, "He troubles me a lot, my *mahatma* is very troublesome. He does not leave me in peace. He disturbs my meditations, he hinders me from working; and yet I know quite well that it is I who created him, and I can't get rid of him!" Then I said, "That's because you don't have the 'trick'" (*Mother laughs*) And I explained to her what she should do. And the next day — I used to see her almost every day in those days, you see — the next day she came and told me, "Ah, I am freed from my *mahatma*!" (*Laughter*) She had not *cut* the connection because that's of no use. One must know how to *reabsorb* one's creation, that is the only way. To swallow up again one's formations.

But, you see, in a smaller measure and less perfectly one is making formations all the time. When, for instance, one thinks of somebody quite powerfully, there is a small emanation of mental substance which, instantaneously, goes to this person, you understand, a vibration of your thought which goes and touches his; and if he is receptive, he sees you. He sees you and tells you, "You came last night to see me!" That's because you made a small formation and this formation went and did its work, which was to put you into contact with this person or else to carry a message if you had something special to tell him; and that was done. This happens constantly, but as it is quite a constant and spontaneous phenomenon and done in ignorance, one is not even aware that one does this, one does it automatically.

People who have desires add to the mental formation a kind of small envelope, a vital shell which gives it a still greater reality. These people are

usually surrounded by a number of tiny entities which are their own formations, their own mental formations clothed with vital force, which come all the time to strike them to try to make them realise materially the formations they have made.

You have perhaps read the books of Maurice Magre.[...] He describes this; he had come here, Maurice Magre, and we spoke and he told me that he had always noticed — he was highly sensitive — he had always noticed that people who have sexual desires are surrounded by a kind of small swarm of entities who are somewhat viscous and rather ugly and which torment them constantly, awakening desire in them. He said he had seen this around certain people. It was like being surrounded by a swarm of mosquitoes, yes! But it is more gross, and much uglier still, and it is viscous, it is horrible, and it turns round and round the person and gives him no peace, and it awakens in him the desire that has formed these entities and they batten on it. It is their food. This is absolutely true. His observation was quite correct. His vision was very true. It *is* like that.

But everyone carries around himself the atmosphere of his own desires. So you don't at all require that people should tell you anything; you have only to look and you see around them exactly the state they are in. They may want to give themselves the airs of angels or saints but they can't deceive you, because that thing is there, turning around them.

11 August 1954

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The imagination is really the power of mental formation. When this power is put at the service of the Divine, it is not only formative but also creative. There is, however, no such thing as an unreal formation, because every image is a reality on the mental plane. The plot of a novel, for instance, is all there on the mental plane existing independently of the physical. Each of us is a novelist to a certain extent and possesses the capacity to make forms on that plane; and, in fact, a good deal of our life embodies the products of our imagination. Every time you indulge your imagination in an unhealthy way, giving a form to your fears and anticipating accidents and misfortunes, you are undermining your own future. On the other hand,

the more optimistic your imagination, the greater the chance of your realising your aim. Monsieur Coue got hold of this potent truth and cured hundreds of people by simply teaching them to imagine themselves out of misery.[...] Therefore I say to you never be dejected and disappointed but let your imagination be always hopeful and joyously plastic to the stress of the higher Truth, so that the latter may find you full of the necessary formations to hold its creative light.

The imagination is like a knife which may be used for good or evil purposes. If you always dwell in the idea and feeling that you are going to be transformed, then you will help the process of the Yoga. If, on the contrary, you give in to dejection and bewail that you are not fit or that you are incapable of realisation, you poison your own being. It is just on account of this very important truth that I am so tirelessly insistent in telling you to let anything happen but, for heaven's sake, not to get depressed. Live rather in the constant hope and conviction that what we are doing will prove a success.

1930-1931

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Mother, when one imagines something, does it not exist?

When you imagine something, it means that you make a mental formation which may be close to the truth or far from the truth — it also depends upon the quality of your formation. You make a mental formation and there are people who have such a power of formation that they succeed in making what they imagine real. There are not many of these but there are some. They imagine something and their formation is so well made and so powerful that it succeeds in being realised. These are creators; there are not many of them but there are some.

If one thinks of someone who doesn't exist or who is dead?

Ah! what do you mean? What have you just said? Someone who doesn't exist or someone who is dead? These are two absolutely different things.

I mean someone who is dead.

Someone who is dead!

If this person has remained in the mental domain, you can find him immediately. Naturally if he is no longer in the mental domain, if he is in the psychic domain, to think of him is not enough. You must know how to go into the psychic domain to find him. But if he has remained in the mental domain and you think of him, you can find him immediately, and not only that, but you can have a mental contact with him and a kind of mental vision of his existence.

The mind has a capacity of vision of its own and it is not the same vision as with these eyes, but it is a vision, it is a perception in forms. But this is not imagination. It has nothing to do with imagination.

Imagination, for instance, is when you begin to picture to yourself an ideal being to whom you apply all your conceptions, and when you tell yourself, "Why, it should be like this, like that, its form should be like this, its thought like that, its character like that," when you see all the details and build up the being. Now, writers do this all the time because when they write a novel, they imagine. There are those who take things from life but there are those who are imaginative, creators; they create a character, a personage and then put him in their book later. This is to imagine.[...]

What is the function, the use of the imagination?

If one knows how to use it, as I said, one can create for oneself his own inner and outer life; one can build his own existence with his imagination, if one knows how to use it and has a power. In fact it is an elementary way of creating, of forming things in the world. I have always felt that if one didn't have the capacity of imagination he would not make any progress. Your imagination always goes ahead of your life. When you think of yourself, usually you imagine what you want to be, don't you, and this goes ahead, then you follow, then it continues to go ahead and you follow. Imagination opens for you the path of realisation. People who are not imaginative — it is very difficult to make them move; they see just what is there before their nose, they feel just what they are moment by moment and they cannot go forward because they are clamped by the immediate thing. It depends a good deal on what one calls imagination. However...

Men of science must be having imagination!

A lot. Otherwise they would never discover anything. In fact, what is called imagination is a capacity to project oneself outside realised things and towards things realisable, and then to draw them by the projection. One can obviously have progressive and regressive imaginations. There are people who always imagine all the catastrophes possible, and unfortunately they also have the power of making them come. It's like the antennae going into a world that's not yet realised, catching something there and drawing it here. Then naturally it is an addition to the earth atmosphere and these things tend towards manifestation. It is an instrument which can be disciplined, can be used at will; one can discipline it, direct it, orientate it. It is one of the faculties one can develop in himself and render serviceable, that is, use it for definite purposes.

Sweet Mother, can one imagine the Divine and have the contact?

Certainly if you succeed in imagining the Divine you have the contact, and you can have the contact with what you imagine, in any case. In fact it is absolutely impossible to imagine something which doesn't exist somewhere. You cannot imagine anything at all which doesn't exist somewhere. It is possible that it doesn't exist on the earth, it is possible that it's elsewhere, but it is impossible for you to imagine something which is not already contained in principle in the universe; otherwise it could not occur.

6 July 1955

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Is it through the imagination that one can realise desires or aspirations?

That means? What exactly do you want to say? Imagining that the desire is realised and in this way help its realisation?

Yes.

Certainly, quite certainly.

And ideals also?

Only usually, yes, almost totally what people don't have at their disposal is the time it takes. But for instance, if you have a very powerful imagination and build up the realisation of your desire, build it up well with all its details and everything, like an admirably made formation existing in itself, totally, you see... well, you may be sure that if you live long enough the thing will be realised. It can be realised the next day, it can be realised the next minute, it can take years, it can take centuries. But it is sure to be realised. And then, if to this imaginative power you add a kind of creative vital strength, you make a very living force of it; and as all living forces tend towards realisation, it will put a pressure upon terrestrial events in order to be able to realise itself sooner, and it is realised.

Only, as I said, there are two things. First, as regards desires, personal circumstances, one is not very... persistent or very steady, and after sometime what interested you very strongly doesn't interest you any longer. You think of something else, have another desire, and make another formation. But now the first thing one imagined is very well formed; after following its curve in space it is realised. But by then the person has started another construction because for some reason or other the thing doesn't interest him any more, and he is face to face with the realisation of his first desire, while having already embarked upon the second, the third or the fourth. So he is absolutely annoyed: "But why, I don't want this any longer, why does it come?" without his being conscious that quite simply it is the result of a previous deed.

If, however, instead of being desires they are aspirations for spiritual things and one continues his line with a regular progress, then one is absolutely sure to obtain one day what he has imagined. The day may be slightly far-off if there are many obstacles on the path, for example if the formation that you have made is still very alien to the state of the earth atmosphere; well, it takes some time to prepare the conditions for its advent. But if it is something which has already been realised several times on earth and does not imply too categorical a transformation, you may have it quite quickly, provided that you follow the same line persistently.

And if you add to this the ardour of a faith and trust in the divine Grace and that kind of self-giving to the Grace which makes you expect everything from It, then it can become tremendous; you can see things being realised more and more, and the most surprising ones can be realised one after another. But for this there are conditions to be fulfilled.

One must have a great purity and a great intensity in one's self-giving, and that absolute trust in the supreme wisdom of the divine Grace, that It knows better than we do what is good for us, and all that. Then if one offers one's aspiration to It, truly gives it with enough intensity, the results are marvellous. But one must know how to see them, for when things are realised most people find it absolutely natural, they don't even see why and how it has happened, and they tell themselves, "Yes, naturally it had to be like that." So they lose the joy of... the joy of gratitude, because, in the last analysis, if one can be filled with gratitude and thanksgiving for the divine Grace, it puts the finishing touch, and at each step one comes to see that things are exactly what they had to be and the best that could be.

13 My 1955

Reason, Inspiration, Intuition

Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo has written: "On one side it [the reason] is an enlightener — not always the chief enlightener — and the corrector of our life-impulses and first mental seekings, on the other it is only one minister of the veiled Spirit and a preparer of the paths for the coming of its rule."

Yes, this is what we said, that in the rational domain that's what gives the true judgment, the true guidance. This is what we call an enlightener: one who gives light. When you are not sure of something, when you are in darkness, in a confusion, if you call to reason, it can guide you very well, make you see clearly where you were in darkness; therefore it is an enlightener. Now, "minister of the Spirit" means precisely what he was asking, that is, that it can be transformed into an instrument for revealing the spiritual reality in the lower parts of the being; "minister of the Spirit" — that's what it means; a minister is an instrument of something, you see, it means the instrument of the Spirit. And it can prepare the paths for the

coming of the rule of the Spirit, precisely make the being balanced and peaceful, right in its judgments, right in its way of acting, so that being in a state of luminous equilibrium, it becomes capable of receiving the Spirit.

A being who is in a whirlwind of darkness is obviously not ready to receive the Spirit. But when by the use of reason one has managed to organise his being logically and reasonably, in a balanced and wise way — reason is essentially an instrument of wisdom — well, this is an excellent preparation for going beyond, on condition that one knows that it is not a culmination, that it is only a preparation. It is like a base, you see; people who have spiritual experiences, who have a contact with the higher worlds and are not ready in the lower domains, have a lot of trouble, because they have to fight constantly against a heap of elements which are neither organised nor purified nor classified; and each one pulls its own way, there are impulses and preferences and desires, and so this light which has come from above has to organise all this; whereas if the reason had worked to begin with and made the place at least a habitable one, when the Spirit came it would have been more easily installed.

25 May 1955

Many men think and write through inspiration. From where does it come?

Many! That is indeed a wonderful thing. I did not think there have been so many.... So?

Poets, when they write poems...

Ah! inspirations come from very many different places. There are inspirations that may be very material, there are inspirations that may be vital, there are inspirations that come from all kinds of mental planes, and there are very, very rare inspirations that come from the higher mind or from a still higher region. All inspirations do not come from the same place. Hence, to be inspired does not necessarily mean that one is a higher being.... One may be inspired also to do and say many stupid things!

What does “inspired” mean?

It means receiving something which is beyond you, which was not within you; to open yourself to an influence which is outside your individual conscious being.

Indeed, one can have also an inspiration to commit a murder! In countries where they decapitate murderers, cut off their heads, this causes a very brutal death which throws out the vital being, not allowing it the time to decompose for coming out of the body; the vital being is violently thrown out of the body, with all its impulses; and generally it goes and lodges itself in one of those present there, men half horrified, half with a kind of unhealthy curiosity. That makes the opening and it enters within. Statistics have proved that most young murderers admit that the impulse came to them when they were present at the death of another murderer. It was an “inspiration”, but of a detestable kind.

Fundamentally it is a moment of openness to something which was not within your personal consciousness, which comes from outside and rushes into you and makes you do something. This is the widest formula that can be given.

Now, generally, when people say: “Oh! he is an inspired poet”, it means he has received something from high above and expressed it in a remarkable manner. But one should rather say that his inspiration is of a high quality.

Does it not come, Mother, whenever one wants it?

Whenever one wants it? Generally not, for one does not know the mechanism of one’s being and cannot open the doors at will.

It is a thing that can be done. It is one of the earliest things that you are taught to do in Yoga: to open the door whenever one wants. It is the result of meditation or concentration or aspiration: all these processes are followed to open the door somewhere.

And generally you try to open it precisely towards the highest thing, not towards anything whatever. For the other kind of receptivity people unfortunately always have.... It is impossible to be altogether shut up in an ivory tower — besides, I believe it would not be very favourable, it would be impossible to progress if one were completely shut up in oneself. One

would be able only to rearrange whatever was in oneself. Just imagine you were like a closed globe, altogether closed, that there was no communication with outside — you put out nothing, you receive nothing, you are shut up — you have a few elements of consciousness, movements, vibrations (call them what you like), all that is contained as within a ball, along with your consciousness also. You have no relation with things outside, you are conscious only of yourself. What can you do?... Change the organisation within; that you can do, you can do many things by changing this organisation. But it is confined to that. It is a kind of inner progress, but there is no true progress in relation to the forces outside oneself. You would find yourself extremely limited after a time, you would be tired of yourself: turning and turning again, turning and turning again the elements inside — not very pleasant.

But all the while you externalise yourself and all the while you bring back something from this externalisation; it is like something porous: a force goes out and then a force comes in. There are pulsations like that. And this is why it is so important to choose the environment in which one lives, because there is constantly a kind of interchange between what you give and what you receive. People who throw themselves out a great deal in activity, receive more. But they receive on the same level, the level of their activity. Children, for example, who are younger, who always move about, always shout and romp and jump (very rarely do they keep quiet, except while asleep, and perhaps not even so), well, they spend much and they receive much, and generally it is the physical and vital energy that is spent and it is physical and vital energies that are received. They recuperate a good part of what they spend. So there, it is very important for them to be in surroundings where they can, after they have spent or while they are spending, recover something that is at least equal in quality to theirs, that is not of an inferior quality.

When you no longer have this generosity in your movements, you receive much less and this is one of the reasons — one of the chief reasons — why physical progress stops. It is because you become thrifty, you try not to waste; the mind intervenes: "Take care, don't tire yourself, don't do too much, etc." The mind intervenes and physical receptivity diminishes a great deal. Finally, you do not grow any more — by growing reasonable, you stop growing altogether!

But receptivity opens to other levels. Those who live in a world of desires and passions, increase their vital receptivity so much at times that it reaches proportions very unpleasant to themselves and to their surroundings. And then there are those who live in the mental consciousness; their mental receptivity grows very much. All who create mentally, study and live in mental activity, if the mental activity is constant, can progress indefinitely. Mind in the human being does not stop functioning even when the physical instrument has deteriorated. It may no longer manifest its intelligence materially, if there is a lesion in the brain, for example, but the mind itself, independently of the instrument, nothing can prevent from progressing, from continuing to grow. It is a being that lasts infinitely longer than the physical. It is still young when physically one is already old. Only when you do not take enough care to keep your brain in a good state, only if accidents occur and there are lesions then you can no longer express yourself. But the mind in itself continues to grow. And those who have a sufficient physical balance, for example, those who have not gone to excesses of any kind, who have never maltreated their body, who have never poisoned themselves like most people — who have never smoked, drunk alcohol and so on — keep their brain in a relatively good condition and they can progress, even in their expression, till the end of their life. It is only if in the last years of their life they make a kind of withdrawal within themselves, that they lose their power of expression. But the mind goes on progressing.

The vital is by nature immortal. But it is not organised, and in its normal state, it is over-excited, full of contradictory passions and impulses. So with all that it destroys itself. But otherwise the elements continue to exist. A desire, a passion is a very living thing and continues to live for a very long time, even independently of the being who... undergoes them, I might say, rather than creates them, because they are things that one undergoes, that rush upon you from outside like a storm that seizes you and carries you away, unless you keep very calm like that, very still, very quiet, as though one were clinging to something solid and immobile in oneself, allowing the storm to pass over when it begins to blow — it blows, but one must not stir, one must not let oneself tremble or shiver or shake; one must remain altogether immobile and know that these are passing storms. And when the storm has blown over, it passes and goes

away; then one can heave a deep breath and resume one's normal balance; and there has been only a minimum destruction. In such cases, generally, things turn out well in the end.

But those who are like a piece of cork on water and rush about in all directions and do not succeed in recovering their poise and watching themselves, are liable to any occurrence. They may be drawn into a whirlpool all of a sudden and lo! engulfed. And there remains nothing.

5 August 1953

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Sweet Mother, to what plane does intuition belong?

It is one of those planes, one of those regions we were speaking about last time, which are intermediary between the higher mind and the Overmind.

How does intuition manifest, Sweet Mother?

Um! How does it manifest? It is something which takes place without any reasoning, any analysis, any deduction. Suddenly one knows a thing, without having reasoned, without having analysed, without deducing, without having reflected, without having made use of one's brain, without having put together the elements of the problem and tried to resolve them — it is not like that. All of a sudden it comes like a light in the consciousness; it can be in the head, it can be lower down, elsewhere; it is a light in the consciousness which brings a precise knowledge on a particular point and it is not at all a result of analyses and deductions. In fact, it is the first manifestation of the knowledge by identity. Knowledge by identity — you understand clearly what that means?

If one succeeds in identifying himself with something, well, one becomes this thing for a time, and becoming this thing one knows all that is in it, without needing either to guess or to construct.

8 December 1954

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Sometimes while reading a text one has ideas, then, Sweet Mother, how can one distinguish between the other person's idea and one's own ?

Oh! this, this doesn't exist, the other person's idea and one's own idea.

Nobody has ideas of his own: it is an immensity from which one draws according to his personal affinity; ideas are a collective possession, a collective wealth.

Only, there are different stages. So there is the most common level, the one where all our brains bathe; this indeed swarms here, it is the level of "Mr. Everybody". And then there is a level that's slightly higher for people who are called thinkers. And then there are higher levels still — many — some of them are beyond words but they are still domains of ideas. And then there are those capable of shooting right up, catching something which is like a light and making it come down with all its stock of ideas, all its stock of thoughts. An idea from a higher domain if pulled down organises itself and is crystallised in a large number of thoughts which can express that idea differently; and then if you are a writer or a poet or an artist, when you make it come lower down still, you can have all kinds of expressions, extremely varied and choice around a single little idea but one coming from very high above. And when you know how to do this, it teaches you to distinguish between the pure idea and the way of expressing it.

Some people cannot do it in their own head because they have no imagination or faculty for writing, but they can do it through study by reading what others have written. There are, you know, lots of poets, for instance, who have expressed the same idea — the same idea but with such different forms that when one reads many of them it becomes quite interesting to see (for people who love to read and read much). Ah, this idea, that one has said it like this, that other has expressed it like that, another has formulated it in this way, and so on. And so you have a whole stock of expressions which are expressions by different poets of the same single idea up there, above, high above. And you notice that there is an almost essential difference between the pure idea, the typal idea and its formulation in the mental world, even the speculative or artistic mental world. This is a very good thing to do when one loves gymnastics. It is mental gymnastics.

Well, if you want to be truly intelligent, you must know how to do mental gymnastics; as, you see, if you want really to have a fairly strong body you must know how to do physical gymnastics. It is the same thing. People who have never done mental gymnastics have a poor little brain, quite over-simple, and all their life they think like children. One must know how to do this — not take it seriously, in the sense that one shouldn't have convictions, saying, "This idea is true and that is false; this formulation is correct and that one is not and this religion is the true one and that religion is false", and so on and so forth... this, if you enter into it, you become absolutely stupid.

But if you can see all that and, for example, take all the religions, one after another and see how they have expressed the same aspiration of the human being for some Absolute, it becomes very interesting; and then you begin... yes, you begin to be able to juggle with all that. And then when you have mastered it all, you can rise above it and look at all the eternal human discussions with a smile. So there you are master of the thought and can no longer fly into a rage because someone else does not think as you, something that's unfortunately a very common malady here.

16 March 1955

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There is one thing very difficult for the mind to do but very important, according to me: you must never allow your mind to judge things and men. To say "this is good, that is bad, this is right, that is wrong, this one has this defect, that one has that bad thing, etc." — this is depreciatory judgment.

For people who exercise their intelligence, the more intelligent they are, the more do they grow aware that they know nothing at all and that with the mind one can know nothing. One may think in a particular way, judge and see in a particular way, but one is never sure of anything — and never will be sure of anything. One can always say, "perhaps it is like that" or "perhaps it is like this" and so on, indefinitely, because the mind is not an instrument of knowledge.

Above the thoughts, there are pure ideas; thoughts serve to express

pure ideas. And Knowledge is well above the domain of pure ideas, as these are well above thought. One must hence know how to climb from thought to pure idea, and pure idea is itself nothing but a translation of Knowledge. And Knowledge can be obtained only by a total identification. So, when you put yourself in your small human mentality, the mentality of the physical consciousness which is at work all the time, which looks at everything, judges everything from the height of its derisive superiority, which says, "That is bad, it should not be like that", you are sure to be always mistaken, without exception. The best is to keep silent and look well at things, and little by little you make notes within yourself and keep the record without pronouncing any judgment. When you are able to keep all that within you, quietly, without agitation and present it very calmly before the highest part of your consciousness, with an attempt to maintain an attentive silence, and wait, then perhaps, slowly, as if coming from a far distance and from a great height, something like a light will manifest and you will know a little more of truth.

But as long as you excite your thoughts and cut them up into little bits, you will never know anything. I shall repeat this to you a hundred times if necessary, but I can assure you that so long as you are not convinced of this you will never come out of your ignorance.

Is there an exact number of pure ideas?

To know that, you must go and see the Supreme and ask Him! I am not interested in statistics!

Here is a little story. One of my friends had made a trip to India and was requested to give an account of his travels. An old, very credulous lady was there and she asked him, "In India, do they count the souls?" He answered, "Yes." "How many are there?" asked the old lady. He answered, "One only."

20 January 1951

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In vital nightmares, which part of the being goes out of the body?

Your vital — not the whole of it for that would produce a cataleptic state, but a portion of the vital goes out for a stroll. Some always go to the nastiest places and so have very bad nights — the possibilities in these nightly rambles are innumerable. It may be a very small thing, just a little portion of your being, but if it is conscious, that is enough to give you a fine little nightmare!

You know, when you sleep, the inner beings are not concentrated upon the body, they go out and become more or less independent — a limited independence, but independence all the same — and they go to dwell in their own domains. The mind more so, for it is hardly held within the body, it is only concentrated but not contained in the body. The vital also goes beyond the body, but it is more concentrated upon the body. The mind however is such a supple substance that it is sufficient to think about a person in order to be with that person, at least partially, mentally. If you think strongly of a place, a part of your mind is there; distance, so to say, does not exist. Of course, to have a mind centralised around the body requires good training. Few people have a mind with a well-defined form: it is like clouds which roll, come and go. Even to have a vital with a form similar to that of your physical body, an analogous form, it must be very much individualised, very much centralised. The mind still more; it must be completely individualised, centralised, organised around the psychic centre in order to have a definite form.

There are people who spend their life organising their mind. I have known some who had made of their mind a kind of fortress, a huge construction (I am speaking of people who had uncommon mental capacities). They had made of their mind quite a big edifice, very powerful and of such a fixity, with such solid walls that they had lost all contact with the outer mental world: they lived completely within their own construction and all the phenomena of their consciousness were of their own making — they had no longer any contact with the outside mental world. They retained contact with their own vital and their body, in a way, but all the phenomena of their consciousness were lodged within their mental construction — they could no longer get out of it. Well, this happens very strongly to people who seek for a spiritual life through the

classical methods of a renunciation of the material consciousness, a concentration on their inner being and identification with it. If I gave you the names of some, you would be quite astonished. They construct for themselves a conception in which one finds all the gradations of the mind, a construction so solid and so fixed that they become imprisoned within it and when they believe they have reached the supreme Truth, they have only reached the centre of their own mental construction.

And they have all the experiences they used to foresee: the experience of liberation, the experience of going out of the body, the experience of identification with the Supreme, all, all, but all of their own making; this has no contact with the universal reality. Then if someone touches it, if for some reason or other someone has the power to touch it or simply to make a breach in one of the walls, at first they are completely upset, then they come to regard the force that could do this as a force of terrible destruction, a manifestation of a hostile force of the worst kind!

What is a “mental nightmare”?

When there is a chaos in the brain or a local fever, a particular excitation in the brain, an overexertion, or if there is a want of control, you let yourself be possessed by mental formations, this is what happens most often — mental formations which, most often, you yourself have made, besides. And as the control of the rational, waking consciousness has gone, all this begins to dance a saraband in the head, with a kind of raging madness; ideas get entangled, collide, fight, it is truly hallucinating. Then, unless you have the power to bring a great peace into your head, a great tranquillity, a very strong and pure light, well, it is ten times worse than a vital nightmare. The worst of a vital nightmare consists generally in fighting with an enemy who wants to kill you, and you strike him terrible blows, and the blows never hit; you exert all your force, all your energy, and you do not succeed in touching your adversary. He is there in front of you, he threatens you, he is going to strangle you and you gather all your strength, you try to strike, but nothing touches him. When the struggle is like that, hand to hand, with a being who throws himself upon you, it is particularly painful. That is why you are advised not to go out of the body unless you have the necessary power or the purity. You see, in this kind of nightmare the force you want to use is the “memory” of a physical force; but one may

have great physical strength, be a first-class boxer, and yet be completely powerless in the vital world because one does not have the necessary vital power. As for the mental nightmares, that kind of frightful saraband in the head, one has altogether the impression of going mad.

10 March 1951

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What is consciousness?

(*After a silence*) I am trying to choose among several explanations! One, which is a joke, is that consciousness is the opposite of unconsciousness! Another... it is the creative essence of the universe — without consciousness, no universe; for consciousness means objectification. I could also say that consciousness is what “is”, because without consciousness nothing is — this is the best reason. Without consciousness no life, no light, no objectification, no creation, no universe.

Perhaps there is in the unmanifest Supreme a consciousness (but when one speaks of these questions one begins to say impossible things); it is said that, to begin with, the Supreme became aware of himself (which would mean that he was not conscious of himself before! that he was in a state we cannot call “conscious”), that his first movement was to become aware of himself and once having become conscious of himself, he projected this consciousness, which formed the creation. At least, this is what old tradition says. Grant that there never was a beginning, for it is a human way of putting it: the “beginning” is the Supreme — the unmanifest Supreme becoming aware of himself. Perhaps he found that this consciousness was not altogether satisfactory (!) and he projected it, not outside himself for nothing is outside him, but he changed it into an active consciousness so that it would become an objectification of himself. Consequently, it can be said with certitude that Consciousness is the origin of all creation; there you are as exact as you can ever be with words. Consciousness is the origin of all creation — without consciousness, no creation. And what we call “consciousness” is just a far-off contact, without precision and exactness, with the supreme Consciousness. Or if

you like, it is the reflection, in a not very exact or pure mirror, of the original Consciousness. What we call our consciousness is this original Consciousness reflected in a somewhat foggy mirror (sometimes very foggy, sometimes very deformed), a reflection in the individual mirror. Then through this reflection, if we go back slowly to the origin of what is reflected, we can enter into contact with the Consciousness — the True Consciousness. And once we come into contact with the True Consciousness, we become aware that it is the same everywhere, that it is only deformation which divides it; without deformation everything is contained in one and the same Consciousness. That is, it is only distortion, the reflection in a distorting mirror, which brings about difference and division in the Consciousness, otherwise it is one single Consciousness. But it is only by experience that one can understand these things.

22 March 1951

The Overmind

Above the mind there are several levels of conscious being, among which the really divine world is what Sri Aurobindo has called the Supermind, the world of the Truth. But in between is what he has distinguished as the Overmind, the world of the cosmic Gods. Now it is this Overmind that has up to the present governed our world: it is the highest that man has been able to attain in illumined consciousness. It has been taken for the Supreme Divine and all those who have reached it have never for a moment doubted that they have touched the true Spirit. For, its splendours are so great to the ordinary human consciousness that it is absolutely dazzled into believing that here at last is the crowning reality. And yet the fact is that the Overmind is far below the true Divine. It is not the authentic home of the Truth. It is only the domain of the *formateurs*, all those creative powers and deities to whom men have bowed down since the beginning of history. And the reason why the true Divine has not manifested and transformed the earth-nature is precisely that the Overmind has been mistaken for the Supermind. The cosmic Gods do not wholly live in the Truth-Consciousness: they are only in touch with it and represent, each of them, an aspect of its glories.

No doubt, the Supermind has also acted in the history of the world but always through the Overmind. It is the direct descent of the Supramental Consciousness and Power that alone can utterly re-create life in terms of the Spirit. For, in the Overmind there is already the play of possibilities which marks the beginning of this lower triple world of Mind, Life and Matter in which we have our existence. And whenever there is this play and not the spontaneous and infallible working of the innate Truth of the Spirit, there is the seed of distortion and ignorance. Not that the Overmind is a field of ignorance; but it is the border-line between the Higher and the Lower, for, the play of possibilities, of separate even if not yet divided choice, is likely to lead to deviation from the Truth of things. 1930-1931

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The Overmind, therefore, does not and cannot possess the power to transform humanity into divine nature. For that, the Supramental is the sole effective agent. And what exactly differentiates our Yoga from attempts in the past to spiritualise life is that we know that the splendours of the Overmind are not the highest reality but only an intermediate step between the mind and the true Divine.

(In this chapter, the following gradations of existence have been explored: the subconscious, the subliminal, the physical, the vital, the mental, the intuitive and the overmental. Other gradations are considered in the chapters listed below.)

The Psychic

See Chapter 6, The Psychic Being or Soul

The Supermind or Supramental

See Chapter 19, The Supramental

Sat, Chit, Ananda

See Chapter 1, The Divine and His Creation

CHAPTER 6

The Psychic Being or Soul

What Is the Psychic Being?

The psychic world or plane of consciousness is that part of the world, the psychic being is that part of the being which is directly under the influence of the Divine Consciousness; the hostile forces cannot have even the remotest action upon it. It is a world of harmony, and everything moves in it from light to light and from progress to progress. It is the seat of the Divine Consciousness, the Divine Self in the individual being. It is a centre of light and truth and knowledge and beauty and harmony which the Divine Self in each of you creates by his presence, little by little; it is influenced, formed and moved by the Divine Consciousness of which it is a part and parcel. It is in each of you the deep inner being which you have to find in order that you may come in contact with the Divine in you. It is the intermediary between the Divine Consciousness and your external consciousness; it is the builder of the inner life, it is that which manifests in the outer nature the order and rule of the Divine Will. If you become aware in your outer consciousness of the psychic being within you and unite with it, you can find the pure Eternal Consciousness and live in it; instead of being moved by the Ignorance as the human being constantly is, you grow aware of the presence of an eternal light and knowledge within you, and to it you surrender and are integrally consecrated to it and moved by it in all things.

For your psychic being is that part of you which is already given to the Divine. It is its influence gradually spreading from within towards the most outward and material boundaries of your consciousness that will bring about the transformation of your entire nature. There can be no obscurity here; it is the luminous part in you. Most people are unconscious of this psychic part within them; the effort of Yoga is to make you conscious of it, so that the process of your transformation, instead of a slow labour extending through centuries, can be pressed into one life or even a few

years.

The psychic being is that which persists after death, because it is your eternal self; it is this that carries the consciousness forward from life to life.

The psychic being is the real individuality of the true and divine individual within you. For your individuality means your special mode of expression and your psychic being is a special aspect of the one Divine Consciousness that has taken shape in you. But in the psychic consciousness there is not that sense of division between the individual and the universal consciousness which affects the other parts of your nature. You are conscious there that your individuality is your own line of expression, but at the same time you know too that it is an expression objectifying the one universal consciousness. It is as though you had taken a portion out of yourself and put it in front of you and there were a mutual look and play of movement between the two. This duality was necessary in order to create and establish the objectivised relation and to enjoy it; but in your psychic being the separation that sharpens the duality is seen to be an illusion, an appearance and nothing more.

26 May 1929

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In the ordinary life there's not one person in a million who has a conscious contact with his psychic being, even momentarily. The psychic being may work from within, but so invisibly and unconsciously for the outer being that it is as though it did not exist. And in most cases, the immense majority, almost the totality of cases, it's as though it were asleep, not at all active, in a kind of torpor.

It is only with the sadhana and a very persistent effort that one succeeds in having a conscious contact with his psychic being. Naturally, it is possible that there are exceptional cases — but this is truly exceptional, and they are so few that they could be counted — where the psychic being is an entirely formed, liberated being, master of itself, which has chosen to return to earth in a human body in order to do its work. And in this case, even if the person doesn't do the sadhana consciously, it is possible that

the psychic being is powerful enough to establish a more or less conscious relation. But these cases are, so to say, unique and are exceptions which confirm the rule.

In almost, almost all cases, a very very sustained effort is needed to become aware of one's psychic being. Usually it is considered that if one can do it in thirty years one is very lucky — thirty years of sustained effort, I say. It may happen that it's quicker. But this is so rare that immediately one says, "This is not an ordinary human being." That's the case of people who have been considered more or less divine beings and who were great yogis, great initiates.

17 August 1955

What is the work of the psychic being?

What is the work of the psychic being? You want it to have some work? What do you want to say exactly? What is its function? Ah! very well. One could put it this way, that it is like an electric wire that connects the generator with the lamp. Now, if someone has understood, let him explain what I said!

What is the generator and what the lamp? (Laughter)

Ah, there we are! So, what is the generator and what the lamp? That is exactly it. What is the generator and what the lamp? Or rather, who is the generator and who is the lamp?

The generator is the Divine and the lamp is the body.

It is the body, it is the visible being.

So, that is its function. This means that if there were no psychic in Matter, it would not be able to have any direct contact with the Divine. And it is happily due to this psychic presence in Matter that the contact between Matter and the Divine can be direct and all human beings can be told, "You carry the Divine within you, and you have only to enter within yourself and you will find Him." It is something very particular to the human being or rather to the inhabitants of the earth. In the human being the psychic becomes more conscious, more formed, more conscious and

more independent also. It is individualised in human beings. But it is a speciality of the earth. It is a direct infusion, special and redeeming, in the most unconscious and obscure Matter, so that it might once again awake through stages to the divine Consciousness, the divine Presence and finally to the Divine Himself. It is the presence of the psychic which makes man an exceptional being — I don't like to tell him this very much, because already he thinks too much of himself; he has such a high opinion of himself that it is not necessary to encourage him! But still, this is a fact — so much so that there are beings of other domains of the universe, those called by some people demigods and even gods, beings, for instance, of what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind, who are very eager to take a physical body on earth to have the experience of the psychic, for they don't have it. These beings certainly have many qualities that men don't, but they lack this divine presence which is altogether exceptional and exists only on the earth and nowhere else. All these inhabitants of the higher worlds, the Higher Mind, Overmind and other regions have no psychic being. Of course, the beings of the vital worlds don't have it either. But these latter don't regret it, they don't want it. There are only those very rare ones, quite exceptional, who want to be converted, and for this they act without delay, they immediately take a physical body. The others don't want it; it is something which binds them and constrains them to a rule they do not want.

But it is a fact, so I am obliged to state that this is how it is, that it is an exceptional quality of the human being to carry within himself the psychic and, truly speaking, he does not take full advantage from it. He does not seem to consider this quality as something very, very desirable, from the way he treats this presence — exactly that! He prefers to it the ideas of his mind, prefers the desires of his vital being and the habits of his physical.

9 June 1954

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Is the psychic being in the heart?

Not in the physical heart, not in the organ. It is in a fourth dimension, an inner dimension. But it is in that region, the region somewhat behind the

solar plexus, it is there that one finds it most easily. The psychic being is in the fourth dimension as related to our physical being.

3 November 1954

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The other day I said that most of the time people do not have their psychic being within them. I would like to explain this in greater detail.... You must remember that the inner beings are not in the third dimension. If you open up your body you will find only the viscera of the body which are in the third dimension. The inner beings are in another dimension, and when I say that some men do not have their psychic being within them, I do not mean that it is not at the centre of their being, but that their outer consciousness is so small, so limited, so obscure that it is not able to keep a contact, not only conscious but intimate, with the psychic being which extends beyond it in every way; it is so much higher and deeper than the other outer consciousness that there is no relation either of quality or of nature between them. Religions say that you have a divine spark in you — it is well they call it a “spark”, for it is so small indeed that it can be placed anywhere in the body without difficulty. But this does not mean that it is in the body: it is within the consciousness in another dimension, and there are beings who have a contact with it, others who haven’t. But if you come to the divine Presence in the atom, the image is easier to understand, for there you touch so infinitesimal a domain that you are on the border-line where you can no longer distinguish between two, three, four or five dimensions. If you study modern physics you will understand what I mean. The movements constituting an atom are, in the matter of size, so imperceptible that they cannot be understood with our three-dimensional understanding, the more so as they follow laws which elude completely this three-dimensional idea. So if you take refuge there, you may say that the divine spark is at the centre of each atom and you won’t be far from the truth; but I was not speaking of the divine spark, I was speaking of the being, the psychic consciousness, which is another thing. The psychic being is an entity which has a form; it is organised around a central consciousness and, having a form it has a dimension, but a dimension of another kind than the third dimension of the outer consciousness.

It is often said that children enter into possession of their psychic being when they are about seven. What does this mean exactly?

This is not correct. There are people whose psychic being watches over their formation before their birth, even before they are in the womb of their mother. There are children whose psychic being comes into contact with them at the very moment they utter their first cry. There are also people whose psychic being comes a few hours after their birth, or some days after, or some weeks, some months, some years after or... never!

You told me once that one must not ask a child to make a mental effort before the age of seven.

That is quite different. There it is a question only of the formation of the physical brain which develops slowly, little by little. If you ask of a brain in formation an effort beyond its capacity, you tire it, you overwork it or you make it ill.

You say that the psychic being is the same thing as the divine spark...

No, I never said that — it would be foolish! The psychic being is organised *around* the divine spark. The divine spark is one, universal, the same everywhere and in everything, one and infinite, of the same kind in all. You cannot say that it is a being — it is *the being*, if you like, but not *a* being. Naturally, if you go back to the origin, you may say that there is only one soul, for the origin of all souls is the same, as the origin of the whole universe is the same, as the origin of the entire creation is the same. But the psychic being is an individual, personal being with its own experience, its own development, its own growth, its own organisation; only, this organisation is the product of the action of a central divine spark.

But the day an external being (physical, mental, vital) enters into direct and constant contact with the psychic being, one may say in the same way that the *physical* being of this person is organised by the central divine consciousness. The moment you put yourself in contact with it, submit yourself to it, you are organised by it, by the central divine consciousness.
[...]

Is there a psychic being in the atom?

No, it is not yet there. It can be said that there is a possibility of psychic consciousness in Matter — the diffusion of the divine Consciousness had only one object: to make possible an organisation which would be under the direct influence of the Divine. [...] It may hence be said that the origin of the soul is also in the atom, in all the elements constituting the atom, but it is only the origin.... I must tell you that when it is fully formed, the psychic being has a distinct form which corresponds to our physical form. It is not altogether similar, but it has a definite form. Every psychic being is different from another — they are not all cut out, modelled to one pattern. They are different, each has an individuality, a personality.

24 February 1951

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You must not mistake the feelings for the psychic, you understand! — these two are absolutely different things. People always think that when they have emotions, feelings, they are entering the psychic. These things have nothing to do with the psychic, they are purely vital. They are the most subtle part of the vital, if you like, but they are vital. It's not through the feelings that one goes to the psychic, it is through a very intense aspiration and a self-detachment.

27 July 1955

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To perceive the soul in someone, as a rule the mind must be very quiet — very quiet, for when it is active, *its* vibrations are seen, not the vibration of the soul.

And then, when you look at someone who is conscious of his soul, and lives in his soul, if you look like this, the impression you have is of descending, of entering deep, deep, deep into the person, far, far, far, far within; while usually when you look into someone's eyes, you very soon come to a surface which vibrates and answers your look, but you don't

have that feeling of going down, down, down, down, going deep as into a hole and very far, very, very, very far within, so you have... a small, very quiet response. Otherwise, usually you enter — there are eyes you cannot enter, they are closed like a door; but still there are eyes which are open — you enter and then, quite close behind, you come to something vibrating there, like this, shining at times, vibrating. And then, that's it; if you make a mistake, you say, "Oh! he has a living soul" — it is not that, it is his vital.

In order to find the soul you must go in this way (*gesture of going deep within*), like this, draw back from the surface, withdraw deep within and enter, enter, enter, go down, down, down into a very deep hole, silent, immobile, and there, there's a kind of... something warm, quiet, rich in substance and very still, and very full, like a sweetness — that is the soul.

And if one is insistent and is conscious oneself, then there comes a kind of plenitude which gives the feeling of something complete that contains unfathomable depths in which, should one enter, one feels that many secrets would be revealed... like the reflection in very peaceful waters of something that is eternal. And one no longer feels limited by time.

One has the feeling of having always been and of being for eternity.

9 April 1958

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Essentially, it is only when one has become aware of one's soul, has been identified with one's psychic being that one can see in a single flash the picture of one's individual development through the ages. Then indeed one begins to know... but not before. Then, indeed, I assure you it becomes very interesting. It changes one's position in life.

There is such a great difference between feeling vaguely, having a hesitant impression of something, of a force, a movement, an impulse, an attraction, of something which drives you in life — but it is still so vague, so uncertain, it is hazy — there is such a difference between this and having a clear vision, an exact perception, a total understanding of the meaning of one's life. And only then does one begin to see things as they are, not before. Only then can one follow the thread of one's destiny and

clearly see the goal and the way to reach it. But that happens only through successive inner awakenings, like doors opening suddenly on new horizons — truly, a new birth into a truer, deeper, more lasting consciousness.

Until then you live in a cloud, gropingly, under the weight of a destiny which at times crushes you, gives you the feeling of having been made in a certain way and being unable to do anything about it. You are under the burden of an existence which weighs you down, makes you crawl on the ground instead of rising above and seeing all the threads, the guiding threads, the threads which bind different things into a single movement of progression towards a realisation that grows clear.

One must spring up out of this half-consciousness which is usually considered quite natural — this is your “normal” way of being and you do not even draw back from it sufficiently to be able to see and wonder at this incertitude, this lack of precision; while, on the contrary, to know that one is seeking and to seek consciously, deliberately, *steadfastly* and methodically, this indeed is the exceptional, almost “abnormal” condition. And yet only in this way does one begin to truly live.

16 January 1957

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What is the difference between “spiritual” and “psychic”?

It is not the same thing. The psychic is the being organised by the divine Presence and it belongs to the earth — I am not speaking of the universe, only of the earth; it is only upon earth that you will find the psychic being. The rest of the universe is formed in quite a different way.

The universe contains all the domains higher than the physical: there is a global physical comprising the mental, the vital, etc., and all the domains above the mental are domains of a spiritual order, domains which are, for us, domains of the spirit, and it is this “spirit” which little by little, progressively, materialises itself to arrive at Matter as we conceive it. The beings of the Overmind, for instance, and all the beings of the higher regions have no psychic being — the “angels” have no psychic being. It is only upon earth that the psychic life begins, and it is just the process by

which the Divine has awakened material life to the necessity of rejoicing in its divine origin. Without the psychic, Matter would never have awakened from its unconsciousness, it would never have aspired for the life of its origin, the spiritual life. Therefore, the psychic being in the human being is the manifestation of spiritual aspiration; but there is a spiritual life independent of the psychic.

Is there a correspondence between the psychic world and the earth?

But I have already told you that it is only upon earth that the psychic being gets its experiences to individualise itself. Hence there is an almost absolute interdependence between the psychic world and the earth.

What is the most effective means of awakening the psychic being?

But it is wide awake! And not only is it awake, but it acts, only you are not aware of it. It appears to you asleep because you don't perceive it!

Fundamentally, without this kind of inner will of the psychic being, I believe human beings would be quite dismal, dull, they would have an altogether animal life. Every gleam of aspiration is always the expression of a psychic influence. Without the presence of the psychic, without the psychic influence, there would never be any sense of progress or any will for progress.

1 March 1951

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On the psychic plane is there a past, present and future?

In the psychic? Yes, you have even the consciousness of all the lives you have lived. When you enter into contact with the psychic you become conscious of all the lives you have lived, it keeps the absolutely living memory of all the events in which the psychic took part — not the whole life, not that one can tell little stories to oneself: that first one was a monkey and then later something a little higher, and so on, the cave-man... no, no stories like that. But all the events of former lives in which the psychic participated are preserved, and when one enters into conscious

contact with his psychic being this can be called up like a sort of cinema. But it has no continuity except in lives in which the psychic is absolutely conscious, active, permanently active, that is, constantly associated with the consciousness; so naturally, being constantly associated with the consciousness, it consciously remembers everything that has happened in the real life of the person, and the memories — when one follows these things — the memories of his psychic being are more and more coordinated and closer and closer to what could be a physical memory if there were one, in any case of all the intellectual and emotional elements of life, and of some physical events when it was possible for this being to manifest in the outer consciousness; then, at these moments, the whole set of physical circumstances in which one was is kept absolutely intact in the consciousness.

29 June 1955

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Has the psychic any power?

Power? It is usually the psychic which guides the being. One knows nothing about it because one is not conscious of it but usually it is that which guides the being. If one is very attentive, one becomes aware of it. But the majority of men haven't the least idea of it. For instance, when they have decided, in their outer ignorance, to do something, and instead of their being able to do it, all the circumstances are so organised that they do something else, they start shouting, storming, flying into a rage against fate, saying (that depends on what they believe, their beliefs) that Nature is wicked or their destiny baleful or God unjust, or... no matter what (it depends on what they believe). Whilst most of the time it is just the very circumstance which was most favourable for their inner development. And naturally, if you ask the psychic to help you to fashion a pleasant life for yourself, to earn money, have children who will be the pride of the family, etc., well, the psychic will not help you. But it will create for you all the circumstances necessary to awaken something in you so that the need of union with the Divine may be born in your consciousness. At times you have made fine plans, and if they had succeeded, you would have been

more and more encrusted in your outer ignorance, your stupid little ambition and your aimless activity. Whilst if you receive a good shock, and the post you coveted is denied to you, the plan you made is shattered, and you find yourself completely thwarted, then, sometimes this opposition opens to you a door on something truer and deeper. And when you are a little awake and look back, if you are in the least sincere, you say: "Ah! it wasn't I who was right — it was Nature or the divine Grace or my psychic being who did it." It is the psychic being which organised that.

Is it the psychic will which wants the being to be identified with the Divine?

Yes, surely. It is the will of the psychic. It is also the very reason of its existence. It is for that it is there. For example, in the mind certain activities (and even at times in the physical and vital) certain activities awaken to the influence of the psychic without even knowing it. That is why those parts adhere to it and begin to aspire also for the divine knowledge, the divine union, the relation with the Divine.

16 December 1953

Progress and the Psychic Being

Does the psychic being always progress?

There are in the psychic being two very different kinds of progress: one consisting in its formation, building and organisation. For the psychic starts by being only a kind of tiny divine spark inside the being and out of this spark will emerge progressively an independent conscious being having its own action and will. The psychic being at its origin is only a spark of the divine consciousness and it is through successive lives that it builds up a conscious individuality. It is a progress similar to that of a growing child. It is a thing in the making. For a long time, in most human beings the psychic is a being in the making. It is not a fully individualised, fully conscious being and master of itself and it needs all its rebirths, one after another, in order to build itself and become fully conscious.

But this sort of progress has an end. There comes a time when the

being is fully developed, fully individualised, fully master of itself and its destiny. When this being or one of these psychic beings at that state, takes birth in a human being, that makes a very great difference: the human being, so to say, is born free. He is not tied to circumstances, to surroundings, to his origin and atavism, like ordinary people. He comes into the world with the purpose of doing something, with a work to carry out, a mission to fulfil. From this point of view his progress in growth has come to an end, that is, it is not indispensable for him to take birth again in a body. Till then rebirth is a necessity, for it is through rebirth that he grows; it is in the physical life and in a physical body that he gradually develops and becomes a fully conscious being. But once he is fully formed, he is free, in this sense that he can take birth or not, at will. So there, one kind of progress stops.

But if this fully formed being wants to become an instrument of work for the Divine, if instead of retiring to repose in a psychic bliss, in its own domain, he chooses to be a worker upon earth to help in the fulfilment of the Divine Work, then he has a fresh progress to make, a progress in the capacity for work, for organisation of his work and for expression of the Divine Will. So there is a time when the thing changes. So long as he remains in the world, so long as he chooses to work for the Divine, he will progress. Only if he withdraws into the psychic world and refuses to continue doing the Divine Work or renounces it, can he remain in a static condition outside all progress, because, as I have told you, only upon earth is there progress, only in the physical world; it is not acquired everywhere. In the psychic world there is a kind of blissful repose. One remains what one is, without any movement.

But for those who are not conscious of their psychic?

They are compelled to progress whether they want it or not.

The psychic being itself progresses in them and they are not conscious of it. But they themselves are compelled to progress. That is to say, they follow a curve. They follow an ascent in life. It is the same progress as that of the growing child; there comes a time when it is at the summit of its growth and then, unless it changes the plane of progress, unless the purely physical progress turns into a mental progress, a psychic progress, a spiritual progress, it goes down the curve and then there will be a

decomposition and it will not exist any longer.

It is just because progress is not constant and perpetual in the physical world that there is a growth, an apogee, a decline and a decomposition. For anything that does not advance, falls back; all that does not progress, regresses.

So this is just what happens physically. The physical world has not learnt how to progress indefinitely; it arrives at a certain point, then it is either tired of progressing or is not capable of progressing in the present constitution, but in any case it stops progressing and after a time decomposes. Those who lead a purely physical life reach a kind of summit, then they slide down very quickly. But now, with the general collective human progress, there is behind the physical progress a vital progress and a mental progress, so that the mental progress can go on for a very long time, even after the physical progress has come to a stop, and through this mental progress one keeps up a kind of ascent long after the physical has ceased to progress.

And then there are those who do yoga, who become conscious of their psychic being, are united with it, participate in its life; these, indeed, progress till the last breath of their life. And they do not stop even after death, when they have left their body under the plea that the body cannot last any longer: they continue to progress.

It is the incapacity of the body to transform itself, to continue progressing that causes it to regress and in the end become more and more open to the inner disequilibrium until one day that becomes strong enough to bring about a total imbalance and it can no longer regain its balance and health.[...] It is only in the pure spiritual life — that which is outside all physical and terrestrial existence, including the mental — that there is no progress. You reach a static state and are outside all movements of progress. But at the same time you are outside the manifestation also. When you reach that state, you no longer belong to the manifestation, you go out of the manifested world. One must go out of the manifested world in order to go out of all progress, because the two are identical: manifestation means progress and progress means manifestation.

5 August 1953

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How can one know that the psychic being is in front?

My child, when it happens, one understands. It is exactly so long as one doesn't understand that it means that it hasn't come. This is like people asking you, "How can I know whether I am in contact with the Divine?" That itself is enough to prove that they are not. For if they are they can no longer ask the question. It is something understood. For the psychic it is the same thing. When the psychic is in front one knows it, and there is no possibility of any doubt. Consequently one no longer asks the question.

10 November 1954

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As you said the other day, didn't you, if someone has difficulties it means a mediocre being.

But excuse me! Don't mix up the psychic being with the outer being. The psychic being may be perfect and the outer being may be idiotic. Don't confuse the two. They have nothing to do... unfortunately they have nothing to do with each other, most of the time. For the outer being is not at all conscious of the psychic being; but to the extent that it is conscious it reflects the perfection of this psychic.

If you want to speak of the circumstances, not of the character, why would a psychic being not have difficulties in the world? If the world were entirely psychic, I would understand. But it isn't. It is just the very opposite, and I think the more psychic one is, usually, the more difficulties he has. Only, one is armed to face the difficulties. But the more psychic one is, the more is he in contradiction with the present state of the world. So when one is in opposition with something, the result is difficulties. And I have noticed that most often those who have many difficulties are those who are in a more or less close contact with their psychic being. If you want to speak about outer circumstances — I am not speaking of the character, that's quite different, but of outer circumstances — the people who have to struggle most and would have most reason to suffer are those

who have a very developed psychic being.

First, the development of the psychic being has a double result which is concomitant. That is, with the development of the psychic being, the sensitivity of the being grows. And with the growth of sensitivity there is also the growth of the capacity for suffering; but there is the counterpart, that is, to the extent to which one is in relation with the psychic being, one faces the circumstances of life in an altogether different way and with a kind of inner freedom which makes one capable of withdrawing from a circumstance and not feeling the shock in the ordinary way. You can face the difficulty or outer things with calm, peace, and a sufficient inner knowledge not to be troubled. So, on one side you are more sensitive and on the other you have more strength to deal with the sensitivity.

19 January 1955

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With regard to the evolution upwards, it is more correct to speak of the psychic presence than the psychic being. For it is the psychic presence which little by little becomes the psychic being. In each evolving form there is this presence, but it is not individualised. It is something which is capable of growth and follows the movement of the evolution. It is not a descent of the involution from above. It is formed progressively round the spark of Divine Consciousness which is meant to be the centre of a growing being which becomes the psychic being when it is at last individualised. It is this spark that is permanent and gathers round itself all sorts of elements for the formation of that individuality; the true psychic being is formed only when the psychic personality is fully grown, fully built up, round the eternal divine spark; it attains its culmination, its total fulfilment if and when it unites with a being or personality from above.

Below the human level there is, ordinarily, hardly any individual formation — there is only this presence, more or less. But when, by the growth of the body round the spark of Divine Consciousness, humanity began upon the earth, certain human organisms became in the course of this progressive growth sufficiently perfected, and by their opening and receptivity allowed a junction with certain beings descending from above.

This gave rise to a kind of divine humanity, what may be called a race of the elite. If only they had remained by themselves, these people would have continued as a race unique and superhuman. Indeed many races have made claims to be that: the Aryan, the Semitic and the Japanese have all in turn considered themselves the chosen race. But in fact there has been a general levelling of humanity, a lot of intermixture.

For there arose the necessity of prolongation of the superior race, which drove it to intermix with the rest of humanity — with animal humanity, that is to say. Thus its value was degraded and led to that great Fall which is spoken of in the world's scriptures, the coming out of Paradise, the end of the Golden Age. Indeed it was a loss from the point of view of consciousness, but not from that of material strength, since it was a tremendous gain to ordinary humanity. There were, certainly, some beings who had a very strong will not to mix, who resented losing their superiority; and it is just this that is the real origin of race-pride, race-exclusiveness, and a special caste distinction like that cherished by the Brahmins in India. But at present it cannot be said that there is any portion of mankind which is purely animal: all the races have been touched by the descent from above, and owing to the extensive intermixture the result of the Involution was more widely spread.

Of course one cannot say that every man has got a psychic being, just as one cannot refuse to grant it to every animal. Many animals that have lived near man have some beginnings of it, while so often one comes across people who do not seem to be anything else than brutes. Here, too, there has been a good deal of levelling. But on the whole, the psychic in the true sense starts at the human stage: that is also why the Catholic religion declares that only man has a soul. In man alone there is the possibility of the psychic being growing to its full stature even so far as to be able in the end to join and unite with a descending being, a godhead from above.

1930-1931

The Delight of Being

How can one “learn of pure delight”?

First of all, to begin with, one must through an attentive observation grow aware that desires and the satisfaction of desires give only a vague, uncertain pleasure, mixed, fugitive and altogether unsatisfactory. That is usually the starting-point.

Then, if one is a reasonable being, one must learn to discern what is desire and refrain from doing anything that may satisfy one's desires. One must reject them without trying to satisfy them. And so the first result is exactly one of the first observations stated by the Buddha in his teaching: there is an infinitely greater delight in conquering and eliminating a desire than in satisfying it. Every sincere and steadfast seeker will realise after some time, sooner or later, at times very soon, that this is an absolute truth, and that the delight felt in overcoming a desire is incomparably higher than the small pleasure, so fleeting and mixed, which may be found in the satisfaction of his desires. That is the second step.

Naturally, with this continuous discipline, in a very short time the desires will keep their distance and will no longer bother you. So you will be free to enter a little more deeply into your being and open yourself in an aspiration to... the Giver of Delight, the divine Element, the divine Grace. And if this is done with a sincere self-giving — something that gives itself, offers itself and expects nothing in exchange for its offering — one will feel that kind of sweet warmth, comfortable, intimate, radiant, which fills the heart and is the herald of Delight.

After this, the path is easy.

Sweet Mother, what is the true delight of being?

That very one of which I am speaking!

Sweet Mother, here when Sri Aurobindo speaks of an existence “that multiplied itself for sheer delight of being”, what is this delight?

The delight of existing.

There comes a time when one begins to be almost ready, when one can feel in everything, every object, in every movement, in every vibration, in all the things around — not only people and conscious beings, but things, objects; not only trees and plants and living things, but simply any object one uses, the things around one — this delight, this delight of being, of being just as one is, simply being. And one sees that all this vibrates like that. One touches a thing and feels this delight. But naturally, I say, one must have followed the discipline I spoke about at the beginning; otherwise, so long as one has a desire, a preference, an attachment or affinities and repulsions and all that, one cannot — one cannot.

And so long as one finds pleasures — pleasure, well, yes, vital or physical pleasure in a thing — one cannot feel this delight. For this delight is everywhere. This delight is something very subtle. One moves in the midst of things and it is as though they were all singing to you their delight. There comes a time when it becomes very familiar in the life around you. Of course, I must admit that it is a little more difficult to feel it in human beings, because there are all their mental and vital formations which come into the field of perception and disturb it. There is too much of this kind of egoistic asperity which gets mixed with things, so it is more difficult to contact the Delight there. But even in animals one feels it; it is already a little more difficult than in plants. But in plants, in flowers, it is so wonderful! They speak all their joy, they express it. And as I said, in all familiar objects, the things around you, which you use, there is a state of consciousness in which each one is happy to be, just as it is. So at that moment one knows one has touched true Delight. And it is not conditioned. I mean it does not depend upon... it depends on nothing. It does not depend on outer circumstances, does not depend on a more or less favourable state, it does not depend on anything: it is a communion with the *raison d'être* of the universe.

And when this comes it fills all the cells of the body. It is not even a thing which is thought out — one does not reason, does not analyse, it is not that: it is a *state* in which one lives. And when the body shares in it, it is so fresh — so fresh, so spontaneous, so... it no longer turns back upon itself, there is no longer any sense of self-observation, of self-analysis or of analysing things. All that is like a canticle of joyous vibrations, but very, very quiet, without violence, without passion, nothing of all that. It is very

subtle and very intense at the same time, and when it comes, it seems that the whole universe is a marvellous harmony. Even what is to the ordinary human consciousness ugly, unpleasant, appears marvellous.

Unfortunately, as I said, people, circumstances, all that, with all those mental and vital formations — that disturbs it all the time. Then one is obliged to return to this ignorant, blind perception of things. But otherwise, as soon as all this stops and one can get out of it... everything changes. As he says there, at the end: everything changes. A marvellous harmony. And it is all Delight, true Delight, real Delight.

23 January 1957

Love

What is the relation of human love to Divine love? Is the human an obstacle to the Divine love? Or is not rather the capacity for human love an index to the capacity for Divine love? Have not great spiritual figures, such as Christ, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, been remarkably loving and affectionate by nature?

Love is one of the great universal forces; it exists by itself and its movement is free and independent of the objects in which and through which it manifests. It manifests wherever it finds a possibility for manifestation, wherever there is receptivity, wherever there is some opening for it. What you call love and think of as a personal or individual thing is only your capacity to receive and manifest this universal force. But because it is universal, it is not therefore an unconscious force; it is a supremely conscious Power. Consciously it seeks for its manifestation and realisation upon earth; consciously it chooses its instruments, awakens to its vibrations those who are capable of an answer, endeavours to realise in them that which is its eternal aim, and when the instrument is not fit, drops it and turns to look for others. Men think that they have suddenly fallen in love; they see their love come and grow and then it fades — or, it may be, endures a little longer in some who are more specially fitted for its more lasting movement. But their sense in this of a personal experience all their own was an illusion. It was a wave from the everlasting sea of universal love.

Love is universal and eternal; it is always manifesting itself and always identical in its essence. And it is a Divine Force; for the distortions we see in its apparent workings belong to its instruments. Love does not manifest in human beings alone; it is everywhere. Its movement is there in plants, perhaps in the very stones; in the animals it is easy to detect its presence. All the deformations of this great and divine Power come from the obscurity and ignorance and selfishness of the limited instrument. Love, the eternal force, has no clinging, no desire, no hunger for possession, no self-regarding attachment; it is, in its pure movement, the seeking for union of the self with the Divine, a seeking absolute and regardless of all other things. Love divine gives itself and asks for nothing. What human beings have made of it, we do not need to say; they have turned it into an ugly and repulsive thing. And yet even in human beings the first contact of love does bring down something of its purer substance; they become capable for a moment of forgetting themselves, for a moment its divine touch awakens and magnifies all that is fine and beautiful. But afterwards there comes to the surface the human nature, full of its impure demands, asking for something in exchange, bartering what it gives, clamouring for its own inferior satisfactions, distorting and soiling what was divine.

To manifest the Divine love you must be capable of receiving the Divine love. For only those can manifest it who are by their nature open to its native movement. The wider and clearer the opening in them, the more they manifest love divine in its original purity; the more it is mixed with the lower human feelings, the greater is the deformation. One who is not open to love in its essence and in its truth cannot approach the Divine. Even the seekers through knowledge come to a point beyond which if they want to go farther, they are bound to find themselves entering at the same time into love and to feel the two as one, knowledge the light of the divine union, love the very heart of knowledge. There is a place in the soul's progress where they meet and you cannot distinguish one from the other. The division, the distinction between the two that you make in the beginning are a creation of the mind: once you rise to a higher level, they disappear.

Among those who have come into this world seeking to reveal the Divine here and transform earthly life, there are some who have manifested the Divine love in a greater fullness. In some the purity of the

manifestation is so great that they are misunderstood by the whole of humanity and are even accused of being hard and unloving, although the Divine love is there. But it is in them divine and not human in its form as in its substance. For when man speaks of love, he associates it with an emotional and sentimental weakness. But the divine intensity of self-forgetfulness, the capacity of throwing oneself out entirely, making no restriction and no reservation, as a gift, asking nothing in exchange, this is little known to human beings. And when it is there unmixed with weak and sentimental emotions, they find it hard and cold; they cannot recognise in it the very highest and intensest power of love.

The manifestation of the love of the Divine in the world was the great holocaust, the supreme self-giving. The Perfect Consciousness accepted to be merged and absorbed into the unconsciousness of matter, so that consciousness might be awakened in the depths of its obscurity and little by little a Divine Power might rise in it and make the whole of this manifested universe a highest expression of the Divine Consciousness and the Divine love. This was the supreme love, to accept the loss of the perfect condition of supreme divinity, its absolute consciousness, its infinite knowledge, to unite with unconsciousness, to dwell in the world with ignorance and darkness. And yet none perhaps would call it love; for it does not clothe itself in a superficial sentiment, it makes no demand in exchange for what it has done, no show of its sacrifice. The force of love in the world is trying to find consciousnesses that are capable of receiving this divine movement in its purity and expressing it. This race of all beings towards love, this irresistible push and seeking out in the world's heart and in all hearts, is the impulse given by a Divine love behind the human longing and seeking. It touches millions of instruments, trying always, always failing; but this constant touch prepares these instruments and suddenly one day there will awake in them the capacity of self-giving, the capacity of loving.

The movement of love is not limited to human beings and it is perhaps less distorted in other worlds than in the human. Look at the flowers and trees. When the sun sets and all becomes silent, sit down for a moment and put yourself into communion with Nature: you will feel rising from the earth, from below the roots of the trees and mounting upward and coursing through their fibres up to the highest outstretching branches, the aspiration

of an intense love and longing, — a longing for something that brings light and gives happiness, for the light that is gone and they wish to have back again. There is a yearning so pure and intense that if you can feel the movement in the trees, your own being too will go up in an ardent prayer for the peace and light and love that are unmanifested here. Once you have come in contact with this large, pure and true Divine love, if you have felt it even for a short time and in its smallest form, you will realise what an abject thing human desire has made of it. It has become in human nature something low, brutal, selfish, violent, ugly, or else it is something weak and sentimental, made up of the pettiest feeling, brittle, superficial, exacting. And this baseness and brutality or this self-regarding weakness they call love!

Is our vital being to take part in the Divine love? If it does, what is the right and correct form of participation it should take?

Where is the manifestation of Divine love intended to stop? Is it to be confined to some unreal or immaterial region? Divine love plunges its manifestation upon earth down into the most material matter. It does not indeed find itself in the selfish distortions of the human consciousness; but the vital in itself is as important an element in Divine love as it is in the whole of the manifested universe. There is no possibility of movement and progress without the mediation of the vital; but because this Power of Nature has been so badly distorted, some prefer to believe that it has to be pulled out altogether and thrown away. But it is only through the vital that matter can be touched by the transforming power of the Spirit. If the vital is not there to infuse its dynamism and living force, matter will remain dead; for the higher parts of the being will not come into contact with earth, will not be concretised in life, and they will depart unsatisfied and disappear. The Divine love of which I speak is a Love that manifests here upon this physical earth, in matter, but it must be pure of its human distortions, if it is to incarnate. The vital is an indispensable agent in this as in all manifestation. But as has happened always, the adverse powers have put their hold on this most precious thing. It is the energy of the vital that enters into dull and insensitive matter and makes it responsive and alive. But the adverse forces have distorted it; they have turned it into a field of violence and selfishness and desire and every kind of ugliness and

prevented it from taking part in the divine work. The one thing to be done is to change it, not to suppress its movement or destroy it. For without it no intensity is possible anywhere. The vital is in its very nature that in us which can give itself away. Just because it is that which has always the impulse and the strength to take, it is also that which is capable of giving itself to the utmost; because it knows how to possess, it knows also how to abandon itself without reserve. The true vital movement is the most beautiful and magnificent of movements; but it has been twisted and turned into the most ugly, the most distorted, the most repulsive. Wherever into a human story of love, there has entered even an atom of pure love and it has been allowed to manifest without too much distortion, we find a true and beautiful thing. And if the movement does not last, it is because it is not conscious of its own aim and seeking; it has not the knowledge that it is not the union of one being with another that it is seeking after but the union of all beings with the Divine.

Love is a supreme force which the Eternal Consciousness sent down from itself into an obscure and darkened world that it might bring back that world and its beings to the Divine. The material world in its darkness and ignorance had forgotten the Divine. Love came into the darkness; it awakened all that lay there asleep; it whispered, opening the ears that were sealed, "There is something that is worth waking to, worth living for, and it is love!" And with the awakening to love there entered into the world the possibility of coming back to the Divine. The creation moves upward through love towards the Divine and in answer there leans downward to meet the creation the Divine Love and Grace. Love cannot exist in its pure beauty, love cannot put on its native power and intense joy of fullness until there is this interchange, this fusion between the earth and the Supreme, this movement of Love from the Divine to the creation and from the creation to the Divine. This world was a world of dead matter, till Divine love descended into it and awakened it to life. Ever since it has gone in search of this divine source of life, but it has taken in its search every kind of wrong turn and mistaken way, it has wandered hither and thither in the dark. The mass of this creation has moved on its road like the blind seeking for the unknown, seeking but ignorant of what it sought. The maximum it has reached is what seems to human beings love in its highest form, its purest and most disinterested kind, like the love of the mother for

the child. This human movement of love is secretly seeking for something else than what it has yet found; but it does not know where to find it, it does not even know what it is. The moment man's consciousness awakens to the Divine love, pure, independent of all manifestation in human forms, he knows for what his heart has all the time been truly longing. That is the beginning of the Soul's aspiration, that brings the awakening of the consciousness and its yearning for union with the Divine. All the forms that are of the ignorance, all the deformations it has imposed must from that moment fade and disappear and give place to one single movement of the creation answering to the Divine love by its love for the Divine. Once the creation is conscious, awakened, opened to love for the Divine, the Divine love pours itself without limit back into the creation. The circle of the movement turns back upon itself and the ends meet; there is the joining of the extremes, supreme Spirit and manifesting Matter, and their divine union becomes constant and complete.

Great beings have taken birth in this world who came to bring down here something of the sovereign purity and power of Divine love. The Divine love has thrown itself into a personal form in them that its realisation upon earth may be at once more easy and more perfect. Divine love, when manifested in a personal being, is easier to realise; it is more difficult when it is unmanifested or impersonal in its movement. A human being, awakened by this personal touch, with this personal intensity, to the consciousness of the Divine love, will find his work and change made more easy; the union for which he seeks becomes more natural and close. And the union, the realisation will become for him, too, more full, more perfect; for the wide uniformity of a universal and impersonal Love will be lit up and vivified with the colour and beauty of all possible relations with the Divine.

2 June 1929

CHAPTER 7

The Hostile Forces

The Hostile or Adverse Forces

The world as it is today is in its greater part under the influence of the adverse forces. We call them adverse because they do not want the divine life; they oppose the divine life. They want things to remain as they are, because it is their field and their power in the world. They know very well that they will lose all power and all influence the moment the Divine manifests. So they are fighting openly and completely against the Divine, and we have to tear away from them bit by bit, little by little, all the things they have conquered in the outer life. And so when it is torn away from them, it is so much gained.

On the other hand, if, as was done formerly, we try what is called clearing the ground, that is, if we let go all the things we consider as not capable of being transformed, then it is so much lost for the divine realisation.

All the realisations of Nature in the outer life, all that it has created — for example upon earth all this vegetable and animal kingdom, you see, and this ordinary human world which it has created — if we give up all this as an illusion incapable of expressing the Divine, then this is so much left in the hands of the adverse forces which try to keep it, no doubt, for their own ends. Whereas if we consider that all this may be at present deformed but that in its essence and origin not only does it belong to the Divine but is the Divine Himself, then we can work consciously, deliberately at the transformation and wrest all these things from the hostile influence which now governs them.

14 December 1955

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Sweet Mother, what are the adverse powers of the subtle physical?

What are the adverse forces? There are as many of them as there are elements in the world. Only, unless they express themselves physically, we do not see them. So we are not aware of them. But I told you the other day that the atmosphere is full of countless formations which are usually made up of thoughts, desires, impulses, wills, and which are as mixed as men's thoughts. There are good ones, there are bad ones; and behind that there are all the formations of the vital world, a world *essentially* hostile to the Divine. Only the vital in man, under the psychic influence, can change and become a collaborator in the divine work. Otherwise, the vital world is essentially formed of beings *hostile* to the divine work, and those who open themselves to these forces without any control are naturally under the influence of the adverse forces.

8 September 1954

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No, I asked whether the hostile forces were conscious of the function assigned to them. Because that would mean that the hostile forces help in the spiritual accomplishment.

There is nothing that finally does not help. If they did it deliberately, they would no longer be hostile forces, they would be collaborators. For you must take care of one thing, you must not speak of "hostile forces" when thinking of forces which are hostile to *us*. These forces are not hostile to human beings, to their quietude or happiness, they are hostile to the divine Work.

And usually I have heard many people speaking of "hostile forces" — for instance, "the hostile forces of illness which attack me". This is too personal a point of view, it may not be the result of hostile forces; you call them hostile because they attack you. But in fact, when one speaks of hostile forces it means forces hostile to the divine Work or the divine Will. So, if they collaborated with this Work, they would no longer be hostile, you see. That's quite peremptorily logical.

Therefore, one can't say that it is any kind of work for the progress of

humanity or even for the progress of the universe. But there is nothing, not even the most hostile things, which can't be used for the divine Work. It depends on how it is taken. But it must be said that in their relation with human beings they take a very wicked pleasure in testing them. For example, if you are not extremely strong and extremely sincere, and you tell yourself, "Oh, I am sure of my faith" - this for instance among many other things — immediately something happens which is going to try to shake your faith completely. This is one... I suppose that's their diversion, their amusement.

How many times, you know, when someone boasts... it may be very childishly... but when someone boasts about something: "Oh, I am sure of that, I shall never make that mistake", immediately I see a hostile formation passing there, like that, and it enters by the little hole made by the boasting. It enters within, like that, and then penetrates, and so prepares everything for you to do exactly what you didn't want to. But this is an amusement, it is certainly not to help you to progress. (*Mother laughs*) But if you know how to take it, it does help you to progress. You say, "Good, another time I won't boast."

And as these forces are very conscious on the mental and vital plane, one doesn't even need to pronounce the words. If the thought... for example, if you have worked well to correct something, either a bad habit or a material weakness, anything, you have worked hard to correct this thing, and as you have worked well you have succeeded to a certain extent. Then, if simply mentally you state that you have succeeded, the next minute it begins again. It is... you see, you must not even think, it is not a question of saying, the question is simply of thinking: "Why, it was like that before, and now it is like this. Ah, it is fine!" Finished. The next minute it begins again.

And this is certain, because there are witnesses all around you who are notoriously malicious, and this amuses them terrifically. Sometimes I actually even hear them laughing when someone says something frankly. I hear a little laugh like that. Oh, it amuses them very much. And the next minute or the next day, crash! it is undone.

19 January 1955

Sweet Mother, does something aspire even in the most nasty people?

In the most nasty people?... yes, my child — even in the Asuras, even in the Adversaries, even in the monsters, there is something.

There is always a corner, a kind of rift, a sensitive point, which is usually called a weakness. But this actually is the strength of the being, the point by which it can be touched.

For even in the most obscure and misled beings, even in those whose conscious will is to fight against the Divine, in spite of themselves, in spite of everything, their origin is divine. And they work in vain, try in vain to cut themselves off from their origin; they cannot do it. Deliberately, consciously, they try all they can; but they know very well they cannot do it. Even the most monstrous being there is always a means to touch.

The Divine, the Divine's action in the world, always acts as a limit to the excess of evil, and at the same time gives an unlimited power to the good. And it is this unlimited power of the good which, externally, in the manifestation, serves as a limit to the spreading of evil.

Naturally, to the very limited vision of human beings it seems sometimes that evil has no limits and that it goes to its extreme. But this extreme itself is a limit. There is always a halt, because there is a point where the Divine rises up and says, "You won't go any farther." Whether it be the great destructions of Nature or men's monstrosities, there is *always* a moment when the Divine intervenes and prevents things from going farther.

28 December 1955

Possession by Hostile Beings

Have these vital beings a psychic being?

No, I said that the first thing they have to do to incarnate is to drive away the psychic being of the person whom they possess. That may happen from the very birth. There are children who are almost stillborn; they are taken

to be dead and suddenly they revive — this means that a vital being has incarnated in them. I have known such cases. This may happen also in the course of an illness; someone is very ill and gradually he lets go the contact with the psychic being, then, in a swoon or some other similar state, he cuts the contact entirely and the vital being rushes into the body. I have known cases of this kind also. Or it may be a slow action: the vital being enters into the atmosphere of the person, goes on influencing him and finally brings about illness, attacks, specially mental illness; then a time comes when the connection with the psychic being is entirely cut and the vital being takes possession of the body. There are cases of people falling very ill and coming out of the illness altogether different from what they were. Very often it is this that happens.

You have said that these beings of the vital world are attracted by the spiritual life. Why?

They are attracted, but this does not mean that they have decided sincerely to follow the spiritual life. The chief characteristic of these beings is falsehood: their nature is made of deceit. They have a power for illusion; they can take the appearance of divine beings or higher beings, they can appear in a dazzling light, but truly sincere people are not deceived, they immediately feel something that warns them. But if one likes the marvellous, the unexpected, if one loves fantastic things, if one likes to live a romance, one is likely to be easily deceived.

Not long ago there was a historical instance, that of Hitler, who was in contact with a being whom he considered to be the Supreme: this being came and gave him advice, told him all that he had to do. Hitler used to retire into solitude and remain there as long as it was necessary to come into contact with his “guide” and receive from him inspirations which he carried out later very faithfully. This being which Hitler took for the Supreme was quite plainly an Asura, one who is called the “Lord of Falsehood” in occultism, but who proclaimed himself the “Lord of the Nations”. He had a shining appearance, he could mislead anybody except one who really had occult knowledge and could see what was there behind the appearance. He would have deceived anybody, he was truly splendid. Generally he used to appear to Hitler wearing a silver cuirass and helmet; a kind of flame came out of his head and there was an atmosphere of

dazzling light around him, so dazzling that Hitler could hardly look at him. He used to tell Hitler everything that had to be done — he played with him as with a monkey or a mouse. He had decided clearly to make Hitler commit all possible extravagances till the day he would break his neck, which did happen. But cases like this are frequent, though on a smaller scale, of course.

Hitler was a very good medium, he had great mediumistic capacities, but he lacked intelligence and discrimination. This being could tell him anything whatever and he swallowed it all. It was he who pushed Hitler little by little. And he was doing this as a distraction, he did not take life seriously. For these beings men are very tiny things with whom they play, as a cat plays with a mouse, till finally they eat them up.

Are mentally deranged people possessed?

Yes, unless there is a physical lesion, a defect in the formation or an accident, a congestion. In all other cases it is always a possession. The proof of it is that if a person is brought to you who is altogether mentally deranged, if he has a lesion, he cannot be cured, while if there is no physical lesion, if it is a possession, then one can cure him. Unfortunately these things happen only to people who like them; there must be in the being much ambition, vanity, combined with much stupidity and a terrible pride — it is on such things that those beings play. I have known cases like that, of persons who were partially possessed, and I succeeded in freeing them from the beings who possessed them. Naturally they felt some relief, a kind of ease for a time, but it did not last long; almost immediately it wore off and they thought: "Now I have become quite an ordinary creature, whereas before I was an exceptional being!" They used to feel within them an exceptional power, even if it was a power to do evil, and they were satisfied with it. So what did they do? They called back with all their force the power they had lost! Of course, the being that had been destroyed could not come back, but as these beings exist in thousands it was replaced by another. I have seen this happen three times consecutively in a case, so much so that in the end I had to tell the person: "I am tired, get rid of it yourself, I am no longer interested!"

In these cases what happens to the psychic being?

Generally, it goes away.

I must tell you that the beings of the vital world are immortal they cannot die. They can be destroyed, but it is only the pure spiritual force which can destroy them. For example, in a vital battle (then- are people who have a vital fighting power), the experience is always the same: if you fight in the vital world with a vital being, you can crush it, kill it, but it will be reborn always — always they form themselves again. I think herein lies the origin of the legends of hydras or monsters with many heads.

There is only one force in the world which can destroy them categorically, that is, without any chance of return, and it is a force which belongs to the supreme creative Power. It is a force that comes from beyond the supramental world — it is not at the disposal of everybody. It is a luminous force, of a dazzling whiteness, so brilliant that if ordinary eyes looked at it, they would turn blind. A being of the vital world has just to be touched by this light to get dissolved immediately — it is liquefied, like those slugs which melt in water if a little salt is put on them.[...]

When Hitler died, did the Lord of Falsehood pass into Stalin?

It is not altogether like that that things happen, but it is something similar. This being did not wait for Hitler's death, it is there you make a mistake. These beings are not at all tied to a single physical presence. The being in question could very well possess Hitler and at the same time influence many others. Hitler was got rid of because he had behind him a whole nation and a physical power, and if he had succeeded it would have been a disaster for humanity, but there was no deluding oneself about it; it was not sufficient to get rid of him in order to get rid of the force that was behind him — that is not so easy.

I must tell you that the origin of these beings is prior to that of the gods; they are the first emanations, the first individual beings of the universe; so they cannot be got rid of so easily, by winning one war.

As long as they are necessary for the universal evolution they will exist. The day they lose their utility, they will be converted or will disappear.

Besides, they know that they are nearing their last hour and that is why they are doing as much damage as they can.

There were four of them. The first one has been converted, another is dissolved into its origin. Two are still living and these two are more ferocious than the others. One is known in occultism as the “Lord of Falsehood”, I have told you this, the other is the “Lord of Death”. And as long as these two beings exist, there will be difficulties.

8 March 1951

Vital Incarnations

There are some human beings who are like vampires. What are they and why are they like that?

They are not human; there is only a human form or appearance. They are incarnations of beings from the world that is just next to the physical, beings who live on the plane which we call the vital world. It is a world of all the desires and impulses and passions and of movements of violence and greed and cunning and every kind of ignorance; but all the dynamisms too are there, all the life-energies and all the powers. The beings of this world have by their nature a strange grip over the material world and can exercise upon it a sinister influence. Some of them are formed out of the remains of the human being that persist after death in the vital atmosphere near to the earth-plane. His desires and hungers still float there and remain in form even after the dissolution of the body; often they are moved to go on manifesting and satisfying themselves and the birth of these creatures of the vital world is the consequence. But these are minor beings and, if they can be very troublesome, it is yet not impossible to deal with them. There are others, far more dangerous, who have never been in human form; never were they born into a human body upon earth, for most often they refuse to accept this way of birth because it is slavery to matter and they prefer to remain in their own world, powerful and mischievous, and to control earthly beings from there. For, if they do not want to be born on earth, they do want to be in contact with the physical nature, but without being bound by it. Their method is to try first to cast their influence upon a man; then they enter slowly into his atmosphere and in the end may get complete

possession of him, driving out entirely the real human soul and personality. These creatures, when in possession of an earthly body, may have the human appearance but they have not a human nature. Their habit is to draw upon the life-force of human beings; they attack and capture vital power wherever they can and feed upon it. If they come into your atmosphere, you suddenly feel depressed and exhausted; if you are near them for some time you fall sick; if you live with one of them, it may kill you.

But how is one to get such creatures out of one's environment when they are once there?

The vital power incarnated in these beings is of a very material kind and it is effective only within a short distance. Ordinarily, if you do not live in the same house or if you are not in the same company with them, you do not come within their influence. But if you open some channel of connection or communication, through letters, for example, then you make possible an interchange of forces and are liable to be influenced by them even from a far distance. The wisest way with these beings is to cut off all connection and have nothing to do with them — unless indeed you have great occult knowledge and power and have learned how to cover and protect yourself — but even then it is always a dangerous thing to move about with them. To hope to transform them, as some people do, is a vain illusion; for they do not want to be transformed. They have no intention of allowing any transformation and all effort in that direction is useless.

These beings, when in the human body, are not often conscious of what they really are. Sometimes they have a vague feeling that they are not quite human in the ordinary way. But still there are cases where they are conscious and very conscious; not only do they know that they do not belong to humanity but they know what they are, act in that knowledge and deliberately pursue their ends. The beings of the vital world are powerful by their very nature; when to their power they add knowledge, they become doubly dangerous. There is nothing to be done with these creatures; you should avoid having any dealings with them unless you have the power to crush and destroy them. If you are forced into contact with them, beware of the spell they can cast. These vital beings, when they manifest on the physical plane, have always a great hypnotic power; for the centre of their consciousness is in the vital world and not in the

material and they are not veiled and dwarfed by the material consciousness as human beings are.

Is it not a fact that these creatures are drawn by some peculiar fascination towards the spiritual life?

Yes, because they feel they do not belong to this earth but come from somewhere else; and they feel too that they have powers they have half lost and they are eager to win them back. So whenever they meet anyone who can give them some knowledge of the invisible world, they rush to him. But they mistake the vital for the spiritual world and in their seeking follow vital and not spiritual ends. Or perhaps they deliberately seek to corrupt spirituality and build up an imitation of it in the mould of their own nature. Even then it is a kind of homage they pay, or a sort of amends they make, in their own way, to the spiritual life. And there is too some kind of attraction that compels them; they have revolted against the Divine rule, but in spite of their revolt or perhaps because of it, they feel somehow bound and are powerfully attracted by its presence.

This is how it happens that you see them sometimes used as instruments to bring into connection with each other those who are to realise the spiritual life upon earth. They do not purposely serve this use, but are compelled to it. It is a kind of compensation that they pay. For they feel the pressure of the descending Light, they sense that the time has come or is soon coming when they must choose between conversion or dissolution, choose either to surrender to the Divine Will and take their part in the Great Plan or to sink into unconsciousness and cease to be. The contact with a seeker of Truth gives such a being his chance to change. All depends upon how he utilises his chance. Taken rightly, it may open his way to liberation from falsehood and obscurity and misery, which is the stuff out of which these vital creatures are made, and bring him to Regeneration and to Life.

Have not these beings a great control over money power?

Yes. The power of money is at present under the influence or in the hands of the forces and beings of the vital world. It is because of this influence that you never see money going in any considerable amount to the cause of

Truth. Always it goes astray, because it is in the clutch of the hostile forces and is one of the principal means by which they keep their grip upon the earth. The hold of the hostile forces upon money-power is powerfully, completely and thoroughly organised and to extract anything out of this compact organisation is a most difficult task. Each time that you try to draw a little of this money away from its present custodians, you have to undertake a fierce battle.

12 May 1929

The Four Great Asuras

Would it not be better to change them [the hostile beings]?

Ah! my child, certainly it would be better, much better. But then...

It is a domain of which I have a thorough experience. After forty years of sustained effort I have found out that it is absolutely impossible to change anyone unless in truth he wants it sincerely. If he does not set himself to the task with an absolute sincerity, well — I have tried for forty years, one can try it for a hundred and forty years, it will be the same thing — he won't stir. It is the very character of these beings to be perfectly satisfied with themselves, and they do not desire, they have not the least intention to change! Even now, among the beings who are concerned with the earth, the asuric beings, the greatest of the asuras who is still busy with the earth at present, who is the asura of falsehood and calls himself the "Lord of the Nations" — he has taken a beautiful name, he is Lord of the Nations — it is he, wherever there is something going wrong, you may be sure it is he or a representative of his who is there. It is also perfectly sure that very soon his hour will come and all will be over for him, that he will have to disappear. And he absolutely refuses to change. He has no intention to do it, for immediately he will lose all his power. It is impossible. And he knows that he will disappear. But he proclaims categorically that before disappearing he will destroy all he can.... At heart, he would not consent to disappear unless everything disappeared at the same time as he. Unfortunately for him, this is not possible. But he will do all that lies in his power to destroy, demolish, ruin, corrupt as many things

as he can. That is certain. Afterwards it is the downfall. He accepts the downfall on this condition. It has never crossed his mind that he might be converted. It would no longer be he, don't you see, he would no longer be himself.

There is a great difference between a human being and these beings of the vital plane. I have told you this many times, I am going to repeat it:

In a human being, there is the divine Presence and the psychic being — at the beginning embryonic, but in the end a being wholly formed, conscious, independent, individualised. That does not exist in the vital world. It is a special grace given to human beings dwelling in matter and upon earth. And because of this, there is no human being who cannot be converted, if he wants it; that is, there is a possibility of his wanting it and the moment he wants it, he can do it. He is sure to succeed the moment he wants it, whereas those beings of the vital do not have a psychic being in them, they do not have the direct divine Presence (naturally, at the Origin, they descended directly from the Divine, but that was at the Origin, that is very far away). They are not in direct contact with the Divine within them, they have no psychic being. And if they were converted, there would remain nothing of them! For they are made up entirely of the opposite movement: they are entirely made up of personal self-assertion, despotic authority, separation from the Origin, and, of a great disdain for all that is pure, beautiful and noble. They do not have within them this psychic element which in man, even in the most debased, makes him respect what is beautiful and pure; even the basest man, in spite of himself, against his own will, respects what is pure, noble and beautiful. But those beings do not have that. They are wholly on the other side, totally on the other side. It disgusts them in every way. It is for them something which should not be touched, because it destroys; it is the thing that makes them disappear. Goodwill, sincerity, purity and beauty are things which make them disappear. So they hate these things.

Now I do not know on what grounds one could convert them. What would be the point of support? I do not find it. Even in the greatest. That is, some of these beings will not disappear until hatred disappears from the earth.... One might put it the other way round. One might say that hatred will disappear from the earth when those beings disappear; but, for the reason I have just given, the power to make light spring forth in the place

of darkness, beauty in the place of ugliness, goodness instead of evil, that power man possesses, the Asm a does not. Therefore it is man who will do that work, it is he who will change, it is he who will transform his earth and it is he who will compel the Asura to flee into other worlds or to dissolve. After that, all will be quiet. There you are.

10 June 1953

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If the Divine were to withdraw from the Asura, the Asura would dissolve, wouldn't he? — the Divine who is in the Asura?

I know people who have rejected their psychic being and who still continue to live; and yet, logically it would seem that a human being without a psychic being would die, still they continue to live. And perhaps it would be necessary in order finally to dissolve these asuric forces in the world — perhaps it would be necessary for the Divine to withdraw his whole creation into himself, because these are at the very origin of the creation.

Then the transformation cannot come about unless the Divine withdraws into the Divine?

That, why, that is Pralaya! It is not transformation, it is the dissolution of the earth. It is said that there were six creations, that is, six exteriorisations of the universe, and that six times the universe went back — it is recounted in the scriptures, you know — went back into the Divine. But it is said that this is the end. It is evidently one ending, but it is not the completion. It is because the creation lacked something and it was necessary to withdraw it and remake it. And it is said that our present creation is the seventh, and being the seventh it is the real one, that is, it is the final one, and it will not be withdrawn again, that it will continue being transformed and becoming more and more perfect, so as not to have to be withdrawn.

How far is what is said true ?

We shall see!

But the last six times, is that what happened?

The first six, yes, it is true. Even the order is given, the order in which... Because each creation is built on certain attributes, and the order of these attributes is given. I know them, I have written them somewhere. But I don't have it with me. So I can't give it to you, I would make a mistake. But one day I could bring you the paper on which it is written. All that I know is that this time it is the creation based on equilibrium. But a special equilibrium, for it is a progressive equilibrium. It is not a static equilibrium, the attribute of the present creation. It is *equilibrium*; that is why it is said that in this creation, if each thing is exactly in its place, in a perfect balance, well, there is no more evil. What is evil? — it is things not in equilibrium! There is nothing that is bad in itself, it is only the position which is wrong, which is not the true position.

Then what is the position of the Asuras?

To be taken back into the Divine. There were four great Asuras. Out of the four, two are converted. They are taking part in the divine work. The other two are holding out well. How long will they hold out? We shall see. So, they have the choice between being converted, that is, taking their place, poised, in the whole totality or else being dissolved, that is, being re-absorbed by their origin.

There is one of them who has almost attempted conversion and not succeeded. When it had to be done, it seemed to him quite unpleasant. So he has put it off till another time.

As for the other, he refuses to try. He has taken up a very, very important position in the world, because people who don't know things call him "Lord of the Nations". In fact, I was speaking a while ago about the forces which govern the world and don't want to give up their rule at all. They are perfectly satisfied with it it is not that he does not know that his end will come one day, but still he always postpones it as long as he can.

But as they do not have human dimensions, it can go on for quite a long time, can't it? As long as they find somewhere upon earth a human consciousness ready to respond to their influence, they will remain. So you can imagine the problem! Now it is not through individuals, it is through nations that they exert their influence.[...]

Do you know what the origin of these four Asuras is? [...]

You said there were four divine forces: Love, Light, Truth and [...] Life. [...] Then these four forces separated from the Divine and changed into falsehood...

Yes, it is something like that! It is something like that!

Light or Consciousness, Ananda or Love, Life and Truth.

Then Light or Consciousness became Darkness and Inconscience. Love and Ananda became Hatred and Suffering, and Truth became Falsehood, and Life became Death. Well, it is the first two... but not exactly in the same conditions. The first is converted and works, but he has refused to take a human body, he says it is a limitation in his work; perhaps one day he will take one, but for the time being he refuses. The second is converted and has of his own will been dissolved. He has dissolved into his origin. And the last two are holding out well.

The one of Death tried to incarnate. But he could not get converted. He tried to incarnate, which is something very rare. But it was a partial, not a total incarnation. That is difficult for them, a total incarnation. Human bodies are quite small, human consciousnesses are too small.

As for the other, he has emanations which are very active in certain human bodies and have played a big role in the recent history of the earth!

Don't the Asuras quarrel among themselves?

Oh yes, oh yes! just like men who are under asuric influences They are the worst enemies among themselves. We must say it is a blessing, for if they had an understanding, things would be much more difficult. Perhaps it is so just because it is a law of equilibrium that governs the world. It is in order to lessen the strength of their influence. But still[...]

But why is man a centre of attraction for the adverse forces? He is so limited!

Yes. Also they do not usually work upon one man. But they try to get hold of the earth-atmosphere, you understand, and without getting hold of men, they can't get hold of the earth-atmosphere, because it is in man that the highest terrestrial force manifests. As for taking a human body for conversion, that indeed is quite... the answer is quite simple. It is because in man there is a psychic being and there is no Asura who can eternally resist the influence of the psychic being, even were he to refuse as much as he could to surrender and bind himself closely. That's exactly the contradiction of their existence.

16 June 1954

Hostile Possession and the Psychic Being

When a being is possessed by a hostile force, what becomes of his psychic?

It depends on the degree of the possession. Usually it is something progressive. First there is an influence under which one comes, and comes in a fragmentary way, not even totally in his being, but in certain parts and for a time. This is the first stage. The second: the influence becomes permanent and there is one part of the being which deteriorates, which is constantly under this influence and expresses it. After this, the being which has cast this influence tries to enter that part. Then, usually, this produces a conflict, a kind of inner battle. People have fits, sometimes even nervous morbid fits. In trying to resist, the two parts of the being come constantly into conflict, and this produces great imbalance, even physical imbalance. But if one doesn't know how to resist and doesn't succeed in shaking off the hold, then gradually the being that has seized upon a part of the person acts like an octopus and spreads its tentacles like that, slowly and everywhere; and finally it is a total possession. At the moment of the total possession, either the possessed person becomes completely unbalanced or he becomes a kind of monster and his psychic being leaves him.

These cases are extremely rare, fortunately. Usually, in the human

being the psychic is strong enough to be able to resist, and the most frequent case is that of constant conflict between the two parts, until the psychic being, if it is strong enough and knows how to lean on a greater strength than its own, is capable of rejecting this influence and freeing itself. It is only in an extreme case of a total possession that the psychic being goes away. But these are extremely rare cases, extremely rare. It sometimes happens that a child is still-born, that is, just at the moment of birth it dies or a few minutes later, or an hour or two later, you see, just at that time. In these cases it happens that it is the psychic being which has decided not to use this body. But if, for example, the doctor who is looking after the case is a clever man or the nurse a clever person and they can bring back life into the body by artificial respiration or such means, most often it is a hostile being which gets hold of this body. There have been cases like that, children who seemed to be dead, that is, the psychic being had left the body, and before it had died completely, a vital being had entered and taken its place. Such cases have been known. And these beings are demons. In life they become veritable demons. There are not many of them.

There are beings of the vital, but of a higher kind, emanations of Asuras, for example, who have decided for one reason or another that they would try to be converted, not to be anti-divine, and manage to enter into relation with the Divine. They know that the best way is to identify themselves with a human body in order to be under the control of a psychic being. And they incarnate in human bodies, but not with the intention of driving out the psychic being, on the contrary, to try to submit to the influence of the psychic being and be converted by it. These cases also are not frequent, but still they have been known, and in these cases these human beings are gifted with very exceptional capacities, but usually they also have very exceptional difficulties, because the power which has incarnated in them is one which was, at least, if it is not still so, a hostile power; and, you see, it is difficult to get rid of all these movements of revolt immediately; sometimes it takes a whole lifetime to succeed in doing it.

Some of these asuric beings have tried to convert themselves and not succeeded. They ought to have left the body they had chosen, because they could not convert themselves. It was too difficult a task for them, it

demanded too great an effort.

But all these cases about which I have just spoken to you are very rare ones, you see. We can't say that such things happen and are met with at every turn: a gentleman who is the incarnation of an adverse force or another who is possessed. Such cases are very rare, very rare.

But the case of an influence — being under an influence and expressing it — this, unfortunately, is very frequent, especially with people who undertake yoga without being sufficiently purified beforehand, or otherwise with egoistic intentions; to people who begin to do yoga for reasons of ambition or vanity it happens very often that they put themselves under the influence of certain adverse forces.

And there are also many people who are under certain influences in a way... how to put it?... one can't call it accidental, but... for example, there are psychic beings who choose a certain environment to incarnate in because they think that there they will have the experiences they want, and owing to some circumstances in this environment there is a hostile influence at work; so the body they put on is to a certain extent under this hostile influence and they have to fight against that terribly all their life. They can at a particular moment, as I said — if they know how to rely on greater forces than their own — they can conquer and gain a great victory. It is a great victory to get rid of the influence of an adverse force. It is truly a victory which goes beyond the individual's own person and has a repercussion on the whole terrestrial state. Each victory gained like this by an individual over a hostile force influencing him, is a long step forward to the day when the earth will be completely free of the presence of hostile forces. It represents a great progress for the earth.

22 December 1954

When we are afraid, is that due to the mischief of these beings?

Yes, my child. Fear is the prettiest gift these beings have given to the world. It is their first present, and the most powerful. It is through fear that they hold human beings. First of all, they create a movement of fear; the movement of fear weakens you, then hands you over little by little into their power. And it is not even a reasonable fear; it is a kind of fear which seizes you, you don't know why, something that makes you tremble, gives

you anxiety. You do not know why, it has no apparent reason. It is their action.

24 June 1953

Resisting Hostile Forces

How is one to meet adverse forces —forces that are invisible and yet quite living and tangible?

A great deal depends upon the stage of development of your consciousness. At the beginning, if you have no special occult knowledge and power, the best you can do is to keep as quiet and peaceful as possible. If the attack takes the form of adverse suggestions try quietly to push them away, as you would some material object. The quieter you are, the stronger you become. The firm basis of all spiritual power is equanimity. You must not allow anything to disturb your poise: you can then resist every kind of attack. If, besides, you possess sufficient discernment and can see and catch the evil suggestions as they come to you, it becomes all the more easy for you to push them away; but sometimes they come unnoticed, and then it is more difficult to fight them. When that happens, you must sit quiet and call down peace and a deep inner quietness. Hold yourself firm and call with confidence and faith: if your aspiration is pure and steady, you are sure to receive help.

Attacks from adverse forces are inevitable: you have to take them as tests on your way and go courageously through the ordeal. The struggle may be hard, but when you come out of it, you have gained something, you have advanced a step. There is even a necessity for the existence of the hostile forces. They make your determination stronger, your aspiration clearer.

It is true, however, that they exist because you gave them reason to exist. So long as there is something in you which answers to them, their intervention is perfectly legitimate. If nothing in you responded, if they had no hold upon any part of your nature, they would retire and leave you. In any case, they need not stop or hamper your spiritual progress.

The only way to fail in your battle with the hostile forces is not to have

a true confidence in the divine help. Sincerity in the aspiration always brings down the required succour. A quiet call, a conviction that in this ascension towards the realisation you are never walking all alone and a faith that whenever help is needed it is there, will lead you through, easily and securely.

Do these hostile forces generally come from outside or inside ?

If you think or feel that they come from inside, you have possibly opened yourself to them and they have settled in you unnoticed. The true nature of things is one of harmony; but there is a distortion in certain worlds that brings in perversion and hostility. If you have a strong affinity for these worlds of distortion, you can become friends with the beings that are there and answer fully to them. That happens, but it is not a very happy condition. The consciousness is at once blinded and you cannot distinguish the true from the false, you cannot even tell what is a lie and what is not.

In any case, when an attack comes the wisest attitude is to consider that it comes from outside and to say, "This is not myself and I will have nothing to do with it." You have to deal in the same way with all lower impulses and desires and all doubts and questionings in the mind. If you identify yourself with them, the difficulty in fighting them becomes all the greater; for then you have the feeling that you are facing the never easy task of overcoming your own nature. But once you are able to say, "No, this is not myself, I will have nothing to do with it", it becomes much easier to disperse them.

Where can the line be drawn between the inside and the outside?

The line is very flexible; it can be as near to you and as far from you as you will. You may take everything upon yourself and feel it as a part and parcel of your real self; or you may throw it away as you would a bit of hair or nail without being touched at all.[...] Those who are capable of extending the consciousness as wide as the world, become the world; but those who are shut up in their little bodies and limited feelings stop at those limits; their bodies and their petty feelings are to them their whole self.

5 May 1929

Will a time come when the hostile forces will be there no longer?

When their presence in the world is no more of any use, they will disappear. Their action is used as a testing process, so that nothing may be forgotten, nothing left out in the work of transformation. They will allow no mistake. If you have overlooked in your own being even a single detail, they will come and put their touch upon that neglected spot and make it so painfully evident that you will be forced to change. When they will no longer be required for this process, their existence will become useless and they will vanish. They are suffered to exist here, because they are necessary in the Great Work; once they are no more indispensable, they will either change or go.

Will it be a long time before that happens?

All depends upon your point of view. For time is relative; you can speak of it from the ordinary external human standpoint or from the deeper viewpoint of an inner consciousness or from the outlook of the Divine.

Whether the thing to be done takes a thousand years or only a year according to the human computation, does not matter at all, if you are one with the Divine Consciousness; for then you leave outside you the things of the human nature and you enter into the infinity and eternity of the Divine Nature. Then you escape from this feeling of a great eagerness of hurry with which men are obsessed, because they want to see things done. Agitation, haste, restlessness lead nowhere. It is foam on the sea; it is a great fuss that stops with itself.

26 May 1929

CHAPTER 8

Illness and Death

Illness Is a Disequilibrium

In reality illness is only a disequilibrium; if then you are able to establish another equilibrium, this disequilibrium disappears. An illness is simply, always, in every case, even when the doctors say that there are microbes — in every case, a disequilibrium in the being: a disequilibrium among the various functions, a disequilibrium among the forces.

This is not to say that there are no microbes: there are, there are many more microbes than are known now. But it is not because of that you are ill, for they are always there. It happens that they are always there and for days they do nothing to you and then all of a sudden, one day, one of them gets hold of you and makes you ill — why? Simply because the resistance was not as it used to be habitually, because there was some disequilibrium in some part, the functioning was not normal. But if, by an inner power, you can re-establish the equilibrium, then that's the end, there is no more difficulty, the disequilibrium disappears.

There is no other way of curing people. It is simply when one sees the disequilibrium and is capable of re-establishing the equilibrium that one is cured. Only there are two very different categories you come across... Some hold on to their disequilibrium — they hold on to it, cling to it, don't want to let it go. Then you may try as hard as you will, even if you re-establish the equilibrium the next minute they get into disequilibrium once again, because they love that. They say: "Oh no! I don't want to be ill", but within them there is something which holds firmly to some disequilibrium, which does not want to let it go. There are other people, on the contrary, who sincerely love equilibrium, and directly you give them the power to get back their equilibrium, the equilibrium is re-established and in a few minutes they are cured. Their knowledge was not sufficient or their power was not sufficient to re-establish order — disequilibrium is a disorder. But if you intervene, if you have the knowledge and re-establish the

equilibrium, quite naturally the illness will disappear; and those who allow you to do it get cured. Only those who do not let you do it are not cured and this is visible, they do not allow you to act, they cling to the illness. I tell them: "Ah! you are not cured? Go to the doctor then." And the funniest part of the thing is that most often they believe in the doctors, although the working remains the same! Every doctor who is something of a philosopher will tell you: "It is like that; we doctors give only the occasion, but it is the body that cures itself. When the body wants to be cured, it is cured." Well, there are bodies that do not allow equilibrium to be re-established unless they are made to absorb some medicine or something very definite which gives them the feeling that they are being truly looked after. But if you give them a very precise, very exact treatment that is sometimes very difficult to follow, they begin to be convinced that there is nothing better to do than to regain the equilibrium and they get back the equilibrium!

24 June 1953

Illness Comes from Outside

Sweet Mother, when one sees an illness coming, how can one stop it?

Ah! First of all, you must not want it, and nothing in the body must want it. You must have a very strong will not to be ill. This is the first condition.

The second condition is to call the light, a light of equilibrium, a light of peace, quietude and balance, and to push it into all the cells of the body, enjoining them not to be afraid, because that again is another condition.

First, not to want to be ill, and then not to be afraid of illness. You must neither attract it nor tremble. You must not want illness at all. But you must not because of fear not want it; you must not be afraid; you must have a calm certitude and a complete trust in the power of the Grace to shelter you from everything, and then think of something else, not be concerned about this any longer. When you have done these two things, refusing the illness with all your will and infusing a confidence which completely eliminates the fear in the cells of the body, and then busying yourself with something else, not thinking any longer about the illness,

forgetting that it exists... there, if you know how to do that, you may even be in contact with people who have contagious diseases, and yet you do not catch them. But you must know how to do this.

Many people say, "Oh, yes, here I am not afraid." They don't have any fear in the mind, their mind is not afraid, it is strong, it is not afraid; but the body trembles, and one doesn't know it, because it is in the cells of the body that the trembling goes on. It trembles with a terrible anxiety and this is what attracts the illness. It is there that you must put the force and the quietude of a perfect peace and an absolute trust in the Grace. And then, sometimes you are obliged to drive away with a similar force in your thought all suggestions that after all, the physical world is full of illnesses, and these are contagious, and because one was in contact with somebody who is ill, one is sure to catch it, and then, that the inner methods are not powerful enough to act on the physical, and all kinds of stupidities of which the air is full. These are collective suggestions which are passed on from one person to another by everybody. And if by chance there are two or three doctors, then it becomes terrible. (*Laughter*)

When Sri Aurobindo says that illness comes from outside, what exactly is it that comes?

It is a kind of vibration made up of a mental suggestion, a vital force of disorder and certain physical elements which are the materialisation of the mental suggestion and the vital vibration. And these physical elements can be what we have agreed to call germs, microbes, this and that and many other things.

It may be accompanied by a sensation, may be accompanied by a taste, also by a smell, if one has very developed subtle senses. There are these formations of illness which give a special taste to the air, a special smell or a slight special sensation.

People have many senses which are asleep. They are terribly tamasic. If all the senses they possess were awake, there are many things they would perceive, which can just pass by without anyone suspecting anything.[...]

Besides, there is always a way of isolating oneself by an atmosphere of protection, if one knows how to have an extremely quiet vibration, so quiet that it makes almost a kind of wall around you. But all the time, all the

time one is vibrating in response to vibrations which come from outside. If you become aware of this, all the time there is something which does this (*gestures*), like this, like this, like this (*gestures*), which responds to all the vibrations coming from outside. You are never in an absolutely quiet atmosphere which emanates from you, that is, which comes from inside outward (not something which comes from outside within), something which is like an envelope around you, very quiet, like this — and you can go anywhere at all and these vibrations which come from outside do not begin to do this (*gesture*) around your atmosphere.

If you could see that kind of dance, the dance of vibrations which is there around you all the time, you would see, would understand well what I mean. [...]

What is to be wondered at is the unconsciousness with which men go through life; they don't know how to live, there's not one in a million who knows how to live, and they live like that somehow or other, limping along, managing, not managing; and all that for them, bah! What is it? Things that happen.

They don't know how to live. All the same one should learn how to live. That's the first thing one ought to teach children: to learn how to live.

11 May 1955

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Illnesses enter through the subtle body, don't they? How can they be stopped?

Ah! here we are.... If one is very sensitive, very sensitive — one must be very sensitive — the moment they touch the subtle body and try to pass through, one feels it. It is not like something touching the body, it is a sort of feeling. If you are able to perceive it at that moment, you have still the power to say "no", and it goes away. But for this one must be extremely sensitive. However, that develops. All these things can be developed methodically by the will. You can become quite conscious of this envelope, and if you develop it sufficiently, you don't even need to look and see, you feel that something has touched you [...] a kind of little

discomfort (it is not something which is imposed with a great force), a little uneasiness coming near you from anywhere at all: front, behind, above, below. If at that moment you are sufficiently alert, you say "no", as though you were cutting off the contact with great strength, and it is finished. If you are not conscious at that moment, the next minute or a few minutes later you get a queer sick feeling inside, a cold in the back, a little uneasiness, the beginning of some disharmony; you feel a maladjustment somewhere, as though the general harmony had been disturbed. Then you must concentrate all the more and with a great strength of will keep the faith that nothing can do you harm, nothing can touch you. This suffices, you can throw off the illness at that moment. But you must do this immediately, you understand, you must not wait five minutes, it must be done at once. If you wait too long and begin to feel really an uneasiness somewhere, and something begins to get quite disturbed, then it is good to sit down, concentrate and call the Force, concentrate it on the place which is getting disturbed, that is to say, which is beginning to become ill. But if you don't do anything at all, an illness indeed gets lodged somewhere; and all this, because you were not sufficiently alert. And sometimes one is obliged to follow the entire curve to find the favourable moment again and get rid of the business. I have said somewhere that in the physical domain all is a question of method — a method is necessary for realising everything. And if the illness has succeeded in touching the physical-physical, well, you must follow the procedure needed to get rid of it. This is what medical science calls "the course of the illness". One can hasten the course with the help of spiritual forces, but all the same the procedure must be followed. There are some four different stages. The very first is instantaneous. The second can be done in some minutes, the third may take several hours and the fourth several days. And then, once the thing is lodged there, all will depend not only on the receptivity of the body but still more on the willingness of the part which is the cause of the disorder. You know, when the thing comes from outside it is in affinity with something inside. If it manages to pass through, to enter without one's being aware of it, it means there is some affinity somewhere, and the part of the being which has responded must be convinced.[...] But the condition in every case — in every case — whether one does it oneself and depending only on oneself or whether one does it by asking someone to do it for one, the first condition: not to fear and to be calm. If you begin to

boil and get fidgety in your body, it is finished, you can do nothing.

For everything — to live the spiritual life, heal sickness — for everything, one must be calm.

31 March 1951

Microbes and Illness

“When you cut yourself off from the energy and light that sustain you, then there is this depression, there is created what medical science calls a favourable ground’ and something takes advantage of it. It is doubt, gloominess, lack of confidence, a selfish turning back upon yourself that cuts you off from the light and divine energy and gives the attack this advantage. It is this that is the cause of your falling ill and not microbes.” (The Mother)

One thing that is now beginning to be recognised by everyone, even by the medical corps, is that hygienic measures, for example, are effective only to the extent that one has confidence in them. Take the case of an epidemic. Many years ago we had a cholera epidemic here — it was bad — but the chief medical officer of the hospital was an energetic man: he decided to vaccinate everybody. When he discharged the vaccinated men, he would tell them, “Now you are vaccinated and nothing will happen to you, but if you were not vaccinated you would be sure to die!” He told them this with great authority. Generally such an epidemic lasts a long time and it is difficult to arrest it, but in some fifteen days, I think, this doctor succeeded in checking it; in any case, it was done miraculously fast. But he knew very well that the best effect of his vaccination was the confidence it gave to people.

Now, quite recently, they have found something else and I consider it wonderful. They have discovered that for every disease there is a microbe that cures it (call it a microbe if you like, anyway, some sort of germ). But what is so extraordinary is that this “microbe” is extremely contagious, even more contagious than the microbe of the disease. And it generally develops under two conditions: in those who have a sort of natural good humour and energy and in those who have a strong will to get well!

Suddenly they catch the “microbe” and are cured. And what is wonderful is that if there is one who is cured in an epidemic, three more recover immediately. And this “microbe” is found in all who are cured.

But I am going to tell you something: what people take to be a microbe is simply the materialisation of a vibration or a will from another world. When I learned of these medical discoveries, I said to myself, “Truly, science is making progress.” One might almost say with greater reason, “Matter is progressing,” it is becoming more and more receptive to a higher will. And what is translated in their science as “microbes” will be perceived, if one goes to the root of things, as simply a vibratory mode; and this vibratory mode is the material translation of a higher will. If you can bring this force or this will, this power, this vibration (call it what you will) into certain given circumstances, not only will it act in you, but also through contagion around you.

“Is any one of you pure and strong enough not to be affected by suggestions? If you drink unfiltered water and think, ‘Now I am drinking impure water’, you have every chance of falling sick. And even though such suggestions may not enter through the conscious mind, the whole of your subconscious is there, almost helplessly open to any kind of suggestion.... The normal human condition is a state filled with apprehensions and fears; if you observe your mind deeply for ten minutes, you will find that for nine out of the ten it is full of fears....

And even if by discipline and effort you have liberated your mind and your vital of apprehension and fear, it is more difficult to convince the body.”

(*The Mother*)

Why is it so difficult to convince the body, when one has succeeded in liberating oneself mentally and vitally?

Because in the large majority of men, the body receives its inspirations from the subconscious, it is under the influence of the subconscious. All the fears driven out from the active consciousness go and take refuge there and then, naturally, they have to be chased out from the subconscious and

uprooted from there.

14 March 1951

Causes of Illness

Sweet Mother, if someone falls seriously ill, is this a purely physical phenomenon or is it a difficulty in his spiritual life?

That depends on the person! If it is someone who is doing yoga, it is quite obviously a difficulty in his spiritual life. If it is somebody who is not at all engaged in yoga and who lives an ordinary life in the most ordinary manner, it is an ordinary accident. It depends absolutely on the person. The outer phenomena may be similar, but the inner causes are absolutely different. No two illnesses are alike, though labels are put on diseases and attempts made to group them; but in fact every person is ill in his own way, and his way depends on what he is, on his state of consciousness and the life he leads.

We have often said that illnesses are always the result of a disturbance of equilibrium, but this disturbance can occur in completely different states of being. For the ordinary man whose consciousness is centred in the physical, outer life, it is a purely physical disturbance of equilibrium, of the functioning of the different organs. But when behind this purely superficial life, an inner life is being fashioned, the causes of illness change; they always become the expression of a disequilibrium between the different parts of the being: between the inner progress or effort and the outer resistances or conditions of one's life, one's body.

Even from the ordinary external point of view, it has been recognised for a very long time that it is a fall in the resistance of the vitality due to immediate moral causes which is always at the origin of an illness. When one is in a normal state of equilibrium and lives in a normal physical harmony, the body has a capacity of resistance, it has within it an atmosphere strong enough to resist illnesses: its most material substance emanates subtle vibrations which have the strength to resist illnesses, even diseases which are called contagious in fact, all vibrations are contagious, but still, certain diseases are considered as especially contagious. Well, a

man who, even from the purely external point of view, is in a state in which his organs function harmoniously and an adequate psychological balance prevails, has at the same time enough resistance for the contagion not to affect him. But if for some reason or other he loses this equilibrium or is weakened by depression, dissatisfaction, moral difficulties or undue fatigue, for instance, this reduces the normal resistance of the body and he is open to the disease. But if we consider someone who is doing yoga, then it is altogether different, in the sense that the causes of disequilibrium are of a different nature and the illness usually becomes the expression of an inner difficulty which has to be overcome. So each one should find out for himself why he is ill.

From the ordinary point of view, in most cases, it is usually fear — fear, which may be mental fear, vital fear, but which is almost always physical fear, a fear in the cells — it is fear which opens the door to all contagion. Mental fear — all who have a little control over themselves or any human dignity can eliminate it; vital fear is more subtle and asks for a greater control; as for physical fear, a veritable yoga is necessary to overcome it, for the cells of the body are afraid of everything that is unpleasant, painful, and as soon as there is any unease, even if it is insignificant, the cells of the body become anxious, they don't like to be uncomfortable. And then, to overcome that, the control of a conscious will is necessary. It is usually this kind of fear that opens the door to illnesses. And I am not speaking of the first two types of fear which, as I said, any human being who wants to be human in the noblest sense of the word, must overcome, for that is cowardice. But physical fear is more difficult to overcome; without it even the most violent attacks could be repelled. If one has a minimum of control over the body, one can lessen its effects, but that is not immunity. It is this kind of trembling of material, physical fear in the cells of the body which aggravates all illnesses. [...]

Mother, how are medicines to be used for a body which is not altogether unconscious? For even when we draw on the divine grace, we see that we need a little medicine, and if a little medicine is given it has a good effect. Does this mean that only the body needs medicine or is there something wrong with the mind and the vital?

In most cases the use of medicines — within reasonable limits, that is,

when one doesn't poison oneself by taking medicines — is simply to help the body to have confidence. It is the body which heals itself. When it wants to be cured, it is cured. And this is something very widely recognised now; even the most traditional doctors tell you, "Yes, our medicines help, but it is not the medicines which cure, it is the body which decides to be cured." Very well, so when the body is told, "Take this", it says to itself, "Now I am going to get better", and because it says "I am going to get better", well, it is cured!

In almost every case, there are things which help — a little — provided it is done within reasonable limits. If it is no longer within reasonable limits, you are sure to break down completely. You cure one thing but catch another which is usually worse. But still, a little help, in a way, a little something that gives confidence to your body: "Now it will be all right, now that I have taken this, it is going to be all right" — this helps it a great deal and it decides to get better and it is cured.

There too, there is a whole range of possibilities, from the yogi who is in so perfect a state of inner control that he could take poison without being poisoned to the one who at the least little scratch rushes to the doctor and needs all sorts of special drugs to get his body to make the movement needed for its cure. There is the whole possible range, from total, supreme mastery to an equally total bondage to all external aids and all that you absorb from outside — a bondage and a perfect liberation. There is the whole range. So everything is possible. It is like a great key-board, very complex and very complete, on which one can play, and the body is the instrument.

19 June 1957

Make a Beautiful Thing of Death

[...]if one must for some reason or other leave one's body and take a new one, is it not better to make of one's death something magnificent, joyful, enthusiastic, than to make it a disgusting defeat? Those who cling on, who try by every possible means to delay the end even by a minute or two, who give you an example of frightful anguish, show that they are not conscious of their soul.... After all, it is perhaps a means, isn't it? One can change this

accident into a means; if one is conscious one can make a beautiful thing of it, a very beautiful thing, as of everything. And note, those who do not fear it, who are not anxious, who can die without any sordidness are those who never think about it, who are not haunted all the time by this "horror" facing them which they must escape and which they try to push as far away from them as they can. These, when the occasion comes, can lift their head, smile and say, "Here I am."

It is they who have the will to make the best possible use of their life, it is they who say, "I shall remain here as long as it is necessary, to the last second, and I shall not lose one moment to realise my goal"; these, when the necessity comes, put up the best show. Why? — It is very simple, because they live in their ideal, the truth of their ideal; because that is the real thing for them, the very reason of their being, and in all things they can see this ideal, this reason of existence, and never do they come down into the sordidness of material life.

So, the conclusion:

One must never wish for death.

One must never will to die.

One must never be afraid to die.

And in all circumstances one must will to exceed oneself.

23 April 1951

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There are two remedies [to overcome the fear of death]. There are many, but two at least are there. In any case, the use of a deeper consciousness is essential. One remedy consists in saying that it is some thing that happens to everyone (let us take it on that level), yes, it is a thing that happens to everybody, and therefore, sooner or later, it will come and there is no reason why one should be afraid, it is quite a normal thing. You may add one more idea to this, that according to experience (not yours but just the collective human experience), circumstances being the same, absolutely identical, in one case people die, in another they do not — why? And if you push the thing a little further still, you say to yourself that after all it

must depend on something which is altogether outside your consciousness — and in the end one dies when one has to die. That is all. When one has to die one dies, and when one has not to die, one does not die. Even when you are in mortal danger, if it is not your hour to die, you will not die, and even if you are out of all danger, just a scratch on your foot will be enough to make you die, for there are people who have died of a pin-scratch on the foot — because the time had come. Therefore, fear has no sense. What you can do is to rise to a state of consciousness where you can say, “It is like that, we accept the fact because it seems to be recognised as an inevitable fact. But I do not need to worry, for it will come only when it must come. So I don’t need to feel afraid: when it is not to come, it will not come to me, but when it must come to me, it will come. And as it will come to me inevitably, it is better I do not fear the thing; on the contrary, one must accept what is perfectly natural.” This is a well-known remedy, that is to say, very much in use.

There is another, a little more difficult, but better, I believe. It lies in telling oneself: “This body is not I”, and in trying to find in oneself the part which is truly one’s self, until one has found one’s psychic being. And when one has found one’s psychic being — immediately, you understand — one has the sense of immortality. And one knows that what goes out or what comes in is just a matter of convenience: “I am not going to weep over a pair of shoes I put aside when it is full of holes! When my pair of shoes is worn out I cast it aside, and I do not weep.” Well, the psychic being has taken this body because it needed to use it for its work, but when the time comes to leave the body, that is to say, when one must leave it because it is no longer of any use for some reason or other, one leaves the body and has no fear. It is quite a natural gesture — and it is done without the least regret, that’s all.

And the moment you are in your psychic being, you have that feeling, spontaneously, effortlessly. You soar above the physical life and have the sense of immortality. As for me, I consider this the best remedy. The other is an intellectual, common-sense, rational remedy. This is a deep experience and you can always get it back as soon as you recover the contact with your psychic being. This is a truly interesting phenomenon, for it is automatic. The moment you are in contact with your psychic being, you have the feeling of immortality, of having always been and

being always, eternally. And then what comes and goes — these are life's accidents, they have no importance. Yes, this is the best remedy. The other is like the prisoner finding good reasons for accepting his prison. This one is like a man for whom there's no longer any prison.

Now, a third thing also one must know, but for this one has to be a mighty yogi. For this means knowing that death is not an inevitable thing, it is an accident which has been occurring till now (which seems in any case to have always occurred till now), and that we have put it into our head and our will to conquer this accident and overcome it. But it is so terrible, so formidable a battle against all the laws of Nature, against all collective suggestions, all earthly habits, that unless, as I have said, you are a first-rate warrior whom nothing frightens, it is better not to begin the battle. You must be an absolutely intrepid hero, for at every step, at every second you have to fight a battle against all established things. So it is not a very easy thing. And even as an individual it is a battle against oneself, because (I think I have already told you this once), if you want your physical consciousness to be in a state which admits of physical immortality, you must be free to such an extent from everything which at present represents the physical consciousness that it becomes every second a battle. All feelings, all sensations, all thoughts, all reflexes, all attractions, all repulsions, all existing things, all that forms the fabric of our physical life must be overcome, transformed and freed from all their habits. This is a battle of every second against thousands and millions of enemies. Unless you feel you are a hero, it is better not to try. Because this solution, well... I do not know, but I believe I was asked this question once before: "Has anyone succeeded so far?" To tell you the truth I don't know, for I have not met such a person.... I do not have the feeling that anyone has succeeded till now. But it is possible. Only, he or she who has done it has not declared it, at least, not till now.

The other two solutions are safe and sure and within your reach. Now, there is a small remedy which is very very easy. For it is based on a simple personal question of one's common sense.... You must observe yourself a little and say that when you are afraid it is as though the fear was attracting the thing you are afraid of. If you are afraid of illness, it is as though you were attracting the illness. If you are afraid of an accident, it is as though you were attracting the accident. And if you look into yourself and around

yourself a little, you will find it out, it is a persistent fact. So if you have just a little common sense, you say: "It is stupid to be afraid of anything, for it is precisely as though I were making a sign to that thing to come to me. If I had an enemy who wanted to kill me, I would not go and tell him: 'You know, it's me you want to kill!'" It is something like that. So since fear is bad, we won't have it. And if you say you are unable to prevent it by your reason, well, that shows you have no control over yourselves and must make a little effort to control yourselves. That is all.

14 October 1953

The Domain of Death

I was seriously ill, unconscious for two hours, and I had the impression that I had gone over to the other side, that I was in a different world. When I came back to myself, I had the impression of having made a long journey in a world quite different from the one where I normally lived.

It was a partial exteriorisation; it was not a total exteriorisation which indeed causes death. If one goes out entirely, that is, if there is a complete separation from the body and one is really dead, and then one comes back, that causes such an intense suffering that one cannot forget it. It is said that babies cry when they come into the world because the first contact with air makes them cry, but I think it is something else. The re-entry into the body causes a kind of friction, for what goes out has to be something very material if it is to bring about death, something even more material than the subtle physical, and this friction is extremely painful. Otherwise one may be externally unconscious, but one is not dead for all that. It is only when something extremely material goes out of the body and all ties are broken that there is truly "death". And that is why (I believe we are beginning to discover it) people do not die till six or seven days after their death. That is, they are not "dead" as long as the body remains intact, but only when a part of the body begins to decompose. Hence during this period, someone who has the necessary knowledge, power and capacity may "raise" a person in such a state. I believe this explains most of the cases of "miraculous" resurrection.

24 February 1951

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What becomes of the vital being after death?

It is dissolved. Rarely does it happen otherwise. But if you have had a very strong passion, if you were divided by fixed impulses, the vital being would break up into small pieces. Instead of going off like a vapour or a liquid, it goes off by little bits. Each of these pieces of vital substance is gathered around the central impulse, the central desire, the central passion of that piece, thus creating little entities which don't have a human form but take at times an indefinite form; at times they resemble the body to which the pieces belonged, at other times they take a form expressing the desire they represent. And naturally their sole concern is to satisfy their desire or passion and they search everywhere for the means of self-satisfaction.

10 March 1951

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Generally, “domain of death” is the name given to a certain region of the most material vital into which one is projected at the moment one leaves one's body. The part — how to put it? — of one's life that's usually the most conscious is projected there at the moment of death. Well, that region, that material vital world is very dark, it is full of adverse formations having desires at their centre or even adverse wills, and these are very, very elemental entities which have a very fragmentary life and are like vampires, in the sense that they feed on all that is thrown out from human beings. And so, at that moment, from the shock of death — for very few die without a shock, go out consciously, in full knowledge of the thing, there are not many such — usually it is an accident: a last accident; well, at that shock of death, those entities rush in upon this, upon this vitality that goes out, and feed upon it.

So long as a person is alive, they cannot touch him. For, you have all

had the experience of a nightmare in which, when the situation becomes really very dangerous, suddenly you wake up — you come back into your body, for the body is your protection. In the physical they can do nothing to you but when you are completely outside the physical (and even this link I spoke about serves as a protection to a certain extent when you go out), but if the links are broken and you are entirely without a body, well, unless you take advantage of special circumstances... as for instance when a person is much loved by others who are yet alive; if at that moment these people who love him concentrate their thought and love on the departed one, he finds a refuge therein, and this protects him completely against those entities; but one who passes away without anyone's having a special attachment for him, either because he is surrounded by people he has harmed and who do not love him or by people who are in a terribly unconscious state — he is like a prey delivered to these forces. And that indeed is an experience that's difficult to bear. They cannot touch anything else except what belongs to their own domain, that is, the most material vital — the higher vital escapes them altogether, they can do nothing there. And so, this material vital goes out but the other remains; and this higher vital is attacked by other dangers, simply that. And if it also disappears, the mind remains.

But behind all this is the psychic being which nothing can touch, which is above all possible attacks, and it indeed is free to go where it wants. Usually — unless it has a special opportunity and has reached a state of complete development — it goes to rest in the psychic worlds. There it enters into a kind of beatific contemplation in which it remains, and this is an assimilation of all its experiences, and when it has finished assimilating them and resting, well, it starts preparing to come down again for a new life. That being nothing can touch. But so very few are conscious of their psychic that one can hardly say that it is such and such a person whom one has known, for people as we know them are made of what? — of all their physical experiences, all their vital reactions, all their mental formations — that is, the body, the character, the thought — and with these we have a human being! Well, all that cannot persist after death unless it is organised and centralised around the psychic being and to the extent it is perfectly unified with the psychic. Otherwise all this mixture is dissolved and the psychic being alone remains, at times just as a flame, at times as a

completely conscious being.

This of course is the general law. Now there are bridges, as it were, "protected passages" which have been built in the vital world in order to cross over all these dangers. There are atmospheres which receive people leaving their body, give them shelter, give them protection. There are all kinds of other conditions; what I have told you just now is the normal state of those who die, of ordinary human beings, but as soon as we come to a little higher type of humanity, all these conditions change. The general law remains unless there is a special higher development within the being. There are people with so total a cohesion in their being that they no longer depend upon the body — not at all — whether it be there or not there.

But all this development does not come about just like that, simply by thinking about it from time to time, desiring it still less often and forgetting it most of the time — no, it is not like that that it can happen. These are disciplines, I may say, at least as arduous as the strictest spiritual disciplines.... Essentially it is for this that we are on the earth. Truly speaking, human beings were made for this purpose, to do that work, and it is perhaps because they refuse to do it that there is so much chaos in the world. If they did it truly, things would go much better.

10 March 1954

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If at the time of death the vital being is attacked in the vital world by hostile forces or entities, does it not look for a shelter somewhere?

Yes, it is for this reason that in all countries and in all religions, it is recommended that for a period of at least seven days after someone's death, people should gather and think of him. Because when you think of him with affection (without any inner disorder, without weeping, without any of those distraught passions), if you can be calm, your atmosphere becomes a kind of beacon for him, and when he is attacked by hostile forces (I am speaking of the vital being of course, not the psychic being which goes to take rest), he may feel altogether lost, not know what to do and find himself in great distress; then he sees through affinity the light of

those who are thinking of him with affection and he rushes there. It happens almost constantly that a vital formation, a part of the vital being of the dead person (or at times the whole vital if it is well organised) takes shelter in the aura, the atmosphere of the people or the person who loved him. There are people who always carry with them a part of the vital of the person who is gone. That is the real utility of these so-called ceremonies, which otherwise have no sense.

It is preferable to do this without ceremonies. Ceremonies are, if anything, rather harmful, for a very simple reason: When you are busy with a ceremony, you think more about that than about the person. When you are busy with gestures, movements, with the following of a ritual, you think much more of all that than of the person who is dead. Moreover, people perform these ceremonies most of the time for that very reason, for they are almost always in the habit of trying to forget. The fact is that one of the two principal occupations of man is to try to forget what is painful to him, and the other is to try to seek amusement in order to escape boredom. These are the two principal occupations of humanity, that is, humanity spends half of its time in doing nothing true.

12 March 1951

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Why does one suffer when one commits suicide?

Why does one commit suicide? Because one is a coward.... When one is cowardly one always suffers.

In the next life one suffers again ?

The psychic being comes with a definite purpose to go through a set of experiences and to learn and make progress. Then if you leave before its work is finished it will have to come back to do it again under much more difficult conditions. So all that you have avoided in one life you will find again in another, and more difficult. And even without leaving in this way, if you have difficulties to overcome in life, you have what we usually call a test to pass, you see; well, if you don't pass it or turn your back upon it,

if you go away instead of passing it, you will have to pass it another time and it will be much more difficult than before.

Now people, you know, are extremely ignorant and they think that it is like this: there is life, and then death; life is a bunch of troubles, and then death is an eternal peace. But it is not at all like that. And usually when one goes out of life in an altogether arbitrary way and in an ignorant and obscure passion, one goes straight into a vital world made of all these passions and all this ignorance. So the troubles one wanted to avoid one finds again without even having the protection which the body gives, for — if you have ever had a nightmare, that is, a rash excursion in the vital world, well, your remedy is to wake yourself up, that is to say, to rush back immediately into your body. But when you have destroyed your body you no longer have a body to protect you. So you find yourself in a perpetual nightmare, which is not very pleasant. For, to avoid the nightmare you must be in a psychic consciousness, and when you are in a psychic consciousness you may be quite sure that things won't trouble you. It is indeed the movement of an ignorant darkness and, as I said, a great cowardice in front of the sustained effort to be made.

26 January 1955

Heaven and Hell

After death people enter the vital world, but those who do good go to paradise?

Where is your paradise? Who has taught you that? They have spoken to you of heaven and hell and purgatory? [...]

It is generally what religious priests say to the faithful to encourage them to do good. For it is a notorious fact that life is not more easy for the good than for the wicked; usually it is the contrary: the wicked succeed better than the good! So people who are not very spiritual say to themselves: "Why should I take the trouble of being good? It is better to be wicked and have an easy life." It is very difficult to make them understand that there are many kinds of good and that sometimes it is worth the trouble perhaps to make an effort to be good. So to make this intelligible to

the least intelligent, they are told: "There, it is very simple. If you are quite obedient, quite nice, quite unselfish, if you always do good deeds, and if you believe in the dogmas we teach, well, when you die, God will send you to Paradise. If you have sometimes good will, sometimes bad, if, sometimes you do good, sometimes you don't and if you think very much of yourself and very little of others, then when you die, you will be sent to Purgatory for another experience. And then if you are thoroughly wicked, if you are always doing harm to others, doing all kinds of bad things and you do not care about the good of anyone and particularly if you do not believe in the dogma that we teach you, then you will go straight to Hell and for eternity."

This is one of the prettiest inventions I have ever heard of: they have invented *eternal hell*. That is to say, once you are in hell, it is for eternity.... You understand what that means, for eternity? You will be tortured and burnt (in the hot countries you are burnt, in the cold countries you are frozen), and that for eternity. That is it. So I do not know who taught you those pretty things; but they are simply inventions to make people obey, to keep them under control.

There are teachings which are not like that. There are religions which are not like that. But still one can, in a poetic, picturesque, descriptive manner speak of a paradise; because this paradise means a wonderful place where there is utmost joy and happiness and comfort.... And yet that depends upon the religion to which you belong. For there are heavens where you pass your time singing praises to God, you do nothing else — but in the end that must be somewhat wearisome; however, there you pass your time playing music and singing the praises of God. There are other heavens, on the contrary, where you enjoy all possible pleasures, all that you desired to have during your life, you have in heaven. There are heavens where you are constantly in blissful meditation — but for people who are not keen on meditating, that must be rather tiresome. However, that depends, you know: they have invented all kinds of things so that people may really want to be wise and obey the laws given to them.

And man's imagination is so creative, such a form-maker, that there really are in the world places like these heavens. There are places also like these hells and there are places like these purgatories. Man creates out of nothing the things he imagines. If your consciousness be enlightened, then

you can be pulled out of these places; otherwise you are shut up, imprisoned there by the very belief you had when alive. You will tell me that it is equal to a life, but it is an altogether illusory and extremely limited existence. It is real only for those who think like that. As soon as you think differently, it does not exist for you any longer; you can come out of it. You can pull a person out of these places, and immediately he perceives that he was imprisoned in his own formation.

Man has an extraordinary power of creation. He has created a whole set of godheads in his own image, having the same faults as himself, doing on a bigger scale, with greater power whatever he does. These beings have a relative existence, but still it is an independent existence, just like your thought. When you have a thought, a well-made mental formation which goes out of you, it becomes an independent entity and continues on its way and it does that for which it was made. It continues to act independently of you. That is why you must be on your guard. If you have made such a formation and it has gone out, it has gone out to do its work; and after a time you find out that it was perhaps not a very happy thing to have a thought like that, that this formation was not very beneficial; now that it has gone out, it is very difficult for you to get hold of it again. You must have considerable occult knowledge. It has gone out and is moving on its way.... Supposing in a moment of great anger (I do not say that you do so, but still) when you were in quite a rage against someone, you said: "Ah! couldn't some misfortune befall him?" Your formation has gone on its way. It has gone out and you have no longer any control over it; and it goes and organises some misfortune or other: it is going to do its work. And after some time the misfortune arrives. Happily, you do not usually have sufficient knowledge to tell yourself: "Oh! It is I who am responsible", but that is the truth.

Note that this power of formation has a great advantage, if one knows how to use it. You can make good formations and if you make them properly, they will act in the same way as the others. You can do a lot of good to people just by sitting quietly in your room, perhaps even more good than by undergoing a lot of trouble externally. If you know how to think correctly, with force and intelligence and kindness, if you love someone and wish him well very sincerely, deeply, with all your heart, that does him much good, much more certainly than you think. I have said this

often; for example, to those who are here, who learn that someone in their family is very ill and feel that childish impulse of wanting to rush immediately to the spot to attend to the sick person. I tell you, unless it is an exceptional case and there is nobody to attend on the sick person (and at times even in such a case), if you know how to keep the right attitude and concentrate with affection and good will upon the sick person, if you know how to pray for him and make helpful formations, you will do him much more good than if you go to nurse him, feed him, help him wash himself, indeed all that everybody can do. Anybody can nurse a person. But not everybody can make good formations and send out forces that act for healing.

In any case, to come back to our paradise, it is a childish deformation — ignorant or political — of something which is true in a sense but not quite like that.... I have told you many times and I could not repeat it too often, that one is not built up of one single piece. We have within us many states of being and each state of being has its own life. All this is put together in one single body, so long as you have a body, and acts through that single body; so that gives you the feeling that it is one single person, a single being. But there are many beings and particularly there are concentrations on different levels: just as you have a physical being, you have a vital being, you have a mental being, you have a psychic being, you have many others and all possible intermediaries. But it is a little complicated, you might not understand.

Suppose you were living a life of desire, passion and impulse: you live with your vital being dominant in you; but if you live with spiritual effort, with great good will, the desire to do things well and an unselfishness, a will for progress, you live with the psychic being dominant in you. Then, when you are about to leave your body, all these beings start to disperse. Only if you are a very advanced yogi and have been able to unify your being around the divine centre, do these beings remain bound together. If you have not known how to unify yourself, then at the time of death all that is dispersed: each one returns to its domain. For example, with regard to the vital being, all your different desires will be separated and each one run towards its own realisation, quite independently, for the physical being will no longer be there to hold them together. But if you have united your consciousness with the psychic consciousness, when you die you remain

conscious of your psychic being and the psychic being returns to the psychic world which is a world of bliss and delight and peace and tranquillity and of a growing knowledge. So, if you like to call that a paradise, it is all right; because in fact, to the extent to which you are identified with your psychic being, you remain conscious of it, you are one with it, and it is immortal and goes to its immortal domain to enjoy a perfectly happy life or rest. If you like to call that paradise, call it paradise. If you are good, if you have become conscious of your psychic and live in it, well, when your body dies, you will go with your psychic being to take rest in the psychic world, in a blissful state.

But if you have lived in your vital with all its impulses, each impulse will try to realise itself here and there... For example, a miser who is concentrated upon his money, when he dies, the part of the vital that was interested in his money will be stuck there and will continue to watch over the money so that nobody may take it. People do not see him, but he is there all the same, and is very unhappy if something happens to his precious money. I knew quite well a lady who had a good amount of money and children; she had five children who were all prodigals each one more than the other. The same amount of care she had taken in amassing the money, they seemed to take in squandering it; they spent it at random. So when the poor old lady died, she came to see me and told me: "Ah, now they are going to squander my money!" And she was extremely unhappy. I consoled her a little, but I had a good deal of difficulty in persuading her not to keep watching over her money so that it might not be wasted.

Now, if you live exclusively in your physical consciousness (it is difficult, for you have, after all, thoughts and feelings, but if you live exclusively in your physical), when the physical being disappears, you disappear at the same time, it is finished.... There is a spirit of the form: your form has a spirit which persists for seven days after your death. The doctors have declared that you are dead, but the spirit of your form lives, and not only does it live but it is conscious in most of the cases. But that lasts for seven or eight days and afterwards it is dissolved. I am not speaking of yogis; I am speaking of ordinary people. Yogis have no laws, it is quite different; for them the world is different. I am speaking to you of ordinary men living an ordinary life; for these it is like that.

So the conclusion is that if you want to preserve your consciousness, it

would be better to centralise it on a part of your being that is immortal; otherwise it will vanish like a flame in the air. And it is very fortunate, for if it were otherwise, there would be perhaps gods or types of superior men who would create hells and heavens as they do in their material imagination, where they would imprison you; you would be imprisoned in heaven or in hell according as you pleased or displeased them. It would be a very critical situation and happily it is not like that.

It is said that there is a god of Death. Is it true?

Yes, I call it the spirit of Death. I know it very well. And that is an extraordinary organisation. You do not know to what an extent it is organised.

I believe there are many of these spirits of death, I believe there are hundreds. I have met at least two of them. One I met in France and the other in Japan, and they were very different; which leads one to believe that probably in accordance with the mental culture, the education, the country and beliefs there should be different spirits. But there are spirits of all the manifestations of Nature: there are spirits of fire, spirits of air, of water, of rain, of wind; and there are spirits of death.

Each spirit of death, whatever it may be, has a claim to a certain number of deaths per day. Indeed it is a fantastic organisation, it is a kind of alliance between the vital forces and the forces of Nature. For example, if the spirit of death has decided: "That is the number of people to which I am entitled", let us say four or five or six, or one or two persons, it depends on the day; it has decided that certain persons would die, it goes straight and settles down beside the person about to die. But if you happen to be conscious (not the person), if you see the spirit going to a person and you do not want him to die, then you can, if you possess a certain occult power, tell it: "No, I forbid you to take him." It is a thing that has happened, not once but several times, in Japan and here. It was not the same spirit. That is what makes me say that there must be many.

"I don't want him to die."

"But I have a right to one death!"

"Go and find someone who is ready to die."

So I have seen several cases: sometimes it is just a neighbour who dies suddenly in place of the other, sometimes it is an acquaintance and sometimes it is an enemy. Naturally, there is a relation, good or bad, of neighbourhood (or anything else) which externally looks like chance. But it is the spirit who has taken *its* dead. The spirit has a claim to one death, it will have one death. You can tell it: "I forbid you to take this one", and have the power of sending it away, and the spirit can do nothing but go away; but it does not give up its due and goes elsewhere. There is another death.[...]

Sometimes when people are dying, they know that they are about to die. Why don't they tell the spirit to go away?

Ah! well, that depends upon the people. Two things are necessary. First of all, nothing in your being, no part of your being should want to die. That does not happen often. You have always a defeatist in you somewhere: something that is tired, something that is disgusted, something that has had enough of it, something that is lazy, something that does not want to struggle and says: "Well! Ah! Let it be finished, so much the better." That is sufficient, you are dead.

But it is a fact: if nothing, absolutely nothing in you consents to die, you will pot die. For someone to die, there is always a second, perhaps the hundredth part of a second when he gives his consent. If there is not this second of consent, he does not die.

I knew people who should have really died according to all physical and vital laws; and they refused. They said: "No, I will not die", and they lived. There are others who do not need at all to die, but they are of that kind and say: "Ah! Well! Yes, so much the better, it will be finished", and it is finished. Even that much, even nothing more than that: you need not have a persistent wish, you have only to say: "Well, yes, I have had enough!" and it is finished. So it is truly like that. As you say, you may have death standing by your bedside and tell him: "I do not want you, go away", and it will be obliged to go away. But usually one gives way, for one must struggle, one must be strong, one must be very courageous and enduring, must have a great faith in the necessity of life; like someone, for example, who feels very strongly that he has still something to do and he must absolutely do it. But who is sure he has not within him the least bit of

a defeatist, somewhere, who just yields and says: "It is all right"?... It is here, the necessity of unifying oneself.

Whatever the way we follow, the subject we study, we always arrive at the same result. The most important thing for an individual is to unify himself around his divine centre; in that way he becomes a true individual, master of himself and his destiny. Otherwise, he is a plaything of forces that toss him about like a piece of cork on a river. He goes where he does not want to go, he is made to do things he does not want to do, and finally he loses himself in a hole without having any strength to recover. But if you are consciously organised, unified around the divine centre, ruled and directed by it, you are master of your destiny. That is worth the trouble of attempting.... In any case, I find it preferable to be the master rather than the slave. It is a rather unpleasant sensation to feel yourself pulled by the strings and made to do things whether you want to or not — that is quite irrelevant — but to be compelled to act because something pulls you by the strings, something which you do not even see — that is exasperating.

1 July 1953

CHAPTER 9

Reincarnation or Rebirth

The Process of Rebirth

To understand rightly the problem of what is popularly called reincarnation, you must perceive that there are two factors in it which require consideration. First, there is the line of divine consciousness which seeks to manifest from above and upholds a certain series of formations, peculiar to itself, in the universe which is its field of manifestation. Secondly, there is the psychic consciousness which climbs up from below, the seed of the Divine developing through time till it meets the Force from above and takes the impress of the supramental Truth. This psychic consciousness is the inner being of a man, the material from which his true soul or *jiva* can be fashioned when, in response to its aspiration, the Supramental descends to give it a consistent personality. The exterior being of man is a perishable formation out of the stuff of universal Nature — mental, vital, physical — and is due to the complex interplay of all kinds of forces. The psychic absorbs the essence, as it were, of the experiences of the various formations behind which it stands; but not being in constant contact with them it does not retain the memory of the lives in their totality to which it supplies the background. Hence by merely contacting the psychic one cannot have the recollection of all those past lives: what commonly goes by the name of such recollection is, mostly, either deliberate imposture or a fabrication out of a few spasmodic hints received from within. Many people claim to remember their animal lives as well: they say that they were such and such a monkey living in this or that part of the globe. But if anything is certain, it is that the monkey has no contact whatever with the psychic consciousness and so transmits not one jot of his experiences to it. The impressions of his exterior monkey-nature vanish with the crumbling of his animal body: to pretend to a knowledge of them is to betray the grossest ignorance of the actual facts of the problem under consideration. Even with regard to human lives, it is only when the psychic has come to

the fore that it carries and preserves definite memories, but certainly not of all the details of life unless it is constantly in front and one with the exterior being. For, as a rule, the physical mind and the physical vital dissolve with the death of the organism: they disintegrate and return to the universal Nature and nothing remains of their experiences. Not until they have become united with the psychic, so that there are not two halves but a single consciousness, the whole nature unified round the central Divine Will and this centralised being is connected up with the divine line of consciousness which is above — not until this happens can one receive the knowledge belonging to that consciousness and become aware of the entire series of forms and lives which were upheld by it as its own successive means of gradual self-expression. Before this is done, it is meaningless to speak of *one's* past births and their various incidents. This precious *oneself* is just the present impermanent exterior nature which has absolutely nothing to do with the several other formations behind which, as behind the present one, the true being stands. Only the supramental consciousness holds these births as if strung on one single thread and that alone can give the real knowledge of them all.

1930-1931

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This is what happens. Let us take a divine spark which, through attraction, through affinity and selection, gathers around it a beginning of psychic consciousness (this work is already very perceptible in animals — don't think you are exceptional beings, that you alone have a psychic being and the rest of creation hasn't. It begins in the mineral, it is a little more developed in the plant, and in the animal there is a first glimmer of the psychic presence). Then there comes a moment when this psychic being is sufficiently developed to have an independent consciousness and a personal will. And then after innumerable lives more or less individualised, it becomes conscious of itself, of its movements and of the environment it has chosen for its growth. Arriving at a certain state of perception, it decides — generally at the last minute of the life it has just finished upon earth — the conditions in which its next life will be passed.

Here I must tell you a very important thing: the psychic being can progress and form itself only in the physical life and upon earth. As soon as it leaves a body, it enters into a rest which lasts for a more or less long time according to its own choice and its degree of development — a rest for assimilation, for a passive progress so to say, a rest for passive growth which will allow this same psychic being to pass on to new experiences and make a more active progress. But after having finished one life (which usually ends only when it has done what it wanted to do), it will have chosen the environment where it will be born, the approximate place where it will be born, the conditions and the kind of life in which it will be born, and a very precise programme of the experiences through which it will have to pass to be able to make the progress it wants to make.

I am going to give you quite a concrete example. Let us take a psychic being that has decided, for some reason or other, to enter the body of a being destined to become king, because there is a whole series of experiences it can have only under those conditions. After having passed through these experiences of a king, it finds that there is a whole domain in which it cannot make a progress due to these very conditions of life where it is. So when it has finished its term upon earth and decides to go away, it decides that in its next life it will take birth in an ordinary environment and in ordinary conditions, neither high nor low, but such that the body which it will take up will be free to do what it likes. For I do not tell you anything new when I say that the life of a king is the life of a slave; a king is obliged to submit to a whole protocol and to all kinds of ceremonies to keep his prestige (it is perhaps very pleasant for vain people, but for a psychic being it is not pleasant, for this deprives it of the possibility of a large number of experiences).

So having taken this decision, it carries in itself all the memories which a royal life can give it and it takes rest for the period it considers necessary (here, I must say that I am speaking of a psychic being exclusively occupied with itself, not one consecrated to a work, because in that case it is the work which decides the future lives and their conditions; I am speaking of a psychic being at work completing its development). Hence it decides that at a certain moment it will take a body. Having already had a number of experiences, it knows that in a certain country, a certain part of the consciousness has developed; in another, another part, and so on; so it

chooses the place which offers it easy possibilities of development: the country, the conditions of living, the approximate nature of the parents, and also the condition of the body itself, its physical structure and the qualities it needs for its experiences. It takes rest, then at the required moment, wakes up and projects its consciousness upon earth centralising it in the chosen domain and the chosen conditions — or almost so; there is a small margin you know, for in the psychic consciousness one is too far away from the material physical consciousness to be able to see with a clear vision; it is an approximation. It does not make a mistake about the country or the environment and it sees quite clearly the inner vibrations of the people chosen, but there may happen to be a slight indecision. But if, just at this moment, there is a couple upon earth or rather a woman who has a psychic aspiration herself and, for some reason or other, without knowing why or how, would like to have an exceptional child, answering certain exceptional conditions; if at this moment there is this aspiration upon earth, it creates a vibration, a psychic light which the psychic being sees immediately and, without hesitation it rushes towards it. Then, from that moment (which is the moment of conception), it watches over the formation of the child, so that this formation may be as favourable as possible to the plan it has; consequently its influence is there over the child even before it appears in the physical world.

If all goes well, if there is no accident (accidents can always happen), if all goes well at the moment the child is about to be born, the psychic force (perhaps not in its totality, but a part of the psychic consciousness) rushes into the being and from its very first cry gives it a push towards the experiences it wants the child to acquire. The result is that even if the parents are not conscious, even if the child in its external consciousness is not quite conscious (a little child does not have the necessary brain for that, it forms slowly, little by little), in spite of that, it will be possible for the psychic influence to direct all the events, all the circumstances of the life of this child till the moment it becomes capable of coming into conscious contact with its psychic being (physically it is generally between the age of four and seven, sometimes sooner, sometimes almost immediately, but in such a case we deal with children who are not "children", who have "supernatural" qualities, as they say — they are not "supernatural", but simply the expression of the presence of the psychic being) But there are

people who have not had the chance or rather the good fortune if one may call it that, of meeting someone, physically, who could instruct them. And yet they have the feeling that every step of their existence, every circumstance of their life is arranged by some one conscious, so that they may make the maximum progress. When they need a certain circumstance, it comes; when they need to meet certain people, they come; when they need to read certain books, they find them within their reach. Everything is arranged like that, as if someone was watching over them so that their life may have the maximum possibilities of development. These people may very well say: "But what is a psychic being?", for no one has ever used these words in speaking to them or they have not found anybody who could explain to them all that; but for them often just one meeting is sufficient, just one look, in order to wake up; one word suffices to make them remember: "But I knew all that!"

This is exactly what happens to a psychic being which has reached the last stage of its development. After that, it will no longer be bound by the necessity of coming upon earth, it will have completed its development and will be able to choose freely either to consecrate itself to the divine Work or go elsewhere, that is, in the higher worlds. But generally, having come to this stage, it remembers all that has happened to it and understands the great necessity of coming to the help of those who are yet struggling in the midst of difficulties. These psychic beings give their whole existence to the divine Work — this is not absolute, inevitable, they choose freely, but ninety times out of a hundred this is what they do.

But in ordinary lives — and by that I mean the life of a certain *elite* of sufficiently well-developed people — the contact between the external being and the psychic is quite intermittent; it is the result of certain experiences or certain inner needs. At that moment the psychic being is "in front", as Sri Aurobindo says, that is, it comes to the surface of the consciousness, it is in direct contact with material circumstances, with forms and words and sounds, etc., for a very short time; so it records all that like a photograph or a cinema, but it is just a minute, a few moments in a lifetime. These moments may repeat themselves several times, but they do not last; and it is this the psychic being remembers; and when you have real psychic memories, sincere, spontaneous, not fabricated by the mind or the vital, that is, purely psychic, exact, your memory is

intermittent. And it is often very difficult to locate your past lives, to say: "I was this or that." It is only when the psychic experience has taken place at a very important moment of your life and a whole set of circumstances gives you, so to say, the key to the story (dresses, spoken words, customs or an environment giving you the key) that you can say: "Oh! that life, I have lived it." But if someone comes and narrates to you all his previous lives from the monkey onwards, with a mass of details, you may be sure that he is a humbug!

24 February 1951

Memory of Past Lives

When you have the psychic memory you remember a set of circumstances at one *moment* of life, particularly of the inner emotion, of the consciousness that acted at that moment. And then that passes into the consciousness along with some associations, with all that was around you, perhaps a word spoken, a phrase heard; but what was most important was the state of the soul in which you were: for that indeed remains very clearly engraved. These are the landmarks of the psychic life, things that have left a deep impression and taken part in its formation. Hence when you find your psychic being in you again constantly, continuously, clearly, it is things like these that you remember. There may be quite a few, but they are flashes in one's life, and one cannot say: "I was such and such a person, I did such and such a thing, I was called by this name and I was doing this or that." Or otherwise it would mean that at that moment (a rare one) there was a combination of circumstances good enough for one to be able to fix the date or the place, the country and the age. That can happen.

Naturally the psychic takes a greater and greater part, and the larger does the set of memories grow. And then one can retrace one's life, but not in all its details. One can say that at certain moments, "it was like this," or "I was that." Certain moments, yes, very important moments of a life.... What's necessary is a being wholly identified with the psychic, one that has organised its whole existence around it, unified its whole being — all the tiniest parts, all the elements, all the movements of the being around the psychic centre — that has made of itself a single being, solely turned to

the Divine; then, if the body falls off, that remains. It is only a completely formed conscious being that can remember exactly in another life all that has happened before. It can even pass consciously from one life to another without losing anything of its consciousness. How many people upon earth have reached that state?... Not many, I believe. And usually they are not in the least inclined to narrate their adventures.

6 May 1953

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In rebirth it is not the external being, that which is formed by parents, environment and circumstances — the mental, the vital and the physical — that is born again: it is only the psychic being that passes from body to body. Logically, then, neither the mental nor the vital being can remember past lives or recognise itself in the character or mode of life of this or that person. The psychic being alone can remember; and it is by becoming conscious of our psychic being that we can have at the same time exact impressions about our past lives.

Besides, it is much more important for us to fix our attention upon what we want to become than upon what we have been.

2 April 1935

Rebirth and Psychic Development

I have already told you many times that, for the destiny which follows after death, the last state of consciousness is usually the most important. That is, if at the moment of death one has the intense aspiration to return to continue his work, then the conditions are arranged for it to be done. But, you see, there are all the possibilities for what happens after death. There are people who return in the psychic. You see, I have told you that the outer being is very rarely preserved; so we speak only of the psychic consciousness which, indeed, always persists. And then there are people for whom the psychic returns to the psychic domain to assimilate the experience they have had and to prepare their future life. This may take centuries, it depends on the people.

The more evolved the psychic is, the nearer it is to its complete maturity, the greater the time between the births. There are beings who reincarnate only after a thousand years, two thousand years.

The closer one is to the beginning of the formation, the closer are the reincarnations; and sometimes even, altogether at the lower level, when man is quite near the animal, it goes like this (*gesture*), that is, it is not unusual for people to reincarnate in the children of their children, like that, something like that, or just in the next generation. But this is always on a very primitive level of evolution, and the psychic being is not very conscious, it is in the state of formation. And as it becomes more developed, the reincarnations, as I said, are at a greater distance from one another. When the psychic being is fully developed, when it no longer needs to return to earth for its development, when it is absolutely free, it has the choice between no longer coming back to earth if it finds that its work lies elsewhere or if it prefers to remain in the purely psychic consciousness, without reincarnating; or else it can come when it wants, as it wants, where it wants, perfectly consciously. And there are those who have united with forces of a universal order and with entities of the Overmind or elsewhere, who remain all the time in the earth atmosphere and take on bodies successively for the work. This means that the moment the psychic being is completely formed and absolutely free — when it is completely formed it becomes absolutely free — it can do anything it likes, it depends on what it chooses; therefore one can't say, "It will be like this, it will be like that"; it does exactly what it wants and it can even announce (that has happened), at the moment of the death of the body, what its next reincarnation will be and what it will do, and already choose what it is going to do. But before this state, which is not very frequent — it depends absolutely on the degree of development of the psychic and the hope formulated by the integral consciousness of the being — there is still the mental, vital and physical consciousness, united with the psychic consciousness; so at that moment, the moment of death, the moment of leaving the body, it formulates a hope or an aspiration or a will, and usually this decides the future life.

So one can't ask a question saying, "What happens and what should be done?" All possible things happen, and everything can be done.

Everyone has one thing in mind: he asks a general question but in his

mind it is an altogether particular question; but this — these things one does not discuss in public.

16 March 1955

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Mother, since in each new life the mind and vital as well as the body are new, how can the experiences of past lives be useful for them? Do we have to go through all the experiences once again?

That depends on people!

It is not the mind and vital which develop and progress from life to life — except in altogether exceptional cases and at a very advanced stage of evolution — it is the psychic. So, this is what happens: the psychic has alternate periods of activity and rest; it has a life of progress resulting from experiences of the physical life, of active life in a physical body, with all the experiences of the body, the vital and the mind; then, normally, the psychic goes into a kind of rest for assimilation where the result of the progress accomplished during its active existence is worked out, and when this assimilation is finished, when it has absorbed the progress it had prepared in its active life on earth, it comes down again in a new body bringing with it the result of all its progress and, at an advanced stage, it even chooses the environment and the kind of body and the kind of life in which it will live to complete its experience concerning one point or another. In some very advanced cases the psychic can, before leaving the body, decide what kind of life it will have in its next incarnation.

When it has become an almost completely formed and already very conscious being, it presides over the formation of the new body, and usually through an inner influence it chooses the elements and the substance which will form its body in such a way that the body is adapted to the needs of its new experience. But this is at a rather advanced stage. And later, when it is fully formed and returns to earth with the idea of service, of collective help and participation in the divine Work, then it is able to bring to the body in formation certain elements of the mind and vital from previous lives which, having been organised and impregnated

with psychic forces in previous lives, could be preserved and, consequently, can participate in the general progress. But this is at a very, very advanced stage.

When the psychic is fully developed and very conscious, when it becomes a conscious instrument of the divine Will, it organises the vital and the mind in such a way that they too participate in the general harmony and can be preserved.

A high degree of development allows at least some parts of the mental and vital beings to be preserved in spite of the dissolution of the body. If, for instance, some parts — mental or vital — of the human activity have been particularly developed, these elements of the mind and vital are maintained even “in their form” — in the form of the activity which has been fully organised — as, for example, in highly intellectual people who have particularly developed their brains, the mental part of their being keeps this structure and is preserved in the form of an organised brain which has its own life and can be kept unchanged until a future life so as to participate in it with all its gains.

In artists, as for instance in certain musicians who have used their hands in a particularly conscious way, the vital and mental substance is preserved in the form of hands, and these hands remain fully conscious, they can even use the body of living people if there is a special affinity — and so on.

Otherwise, in ordinary people in whom the psychic form is not fully developed and organised, when the psychic leaves the body, the mental and vital forms may persist for a certain time if the death has been particularly peaceful and concentrated, but if a man dies suddenly and in a state of passion, with numerous attachments, well, the different parts of the being are dispersed and live for a shorter or longer time their own life in their own domain, then disappear.

The centre of organisation and transformation is always the presence of the psychic in the body. Therefore, it is a very big mistake to believe that the progress continues or even, as some believe, that it is more complete and rapid in the periods of transition between two physical lives; in general, there is no progress at all, for the psychic enters into a state of rest and the other parts, after a more or less ephemeral life in their own domain,

are dissolved.

Earthly life is the place for progress. It is here, on earth, that progress is possible, during the period of earthly existence. And it is the psychic which carries the progress over from one life to another, by organising its own evolution and development itself.

12 February 1958

Emanations of Evolved Beings

After death, does the inner being continue to progress?

That depends altogether upon the person. For everyone it is different. There are people — for example, writers, musicians, artists — people who have lived on intellectual heights, who feel that they still have something further to do, that they have not finished what they had undertaken to do, have not reached the goal they had fixed for themselves, so they are ready to remain in the earth atmosphere as long as they can, with as much cohesiveness as possible and they try to manifest themselves and continue their progress in other human bodies. I have seen many such cases, I have seen the very interesting case of a musician who was a pianist (a pianist of great worth), who had hands which were a marvel of skill, exactness, precision, force, rapidity of movement, indeed, it was absolutely remarkable. This man died relatively young with the feeling that if he had continued to live he would have continued to progress in his expression of music. And such was the intensity of his aspiration that his subtle hands maintained their form without being dissolved, and each time he met anyone a little receptive and passive and a good musician, his hands would enter the hands of those who were playing — the person who was playing at the time could play well but in an ordinary way; but at that moment he became not merely a virtuoso but a wonderful artist during the time he played. It was the hands of the other that were making use of him. This is a phenomenon I know. I have seen the same thing in the case of a painter: it was also a matter of hands. The same thing with regard to some writers, and here it was the brain that kept quite a precise form and entered the brain of someone who was sufficiently receptive and suddenly made him write extraordinary things, infinitely more beautiful than anything he had

written before.[...]

Do these beings who want to manifest themselves keep the same desire when they are born once again ?

No, it is not the same thing. It is not the whole being, it is the special faculty which remains in the earth atmosphere, does not leave it and go away, which remains in the earth atmosphere in order to continue manifesting itself. But the psychic being can very well return to the psychic world and it is the psychic being which takes a body again. I explained to you the other day that before leaving the physical body, the psychic being decides most often what its next rebirth will be, the environment in which it will take birth and what its occupation will be, because it needs a certain field for its experience. So it may happen that very big writers and very big musicians take birth another time in somebody quite imbecile. And you say: "What! it is not possible!" Naturally it does not always happen like that, but it may. There was a case in which the contrary happened: it was a violin player, the most wonderful of the century.[...] What was his name?... Ysaye! he was a Belgian and a violinist, truly the most wonderful violinist of the epoch. Well, that man had most certainly in him a reincarnation of Beethoven. Not perhaps a reincarnation of his entire psychic being, but in any case, that of his musical capacity. He had the appearance, the head of Beethoven, I saw him, I heard him (I did not know him, I knew nothing, I was at a concert in Paris and they were giving the concerto in D major), I saw him coming on the stage to play and I said: "Strange! How much this man looks like Beethoven, he is the very portrait of Beethoven!" Then it just started with a stroke of the bow, three, four notes.... Everything changed, the atmosphere was changed. All became absolutely wonderful. Three notes started off with such power, such grandeur, so wonderful it was, nothing stirred, all waited. And he played that from one end to the other in an absolutely unique manner with an understanding I have not met with in any other executant. And then I saw that the musical genius of Beethoven was in him.... But perhaps Beethoven's psychic being had taken body in a shoemaker or anybody else, one does not know! It wanted to have another kind of experience.

For what I saw in this man was a formation belonging to an earthly

plane, it was mental-vital; and as Beethoven had disciplined his whole mental, vital and physical being around his musical capacity, that had remained in form, it was a living thing, and had incarnated in that man, just as it was, but not necessarily Beethoven's psychic being. In his first life it was the psychic being of Beethoven that had shaped all those other beings, the psychic being that had disciplined them around musical creation; but after his death, it cannot at all be said whether the psychic being remained there; it must have returned to the psychic world as is the usual rule. That however had been formed, had its own life, independent and existing in itself. It was formed for a certain manifestation and it remained to manifest itself. And as soon as it found a fit instrument, it entered there to manifest itself.

Can a psychic being take birth in two bodies?

It is not quite so simple as that.... The psychic being is the result of evolution, that is to say, evolution of the divine Consciousness which spread into Matter and slowly lifted up Matter, made it develop to return to the Divine. The psychic being was formed by this divine centre progressively through all the births. There comes a time when it reaches a kind of perfection, perfection in its growth and formation. Then, most often, as it has an aspiration for realisation, for a greater perfection to manifest yet better the Divine, it generally draws towards itself a being from the involution, that is to say, one of those entities belonging to what Sri Aurobindo calls Overmind, who comes then to incarnate in this psychic being. It can be one of those entities men generally call gods, some kind of deities. And when this fusion occurs the psychic being naturally is magnified and shares in the nature of the being incarnated in it. And then it has the power to produce emanations. These beings have the power to produce emanations, that is to say, they project out of themselves a part of themselves which becomes independent and goes into others to incarnate itself. So there can be not only two, but three, four or five emanations. That depend upon cases, it can happen thus. That is to say, one can have the same origin, psycho-divine, we might say. And generally when there are a number of emanations, the different persons feel themselves to be that being with reason, for they carry in themselves something of that godhead: it is as though a part of the godhead has flung itself out of itself and

become independent in another being. It is not a redoubling but a kind of self-projection. (*To the child who put the question:*) Redoubling gives the idea that what has been redoubled has lost a part of its faculty: if you cut your body in two, only half of it will remain for you; but if you have the power to emanate something out of you, you remain quite whole, as you are, and at the same time, there is another Tara who is there in another person.... You understand? It is like that.

16 September 1953

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Can it happen that the psychic being does not fall at the place where it wanted to take birth?

If a psychic being sees from its psychic world a light on the earth, it may rush down there without knowing exactly where it is. Everything is possible. But if the psychic being is very conscious, sufficiently conscious, it will seek the light of aspiration in a precise place, because of the culture, the education it will find there. This happens much more frequently than one believes, especially in somewhat educated circles. An intelligent woman with some artistic or philosophical culture, a beginning of conscious individuality, may aspire that the child she is going to have may be the best possible according to her idea or according to what she has read. Hence it is not so very complicated to find a place. The number of psychic beings born constantly being considerable, if each time exceptional conditions have to be found it would be difficult. Surely, there are instances where the psychic being seems to have fallen headlong and been stunned, but this is bad luck; in such a case it generally requires a long time to wake up. It is bad luck in the sense that it probably lacked a certain power of discrimination, or perhaps it had to face certain forces which thwarted its decision and won a partial victory over it. There are a thousand possibilities, you know. One cannot say that everything goes according to the same plan — every psychic being is different.

1 March 1951

The Incarnation of Evolved Souls

I may say that I have been present at innumerable incarnations of evolved souls in beings either preparing to be born or already born. As I said, the cases are quite different; it depends more on psychological conditions than on material ones, but it also depends on material conditions. It depends on the state of development of the soul which wants to reincarnate — we take the word “soul” here in the sense of the psychic being, what we call the psychic being — it depends on its state of development, on the milieu in which it is going to incarnate, on the mission it has to fulfil — that makes many different conditions.... It depends very largely on the state of consciousness of the parents. For it goes without saying that there is a stupendous difference between conceiving a child deliberately, with a conscious aspiration, a call to the invisible world and a spiritual ardour, and conceiving a child by accident and without intending to have it, and sometimes even without wanting it at all. I don't say that in the latter case there cannot also be an incarnation, but it usually takes place later, not at the conception.

For the formation of the child it makes a great difference.

If the incarnation takes place at the conception, the whole formation of the child to be born is directed and governed by the consciousness which is going to incarnate: the choice of the elements, the attraction of the substance — a choice of the forces and even the substance of the matter which is assimilated. There is already a selection. And this naturally creates altogether special conditions for the formation of the body, which may already be fairly developed, evolved, harmonised before its birth. I must say that this is quite, quite exceptional; but still it does happen.

More frequently there are cases in which, just at the moment of its birth, that is to say, of its first gesture of independence, when the child begins to develop its lungs by crying as much as it can, at that moment, very often, this sort of call from life makes the descent easier and more effective.

Sometimes days and at times months pass, and the preparation is slow and the entry takes place very gradually, in quite a subtle and almost imperceptible way.

Sometimes it comes much later, when the child itself becomes a little conscious and feels a very subtle but very real relation with something from above, far above, which is like an influence pressing upon it; and then it can begin to feel the need of being in contact with this something which it does not know, does not understand, but which it can only feel; and this aspiration draws the psychic and makes it descend into the child.

I am giving you here a few fairly common instances; there are many others; this may happen in innumerable different ways. What I have described to you are the most frequent cases I have seen.

So, the soul which wants to incarnate stays at times in a domain of the higher mind, quite close to the earth, having chosen its future home; or else it can descend further, into the vital, and from there have a more direct action; or again it can enter the subtle physical and very closely govern the development of its future body.

Now the other question — the one about departure.

That too depends on the degree of development, the conditions of death — and above all on the unification of the being and its attitude at the time of leaving the body. The question here was about fully developed beings, that is, fully developed psychic beings — and I don't know if it means a psychic being which has profited by its presence in a physical body to do yoga, for then the conditions are quite different. But in a more general way, I have often told you that, with regard to the external envelope¹¹ of the being, everything depends on its attitude at the moment of death, and that attitude necessarily depends on its inner development and its unification.

If we take the best instance, of someone who has unified his being completely around the divine Presence within him, who is now only *one* will, *one* consciousness, this person will have grouped around his central psychic being a fully developed and organised mind, an absolutely surrendered and collaborating vital and an obedient, docile and supple physical being. This physical being, as it is fully (level oped, will have a subtle body — what Sri Aurobindo calls the “true physical” — which will infinitely surpass the limits of its body and have enough suppleness, plasticity, balance to be able to adhere to the inner parts of the being and

¹¹ This envelope consists of the mental, vital and physical sheaths.

follow the movement of the soul in its... I don't want to say in its ascent, but in its peregrinations outside the body. What the soul will do, where it will go — it all depends on what it has decided before leaving the body. And this capacity to keep around itself the being that has been fully organised and unified in its physical life, will allow it to really choose what it wants to do. And this also represents a very different field of possibilities, from passing consciously from one body into another, directly — there are instances in which one of these fully conscious and fully developed beings has slowly prepared another being capable of receiving and assimilating it, and in order not to stop its material work when it leaves one body, it goes and joins another psychic being, merges with it, combines with it in another physical body; that is an extreme case, extremely rare also, but one which forms part of an altogether traditional occult knowledge — to the instance at the other extreme, where the soul having finished its bodily experience, wants to assimilate it in repose and prepare for another physical existence later, sometimes much later. And so this is what happens, among many other possibilities: it leaves in each domain — in the subtle physical, in the vital, in the mental domain — the corresponding beings; it leaves them with a sort of link between them, but each one keeps its independent existence, and it itself goes into the zone, the reality, the world of the psychic proper, and enters into a blissful repose for assimilation, until it has assimilated [...] all its good deeds, digested all its good deeds, and is ready to begin a new experience. And then, if its work has been well done and the parts or sheaths of its being which it has left in their different domains have acted as they should there, when it descends again, it will put on one after another all these parts which lived with it in a former life, and with this wealth of knowledge and experience it will prepare to enter a new body.... This may be after hundreds or thousands of years, for in those domains all that is organised is no longer necessarily subject to the decomposition which here we call "death". As soon as a vital being is fully harmonised, it becomes immortal. What dissolves it and breaks it up are all the disorders within it and all the tendencies towards destruction and decomposition; but if it is fully harmonised and organised and, so to say, divinised, it becomes immortal. It is the same thing for the mind. And even in the subtle physical, beings who are fully developed and have been impregnated with spiritual forces do not necessarily dissolve after death. They may continue to act or may

take a beneficial rest in certain elements of Nature like water — generally it is in some liquid, in water or the sap of trees — or it may be, as described here (*laughing*), in the clouds. But they may also remain active and continue to act on the more material elements of physical Nature.

I have given you here a certain number of examples; I tell you, I could talk to you for hours and there would always be new examples to give! But this covers the subject broadly and opens the door to imagination.

24 October 1956

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I must here remark in passing that there is a common misconception about rebirth. People believe that it is they who are reincarnated, yet this is a palpable error, though it is true that parts of their being are amalgamated with others and so act through new bodies. Their whole being is not reborn, because of the simple fact that what they evidently mean by their "self" is not a real individualised entity but their exterior personality, the personality composed of the outward name and form. Hence it is wrong to say that A is reborn as B: A is a personality organically distinct from B and cannot be said to have reincarnated as B. You would be right only if you said that the same line of consciousness uses both A and B as the instruments of its manifestation. For, what does remain constant is the psychic being which is not the outward personality at all, but something deep within, something which is not the exterior name and form.

1930-1931

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Do many remember that they have passed over and are back again ?

When you reach a certain state of consciousness, you remember. It is not so difficult to touch this state partially for a short time; in deep meditation, in a dream or a vision one may have the feeling or the impression that he has lived this life before, had this realisation, known these truths. But this is not a full realisation; to come to that, one must have attained to a

permanent consciousness within us which is everlasting and holds together all our existences in past or present or future time.

28 April 1929

Families of Souls

What does “choose one’s family” mean?

You have come into the world in a certain milieu, among certain people. When you are quite young, but for a few rare exceptions, what surrounds you seems altogether natural to you, because you are born in its midst and are quite used to it. But when, a little later, a spiritual aspiration wakes up in you, you may quite possibly feel yourself completely ill at ease in the environment where you have lived, if, for instance, the people who have brought you up don’t have the same aspiration or if their ideas are the very opposite of what is developing in you. Instead of saying, “You see, I belong to this family, what shall I do? I have a mother, a father, brothers, sisters... ”, you can set out in search (I don’t mean necessarily travel), set out in search of spirits who have an affinity with yours, people who have a similar aspiration and, if you have the sincere aspiration to find those who like you are in quest of something, you will always have the occasion to meet them in one way or another, through quite unexpected circumstances; and when you have found one or more people who are in exactly the same state of mind and have the same aspiration, quite naturally there will be created bonds of closeness, intimacy, friendship and, among you, you will form a kind of brotherhood, that is to say, a true family. You are together because you are close to one another, you are together because you have the same aspiration, you are together because you want to create the same goal in life; you understand one another when you speak, you have no need to discuss anything which is said and you live in a kind of inner harmony. This is the true family, this is the family of aspiration, the family of spiritual inclinations.

29 March 1951

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[...]when those born scattered over the world at great distances from one another are driven by circumstances or by an impulsion to come and gather here [in the Ashram in Pondicherry], it is almost always because they have met in one life or another (not all in the same life) and because their psychic being has felt that they belonged to the same family; so they have taken an inner vow to continue to act together and collaborate. That is why even though they are born far from one another, there is something which compels them to come together; it is the psychic being, the psychic consciousness that is behind. And only to the extent the psychic consciousness is strong enough to order and organise the circumstances or the life, that is, strong enough not to allow itself to be opposed by outside forces, outside life movements, can people meet.

It is profoundly true in reality; there are large “families of beings” who work for the same cause, who have gathered in more or less large numbers and who come in groups as it were. It is as though at certain times there were awakenings in the psychic world, as though lots of little sleeping children were being called to wake up: “It is time, quick, quick, go down!” And they hurry down. And sometimes they do not drop at the same place, they are dispersed, yet there is something within which troubles them, pushes them; for one reason or another they are drawn close and that brings them together. But it is something deep in the being, something that is not at all on the surface; otherwise, even if people met they would not perhaps become aware of the bond. People meet and recognise each other only to the extent they become conscious of their psychic being, obey their psychic being, are guided by it; otherwise there is all that comes in to oppose it, all that veils, all that stupefies, all those obstacles to prevent you from finding yourself in your depths and being able to collaborate truly in the work. You are tossed about by the forces of Nature.

There is only one solution, to find your psychic being and once it is found to cling to it desperately, to let it guide you step by step whatever be the obstacle. That is the only solution.

18 March 1953

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Why are great artists born at the same time in the same country?

That depends on the person to whom you put the question. The explanation will be different accordingly. From the point of view of evolution, I think Sri Aurobindo has explained this very clearly in *The Human Cycle*. Evolution, that is to say, culture and civilisation, describes a more or less regular spiral movement around the earth, and the results of one civilisation, it may be said, slowly go to form another; then, when the total development is harmonious, this creates simultaneously the field of action and the actors, in the sense that at the time of the great artistic periods all the conditions were favourable to the development of art, and naturally, the fact that all the circumstances were favourable, attracted the men who could use them. There have been concrete movements like that, great ages like that of the Italian Renaissance or the similar period in France, almost at the same time, when artists from all countries were gathered at the same place because the conditions were favourable to the development of their art. This is one of the reasons — a so-to-say external reason — for the formation of civilisations.

There is another, this is that from an occult point of view it is almost always the same forces and same beings which incarnate during all the ages of artistic beauty upon earth and that, according to occultists, there are cycles of rebirth: beings return, group themselves through affinity at the time of birth; so it happens that regularly, almost all come together for a similar action. Some occultists have studied this question and given very precise numbers based upon the actual facts of the development of the earth: they have said that once in a hundred years, once in a thousand years, once in five thousand years, etc., certain cycles were repeated; that certain great civilisations appeared every five thousand years, and that it was (according to their special knowledge) the same people who came back. This is not quite exact, that is why I am not going into details, but in a sense this is true: it is the same forces which are at work. It is the same forces and they are grouped according to their affinities and, for a reason which may be quite material or for a mental or cyclic reason, they reunite at a certain place, and in this place there is a new civilisation or a special progress in a civilisation or a kind of effervescence, blossoming, flowering of beauty, as in the great ages in Greece, Egypt, India, Italy, Spain.... Everywhere, in all the countries of the world, there have been more or less

beautiful periods.

If you put the question to astrologers, they will explain this to you by the position of the stars; they will say that certain positions of the stars have a certain effect on the earth. But, as I have told you, all these things are “languages”, a way of expression, of making oneself understood; the truth is deeper, it is more complex, more complete.

12 April 1951

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How is it that in dreams one meets and knows people whom one meets and knows afterwards in the outer world?

It is because of the affinities that draw certain people together, affinities in the mental or the vital world. People often meet in these planes before they meet upon earth. They may join there, speak to each other and have all the relations you can have upon earth. Some know of these relationships, some do not know. Some, as are indeed most, are unconscious of the inner being and the inner intercourse, and yet it will happen that, when they meet the new face in the outer world, they find it somehow very familiar, quite well-known.

21 April 1929

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How is it that we have met?

We have all met in previous lives. Otherwise we would not have come together in this life. We are of one family and have worked through ages for the victory of the Divine and its manifestation upon earth.

7 April 1929

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Sweet Mother, why don't we profit as much as we should by our presence here in the Ashram?

Ah! That is very simple; it is because it is too easy!... When you have to go all round the world to find a teacher, when you have to give up everything to obtain only the first words of a teaching, then this teaching, this spiritual help becomes something very precious, like everything that is difficult to obtain, and you make a great effort to deserve it.

Most of you came here when you were very small, at an age when there can be no question of the spiritual life or spiritual teaching — it would be altogether premature. You have indeed lived in this atmosphere but without even being aware of it; you are accustomed to seeing me, hearing me; I speak to you as one does to all children, I have even played with you as one plays with children; you only have to come and sit here and you hear me speak, you only have to ask me a question and I answer you, I have never refused to say anything to anybody — it is so easy. It is enough to... live — to sleep, to eat, to do exercises and study at school. You live here as you would live anywhere else. And so, you are used to it.

If I had made strict rules, if I had said, "I shall not tell you anything until you have truly made an effort to know it", then perhaps you might have made some effort, but that's not in keeping with my idea. I believe more in the power of the atmosphere and of example than of a rigorous teaching. I count more on something awakening in the being through contagion rather than by a methodical, disciplined effort.

Perhaps, after all, something is being prepared and one day it will spring up to the surface.

That is what I hope for.

One day you will tell yourself, "Just think! I have been here so long, I could have learnt so much, realised so much and I never even thought of it! Only like that, now and then." And then, on that day... well, on that day, just imagine, you are going to wake up all of a sudden to something you never noticed but which is deep within you and *thirsts* for the truth, thirsts for transformation and is ready to make the effort required to realise it. On that day you will go very fast, you will advance with giant strides.... Perhaps, as I said [in July 1953], that day has come now after five years? I

said, “I give you five years....” Now the five years have passed, so perhaps the day has come! Perhaps you will suddenly feel an *irresistible* need not to live in unconsciousness, in ignorance, in that state in which you do things without knowing why, feel things without understanding why, have contradictory wills, understand nothing about anything, live only by habit, routine, reactions — you take life easy. And one day you are no longer satisfied with that.

It depends, for each one it is different. Most often it is the need to know, to understand; for some it is the need to do what must be done as it should be done; for others it is a vague feeling that behind this life, so unconscious, so futile, so empty of meaning, there is something to find which is *worth* being lived — that there is a reality, a truth behind these falsehoods and illusions.

One suddenly feels that everything one does, everything one sees, has no meaning, no purpose, but that *there is* something which has a meaning; that essentially one is here on earth for something, that all this — all these movements, all this agitation, all this wastage of force and energy — all that must have a purpose, an aim, and that this uneasiness one feels within oneself, this lack of satisfaction, this need, this *thirst* for something must lead us somewhere else.

And one day, you ask yourself, “But then, why is one born? Why does one die? Why does one suffer? Why does one act?”

You no longer live like a little machine, hardly half-conscious. You want to feel truly, to act truly, to know truly. Then, in ordinary life one searches for books, for people who know a little more than oneself, one begins to seek somebody who can solve these questions, lift the veil of ignorance. Here it is very simple. You only have to... do the things one does every day, but to do them with a purpose.

You go to the Samadhi¹², look at Sri Aurobindo’s picture, you come to receive a flower from me, sit down to a lesson; you do everything you do but... with one question within you: Why?

And then, if you ask the question, you receive the answer.

¹² The simple tomb in the courtyard of the main Ashram building where at the time only Sri Aurobindo’s body rested. Now it also contains the body of the Mother.

Why?

Because we don't want life as it is any longer, because we don't want falsehood and ignorance any longer, because we don't want suffering and unconsciousness any longer, because we do not want disorder and bad will any longer, because Sri Aurobindo has come to tell us: It is not necessary to leave the earth to find the Truth, it is not necessary to leave life to find one's soul, it is not necessary to give up the world or to have limited beliefs in order to enter into relation with the Divine. The Divine is everywhere, in everything, and if He is hidden... it is because we do not take the trouble to discover Him.

We can, simply by a sincere aspiration, open a sealed door in us and find... that Something which will change the whole significance of life, reply to all our questions, solve all our problems and lead us to the perfection we aspire for without knowing it, to that Reality which *alone* can satisfy us and give us lasting joy, equilibrium, strength, life.

13 August 1958

CHAPTER 10

Free Will, Determinism, Karma, Grace

Freedom and Fatality

Can it be said in justification of one's past that whatever has happened in one's life had to happen?

Obviously, what has happened had to happen; it would not have been, if it had not been intended. Even the mistakes that we have committed and the adversities that fell upon us had to be, because there was some necessity in them, some utility for our lives. But in truth these things cannot be explained mentally and should not be. For all that happened was necessary, not for any mental reason, but to lead us to something beyond what the mind imagines. But is there any need to explain after all? The whole universe explains everything at every moment and a particular thing happens because the whole universe is what it is. But this does not mean that we are bound over to a blind acquiescence in Nature's inexorable law. You can accept the past as a settled fact and perceive the necessity in it, and still you can use the experience it gave you to build up the power consciously to guide and shape your present and your future.

Is the time also of an occurrence arranged in the Divine Plan of things?

All depends upon the plane from which one sees and speaks. There is a plane of divine consciousness in which all is known absolutely, and the whole plan of things foreseen and predetermined. That way of seeing lives in the highest reaches of the Supralental; it is the Supreme's own vision. But when we do not possess that consciousness, it is useless to speak in terms that hold good only in that region and are not our present effective way of seeing things. For at a lower level of consciousness nothing is realised or fixed beforehand; all is in the process of making. Here there are no settled facts, there is only the play of possibilities; out of the clash of

possibilities is realised the thing that has to happen. On this plane we can choose and select; we can refuse one possibility and accept another; we can follow one path, turn away from another. And that we can do, even though what is actually happening may have been foreseen and predetermined in a higher plane.

The Supreme Consciousness knows everything beforehand, because everything is realised there in her eternity. But for the sake of her play and in order to carry out actually on the physical plane what is foreordained in her own supreme self, she moves here upon earth as if she did not know the whole story; she works as if it was a new and untried thread that she was weaving. It is this apparent forgetfulness of her own foreknowledge in the higher consciousness that gives to the individual in the active life of the world his sense of freedom and independence and initiative. These things in him are her pragmatic tools or devices, and it is through this machinery that the movements and issues planned and foreseen elsewhere are realised here.

It may help you to understand if you take the example of an actor. An actor knows the whole part he has to play; he has in his mind the exact sequence of what is to happen on the stage. But when he is on the stage, he has to appear as if he did not know anything; he has to feel and act as if he were experiencing all these things for the first time, as if it was an entirely new world with all its chance events and surprises that was unrolling before his eyes.

Is there then no real freedom? Is everything absolutely determined, even your freedom, and is fatalism the highest secret?

Freedom and fatality, liberty and determinism are truths that obtain on different levels of consciousness. It is ignorance that makes the mind put the two on the same level and pit one against the other. Consciousness is not a single uniform reality, it is complex; it is not something like a flat plain, it is multidimensional. On the highest height is the Supreme and in the lowest depth is matter; and there is an infinite gradation of levels of consciousness between this lowest depth and the highest height.

In the plane of matter and on the level of the ordinary consciousness you are bound hand and foot. A slave to the mechanism of Nature, you are

tied to the chain of Karma, and there, in that chain, whatever happens is rigorously the consequence of what has been done before. There is an illusion of independent movement, but in fact you repeat what all others do, you echo Nature's world-movements, you revolve helplessly on the crushing wheel of her cosmic machine.

But it need not be so. You can shift your place if you will; instead of being below, crushed in the machinery or moved like a puppet, you can rise and look from above and by changing your consciousness you can even get hold of some handle to move apparently inevitable circumstances and change fixed conditions. Once you draw yourself up out of the whirlpool and stand high above, you see you are free. Free from all compulsions, not only you are no longer a passive instrument, but you become an active agent. You are not only not bound by the consequences of your action, but you can even change the consequences. Once you see the play of forces, once you raise yourself to a plane of consciousness where lie the origins of forces and identify yourself with these dynamic sources, you belong no longer to what is moved but to that which moves.

This precisely is the aim of Yoga, — to get out of the cycle of Karma into a divine movement. By Yoga you leave the mechanical round of Nature in which you are an ignorant slave, a helpless and miserable tool, and rise into another plane where you become a conscious participant and a dynamic agent in the working out of a Higher Destiny. This movement of the consciousness follows a double line. First of all there is an ascension; you raise yourself out of the level of material consciousness into superior ranges. But this ascension of the lower into the higher calls a descent of the higher into the lower. When you rise above the earth, you bring down too upon earth something of the above, — some light, some power that transforms or tends to transform its old nature. And then these things that were distinct, disconnected and disparate from each other — the higher in you and the lower, the inner and the outer strata of your being and consciousness — meet and are slowly joined together and gradually they fuse into one truth, one harmony.

It is in this way that what are called miracles happen. The world is made up of innumerable planes of consciousness and each has its own distinct laws; the laws of one plane do not hold good for another. A miracle is nothing but a sudden descent, a bursting forth of another

consciousness and its powers — most often it is the powers of the vital — into this plane of matter. There is a precipitation, upon the material mechanism, of the mechanism of a higher plane. It is as though a lightning flash tore through the cloud of our ordinary consciousness and poured into it other forces, other movements and sequences. The result we call a miracle, because we see a sudden alteration, an abrupt interference with the natural laws of our own ordinary range, but the reason and order of it we do not know or see, because the source of the miracle lies in another plane. Such incursions of the worlds beyond into our world of matter are not very uncommon, they are even a constant phenomenon, and if we have eyes and know how to observe we can see miracles in abundance. Especially must they be constant among those who are endeavouring to bring down the higher reaches into the earth-consciousness below.

28 April 1929

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“Freedom and fatality, liberty and determinism are truths that obtain on different levels of consciousness.” (The Mother)

What are these different levels of consciousness?

[...] I have already spoken to you of the different planes of consciousness. Well, on the material plane, purely material (when separated from the vital plane), it is an absolute mechanism where consequently all things are linked together; and as I was saying the other day, if you want to find the cause of one thing or what is the result of a thing, you will find another and yet another and you will make an entire tour round the universe. And it is like that, everything is absolutely mechanised. Only, in this purely material plane, there can intervene the vital plane, and it already does intervene in the vegetable kingdom. The vital plane has an altogether different determinism, its own particular determinism. But when you introduce the vital determinism into the determinism of the physical, that produces a kind of combination that changes everything. And above the vital plane there is the mental plane. The mental plane also has its own determinism where all things are linked together rigorously.

But that is the movement which could be called “horizontal”. If you take a vertical movement, the mind descending into the vital and the vital descending into the physical, you have there three determinisms that intervene and naturally produce something altogether different. And where the mind has intervened the determinism will necessarily be different from the one where it does not intervene; that is, in the higher animal life there is already a mental determinism which intervenes that is altogether different from the determinism of the vegetable plane.

Above these planes there are others — above each plane there are others, following one another right up to the highest plane. The highest plane is the plane of absolute freedom. If in your consciousness you are capable of passing through all these planes, so to say in a vertical line, and reaching the highest plane and, by means of this connection, of bringing down this plane of perfect freedom into the material determinisms, you change everything. And all the intermediaries change everything. Then because of the very changes from level to level, it gives altogether the appearance of complete freedom; for the intervention or descent of one plane into another has unforeseen consequences for the other plane, the lower plane. The higher plane can foresee, but the lower ones cannot. So, as these consequences are unforeseen, that gives altogether the impression of the unexpected and of freedom. And it is only if you remain consciously and constantly on the highest level, that is, in the supreme Consciousness, that there you can see that, at the same time, all is absolutely determined but also, because of the complexity of the interlinking of these determinisms, all is absolutely free. It is the Plane where there are no more contradictions, where all things *are* and are in harmony without contradicting one another.

[...] All will be unfolded in the universe, but in what order and in what way? There are decisions that are taken up there which escape our ordinary consciousness, and so it is very difficult to foresee. But there also, if you enter consciously and if you can be present up there...

How shall I explain that to you? All is there, absolute, static, eternal: but all that will be unrolled in the material world, naturally more or less one thing after another: for in the static existence all can be there, but in the becoming all becomes in time, that is, one thing after another. Well, what path will the unrolling follow? Up there is the domain of absolute

freedom.... Who tells you that a sufficiently sincere aspiration, a sufficiently intense prayer is not capable of changing the path of the unrolling?

This means that all is possible.

Now, one must have a sufficient aspiration and a prayer that's sufficiently intense. But that has been given to human nature. It is one of the marvellous gifts of grace given to human nature; only, one does not know how to make use of it.

This comes to saying that in spite of the most absolute determinisms in the horizontal line, if one knows how to cross all these horizontal lines and reach the highest Point of consciousness, one is able to make things change, things apparently absolutely determined. So you may call it by any name you like, but it is a kind of combination of an absolute determinism with an absolute freedom.[...]

I forgot to say in that book (perhaps I did not forget but just felt that it was useless to say it) that all these theories are only theories, that is, mental conceptions which are merely more or less imaged representations of the reality; but it is not the reality at all. When you say "determinism" and when you say "freedom", you say only words and all that is only a very incomplete, very approximate and very weak description of what is in reality within you, around you and everywhere; and to be able to begin to understand what the universe is, you must come out of your mental formulas, otherwise you will never understand anything.

To tell the truth, if you live only a moment, just a tiny moment, of this absolutely sincere aspiration or this sufficiently intense prayer, you will know more things than by meditating for hours.

"The Supreme Consciousness ... gives to the individual in the active life of the world his sense of freedom and independence and initiative. These things in him are Her pragmatic tools or devices and it is through this machinery that the movements and issues planned and foreseen elsewhere are realised here."

(*The Mother*)

These "things in him", that is in the individual, are: the sense of freedom,

independence and initiative. You know what independence is? It is precisely the freedom of choice. Independence means the freedom of choice and initiative means the fact of choosing. First of all, one feels that one is free; and then one feels that no one can prevent him from choosing; and finally one uses his freedom to choose and one decides. These are the three stages. So these three stages: the feeling that you are free, the idea that you are going to use your freedom for choosing and then the choice — these three things I call the pragmatic tools and devices.

I am sorry, my children, all this is said in a form a little too philosophical which I do not now approve of very much. I was obliged to speak a language which now appears to me a little too complicated. But what is to be done, it was like that. I was saying that these three things, the feeling of freedom, the will to choose and the choice made are the devices that Nature uses in us to make us act, otherwise we would not move.

If we did not have this illusion that we are free, this second illusion that we can use our freedom for choosing and the third illusion of choosing, well, we would not move. So Nature gives us these three illusions and makes us move, for she requires us to move.

She, with a capital S, I said it was the Supreme Consciousness, but in fact it is Nature and it is the trick of Nature; for the Supreme Consciousness has no tricks, it is Nature that has tricks. The Supreme Consciousness quite simply enters into all things with all her consciousness, because it is *the* consciousness: and with that She tries to make all this inconscience move towards consciousness, simply, without any tricks. She has no need of tricks, She is everywhere. She is at work everywhere and She puts consciousness into the inconscience. When you light a lamp in a dark room, as soon as you turn on the electricity, the room is no longer dark. As soon as you put consciousness in, there is no longer any unconsciousness. So that is what She does. Wherever She sees unconsciousness, She tries to enter. Sometimes the doors are locked, then it takes a little more time, but sometimes the doors open, then She rushes in immediately, the unconsciousness disappears and consciousness comes — without needing any tricks or any intermediaries. She becomes conscious. But material Nature, physical Nature is not like that, she is full of tricks; she makes you move all the time, she pulls the puppet strings; for her you are so many little dolls: she pulls the strings and makes them

move. She puts all kinds of illusions in your head so that you may do the things she wants, without even your wanting it. She does not require that you should want it: she pulls the thread and you do it.

That is why we quarrel at times, but that's something we do not say.

You have said here that we are “tied to the chain of Karma”, but then sometimes when the Divine Grace acts, that contradicts...

Completely, the Divine Grace completely contradicts Karma; you know, It makes it melt away like butter that's put in the sun.

That is what I was saying just now. What you have just told me is another way of speaking. I was putting myself in your place and asking: There you are, if you have an aspiration that's sincere enough or a prayer that's intense enough, you can bring down in you Something that will change everything, everything — truly it changes everything. An example may be given that is extremely limited, very small, but which makes you understand things very well: a stone falls quite mechanically; say, a tile falls; if it gets loose, it will fall, won't it? But if there comes, for example, a vital or mental determinism from someone who passes by and does not want it to fall and puts his hand out, it will fall on his hand, but it will not fall on the ground. So he has changed the destiny of this stone or tile. It is another determinism that has come in, and instead of the stone falling on the head of someone, it falls upon the hand and it will not kill anybody. This is an intervention from another plane, from a conscious will that enters into the more or less unconscious mechanism.

So the consequences of Karma are not rigorous?

No, not at all. In all religions there are people who have said that, who have given such absolute rules, but I believe it was in order to substitute themselves for Nature and pull the strings. There is always this kind of instinct that wants to take the place of Nature and pull the strings of people. So they are told: “There is an absolute consequence of all that you do....” It is a concept necessary at a given moment of evolution to prevent people from being in a completely unconscious egoism, in a total unconsciousness of the consequences of what they do. There is no lack of people who are still like that, I believe it is the majority; they follow their

impulses and do not even ask themselves whether what they have done is going to have any consequences for them and for others. So it is good that someone tells you straight, with a severe look: "Take care, that has consequences which will last for a very long time!" And then there are others who come and tell you: "You will pay for it in another life." That, however, is one of those fantastic stories.... But it does not matter: this also can be for the good of people. There are other religions which tell you: "Oh! If you commit that sin, you will go to hell for eternity." You can imagine!... So people have such a fright that it stops them a little, it gives them just a moment for reflection before obeying an impulse — and not always; sometimes the reflection comes afterwards, a little late.

It is not absolute. These are still mental constructions, more or less sincere, which cut things into small bits like that, quite neatly cut, and tell you: "Do this or do that. If it is not this, it will be that." Oh! what a nuisance is this kind of life. And so people go mad, they are frightened! "Is it like that or rather this?" And they want it to be neither this nor that, what should they do? — They have only to climb to a higher storey. They must be given the key to open the door. There is a door to the staircase, a key is needed. The key, as I told you just now, is the sufficiently sincere aspiration or the sufficiently intense prayer. I said "or", but I do not think it is "or". There are people who like one better and others, the other. But in both there is a magical power, you must know how to make use of it.

There is something very beautiful in both, I shall speak to you about it one day, I shall tell you what there is in aspiration and what in prayer and why both of them are beautiful.... Some dislike prayer; if they entered deep into their heart, they would find it was pride worse than that, vanity. And then there are those who have no aspiration, they try and they cannot aspire; it is because they do not have the flame of the will, it is because they do not have the flame of humility.

Both are needed. There must be a very great humility and a very great will to change one's Karma.

3 June 1953

The Journey of the Supreme

If one wants to state the problem in a way that's more easily accessible to ordinary practical thinking, one could conceive that everything exists from all eternity, and therefore simultaneously, but that this total, simultaneous, eternal existence is like the property, the possession of a Consciousness which would take pleasure in travelling through its domains, find its joy in an almost infinite or anyway indefinite journey throughout all its domains, and would go like this from discovery to discovery of things which already exist, which have always existed... but which the Supreme had never visited. And the path he follows in his discovery could be an entirely free, unexpected, unforeseen path according to his choice of the moment, so that, although his whole domain is there from all eternity, existing for ever, he could visit it in an altogether unexpected, unpredictable way, and so open the door to all relationships and possibilities.

And it is also his own self-discovery, for this domain is himself; and a discovery which could be made according to immediate decisions, without a preconceived plan such as would be mentally thought out, with all the delight of complete freedom and of the unexpectedness of every second — an eternal journey within his own being.

Everything is absolutely determined, for everything *is* from all eternity, and yet the path traversed has a freedom and unpredictability which is also absolute.

And this is how there can exist simultaneously worlds which have no apparent relationship with each other, and which nevertheless coexist, but are discovered gradually and so give the impression of a new creation.... Seeing things in this way, one could easily understand that simultaneously with this physical world as we know it with all its imperfections, all its limitations, all its ignorance, there are one or several other worlds which exist in their own zones and are so different in nature from ours here, that for us they are as if non-existent, for we have no relation with them. But the moment the great eternal Voyage passes from this world to that, by the very fact of this passage of the eternal Consciousness, the link will necessarily be created, and the two worlds will gradually enter into relation with each other.

Truly speaking this is what is actually happening, and we can say with certainty that the supramental world already exists, but the time has come for it to become the object of the journey of the supreme Consciousness, and then, gradually, a conscious link will be formed between this world and that, and they will have a new relation as a result of this new orientation of the journey.

This explanation is as good as any other and perhaps it is easier to understand for people who are not metaphysicians.... At least, I like it!

Mother, you said that everything was absolutely determined; then where does personal effort come from?

I told you just a moment ago that the Great Traveller chooses at each instant the course of his journey, therefore it is an absolute freedom of choice, and this is what gives the universal unfolding that unpredictable air and that possibility of change, for the Supreme is entirely free to change his course if he wants to do so. On the contrary, this is absolute freedom. But everything is there, and since everything is there, everything is absolutely determined — it has always existed but it is discovered in an altogether unforeseen way. And in this discovery lies freedom.

You are taking a walk and, suddenly, well, you feel like going this way instead of that, so the course you take is completely new, but in the places you are going to, the things were already there, they existed and were therefore determined — but not your discovery.

Surely only a consciousness identified with the supreme Consciousness can have this feeling of absolute freedom. So long as you are not one with the supreme Consciousness, you necessarily have the impression or the feeling or idea that you are subject to the law of a higher Will, but the moment you are identified with this Will you are perfectly free.

This amounts to saying what Sri Aurobindo has always said: in union with the Supreme true freedom is realised.

5 February 1958

The Intervention of the Grace

If you see some catastrophe coming, can you, Mother, by your effort change it?

That depends upon the nature of the event. There are many things.... That depends also upon the level from which one sees. There is a plane where there are all the possibilities, and on that level, as there are all the possibilities, there is the possibility also of changing these possibilities. If a catastrophe is foreseen in that plane, one can have the power of preventing it also. In other cases, even though one is forewarned, one has no action upon the event. And yet there, it depends on the level from where one sees.

A case of this kind was reported to me once where the very seeing of a thing prevented it from happening. An American gentleman had arrived at one of those big American hotels where there are lifts (you do not go down a staircase, you take a lift to go up or come down); now, early in the morning just before getting up, he had a dream which he remembered well: he had seen a boy dressed as a lift-boy and making the same movement a lift-boy makes directing you to get in. He was there. And then, at the end of the movement, instead of a lift, there was a hearse! [...] And the boy was signing to him to get into the carriage. When he came out of his room, the boy was there with the lift to take him down: exactly the same boy, the same face, the same dress, the same gesture. He remembered the hearse — he did not get into the lift. He said: "No, no!" and he walked down. And before he reached the ground floor, he heard a terrible noise and the lift had crashed down to the ground and all who were in it were killed. It was because of the dream that he had not got in, for he had understood.

Therefore in such a case when you have the vision, you can avert the catastrophe.

There are other cases, as I said, when you are simply forewarned.

You are forewarned. In reality, it is to help you to prepare within for what must come, so that you may take the right inner attitude to face the event. It is like a lesson telling you: "This is what it must teach you." You cannot change the thing, but you can change your attitude and your inner

reaction. Instead of having a bad reaction, a wrong attitude towards the experience that occurs, you have a good reaction, a good attitude, and you derive as much benefit as possible out of what has happened.

29 July 1953

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People are not aware of the workings of the Grace except when there has been some danger, that is, when there has been the beginning of an accident or the accident has taken place and they have escaped it. Then they become aware. But never are they aware that if, for instance, a journey or anything whatever, passes without any accident, it is an infinitely higher Grace. That is, the harmony is established in such a way that nothing can happen. But that seems to them quite natural. When people are ill and get well quickly, they are full of gratitude; but never do they think of being grateful when they are well; and yet that is a much greater miracle!

23 December 1953

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I have said somewhere, or maybe written, that no matter how great your faith and trust in the divine Grace, no matter how great your capacity to see it at work in all circumstances, at every moment, at every point in life, you will never succeed in understanding the marvellous immensity of Its Action, and the precision, the exactitude with which this Action is accomplished; you will never be able to grasp to what extent the Grace does everything, is behind everything, organises everything, conducts everything, so that the march forward to the divine realisation may be as swift, as complete, as total and harmonious as possible, considering the circumstances of the world.

As soon as you are in contact with It, there is not a second in time, not a point in space, which does not show you *dazzlingly* this perpetual work of the Grace, this constant intervention of the Grace.

And once you have seen this, you feel you are never equal to it, for you

should never forget it, never have any fears, any anguish, any regrets, any recoils... or even suffering. If one were in union with this Grace, if one saw It everywhere, one would begin living a life of exultation, of all-power, of infinite happiness.

And that would be the best possible collaboration in the divine Work.

1 August 1956

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"If one were in union with this Grace, if one saw It everywhere, one would begin living a life of exultation, of all-power, of infinite happiness.

"And that would be the best possible collaboration in the divine Work." (The Mother)

The first condition is not very easy to realise. It is the result of a conscious growth, a constant observation and perpetual experience in life.

I have already told you this several times. When you are in a particular set of circumstances and certain events take place, these events often oppose your desire or what seems best to you, and often you happen to regret this and say to yourself, "Ah! how good it would have been if it were otherwise, if it had been like this or like that", for little things and big things.... Then years pass by, events are unfolded; you progress, become more conscious, understand better, and when you look back, you notice — first with astonishment, then later with a smile — that those very circumstances which seemed to you quite disastrous or unfavourable, were exactly the best thing that could have happened to you to make you progress as you should have. And if you are the least bit wise you tell yourself, "Truly, the divine Grace is infinite."

So, when this sort of thing has happened to you a number of times, you begin to understand that in spite of the blindness of man and deceptive appearances, the Grace is at work everywhere, so that at every moment it is the best possible thing that happens in the state the world is at that moment. It is because our vision is limited or even because we are blinded by our own preferences that we cannot discern that things are like this.

But when one begins to see it, one enters upon a state of wonder which nothing can describe. For behind the appearances one perceives this Grace — infinite, wonderful, all-powerful — which knows all, organises all, arranges all, and leads us, whether we like it or not, whether we know it or not, towards the supreme goal, that is, union with the Divine, the awareness of the Godhead and union with Him.

Then one lives in the Action and Presence of the Grace a life full of joy, of wonder, with the feeling of a marvellous strength, and at the same time with a trust so calm, so complete, that nothing can shake it any longer.

And when one is in this state of perfect receptivity and perfect adherence, one diminishes to that extent the resistance of the world to the divine Action; consequently, this is the best collaboration one can bring to the Action of the Divine. One understands what He wants and, with all one's consciousness, adheres to His Will.

8 August 1956

The Determinism of Death

You have said: “One can neither hasten nor delay its hour.” But death comes if one stops progressing. So, if one progresses, one can put off the hour. Or does this mean that from one’s birth the day and the moment of death are predestined?

No. This is altogether something else and on another plane. I have written elsewhere that one dies only when one consents to die — which seems to contradict what I have said here. But this is the truth. I have told you this once already, I believe; in any case, I have written it somewhere. There are two points of view. Here I have taken quite an ordinary, material point of view, that of the physical consciousness. But I have explained somewhere that there are, as it were, different “layers of determinisms” in our being. The physical existence has a determinism; the vital existence has a determinism; the mental existence has a determinism; the higher mental, the psychic have a determinism. And then the higher existences have determinisms — the supramental existence has a determinism. And the

determinism of everyone comes from the combination of all these determinisms (I am sure I have written this somewhere). If, for instance, at a given moment, when the entire physical determinism must necessarily bring death, you suddenly enter into contact with an extremely high determinism, like the supramental one, for example, and you succeed in joining the two, you change your physical determinism completely at that moment: death which had been determined by the physical determinism is abolished, and the conditions change and are pushed back.

I do not speak of this in that article [“The Fear of Death”]. I have taken a purely material point of view. I have given the example of people (and people who lived almost exclusively in their material consciousness, their physical consciousness, you understand, mental, vital and material), and who eagerly wanted to die from the time they were fifty — they lived to be eighty-seven! I have had an instance of that. I had another example the very opposite of this, of someone who ardently wanted to live very long, who felt that he had many very important things to do and that he must not die, and he took all kinds of precautions against that — and yet he died. There may be cases which seem contradictory, but that is only an appearance. There are explanations for all these things, they obey different laws. Here I have taken the purely material point of view.

If you do not make a higher determinism intervene, truly you can change nothing. That is the only way of changing your physical determinism. If you remain in your physical consciousness and want to change your determinism, you cannot... During the First War I knew a boy who had been told he would die of a shot (you know in war one dies easily), and he had even been given an approximate date. And that caused him such agony that he had succeeded in getting a long leave. He came to Paris on leave. He was an officer and had his pistol in his pocket. He jumped from a tram and fell down, the pistol went off and he was killed on the spot. He could not escape.

I could narrate any number of such examples to you. But this belongs to a single plane, the material plane — the purely material physical, mental and vital plane. It is only a higher knowledge and a contact with the higher planes and the descent of these higher planes into the physical plane, which can change circumstances. So too, if one succeeded in bringing down the supramental plane permanently into the physical life, physical

life would be transformed, that is, it would change totally. But only on this condition.

10 March 1954

“The Best Will Happen”

“Absolute faith —faith that what is for the best will happen, but also that if one can make oneself a true instrument, the fruit will be that which one’s will guided by the Divine Light sees as the thing to be done — kartavyam karma.” (Sri Aurobindo)

Faith that always what is for the best happens. We may for the moment not consider it as the best because we are ignorant and also blind, because we do not see the consequences of things and what will happen later. But we must keep the faith that if it is like that, if we rely on the Divine, if we give Him the full charge of ourselves, if we let Him decide everything for us, well, we must know that it is always what is best for us which happens. This is an absolute fact. To the extent to which you surrender, the best happens to you. This may not be in conformity with what you would like, your preference or desire, because these things are blind: it is the best from the spiritual point of view, the best for your progress, your development, your spiritual growth, your *true* life. It is always that. And you must keep this faith, because faith is the expression of a trust in the Divine and the full self-giving you make to the Divine. And when you make it, it is something absolutely marvellous. That’s a fact, these are not just words, you understand, it is a fact. When you look back, all kinds of things which you did not understand when they happened to you, you realise as *just* the thing which was necessary in order to compel you to make the needed progress. *Always*, without exception. It is our blindness which prevents us from seeing it.

6 October 1954

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You say, "If one always had the feeling that it is the best that happens in all circumstances, one would not be afraid." Is it really the best that happens in all circumstances?

It is the best, given the state of the world — it is not an absolute best.

There are two things: in a total and absolute way, at each moment, it is the best possible for the divine Goal of the whole; and for one who is consciously connected with the divine Will, it is the most favourable for his own divine realisation.

I believe this is the correct explanation.

For the whole, it is always, at every moment, what is most favourable for the divine evolution. And for the elements consciously linked with the Divine, it is the best for the perfection of their union.

Only you must not forget that it is constantly changing, that it is not a static best; it is a best which if preserved would not be the best a moment later. And it is because the human consciousness always has the tendency to preserve statically what it finds good or considers good, that it realises that it is unseizable. It is this effort to preserve which falsifies things.

(*Silence*)

I saw this when I wanted to understand the position of the Buddha who blamed the Manifestation for its impermanence; for him perfection and permanence were one and the same thing. In his contact with the manifested universe he had observed a perpetual change, therefore he concluded that the manifested world was imperfect and had to disappear. And change (impermanence) does not exist in the Unmanifest, hence the Unmanifest is the true Divine. It was by considering and concentrating on this point, that in fact I saw that his finding was right: the Manifestation is absolutely impermanent, it is a perpetual transformation.

But in the Manifestation, perfection consists in having a movement of transformation or an unfolding identical with the divine Movement, the essential Movement: whereas all that belongs to the inconscient or tamasic creation seeks to preserve exactly the very same existence instead of trying to last out through constant transformation.

That is why some thinkers have postulated that the creation was the result of an error. But one finds all possible concepts: perfect creation, then a “fault” which introduced error; the creation itself as a lower movement which must have an end since it had a beginning; then the Vedic concept, as Sri Aurobindo has explained it, of an unfolding or a progressive and infinite discovery — indefinite and infinite — of the All by Himself.... Naturally, all these, these are human interpretations. For the moment, as long as you express yourself in human terms, it is a human translation. But according to the initial position of the human translator (that is to say, whether it is the position which admits “original sin” or an “accident” in the creation or a supreme conscious Will from the beginning in a progressive unfolding), in the yogic attitude, the conclusions or “descents” are different.... There are Nihilists, Nirvanists, Illusionists; there are all the religions which admit the devil’s intervention under one form or another; then there is the pure Vedism which is the eternal unfolding of the Supreme in a progressive objectification. And according to taste, one places himself here, another there or elsewhere, with all the nuances between. But according to what Sri Aurobindo has felt to be the most total truth, according to this conception of a progressive universe, one is led to say that at every minute what happens is the best possible for the unfolding of the whole. It is absolutely logical. And I believe that all contradictions can arise only from a more or less pronounced tendency towards this or that, for one position or another. All who admit the intrusion of a “sin” or an “error” and the conflict resulting from it between forces which pull back and those which pull forward, may naturally contest the possibility. But one has to say that for him who is spiritually linked with the supreme Will or the supreme Truth, for him it is necessarily, at every instant, the best that happens for his personal realisation. In all instances it is like that. An unconditional best can be admitted only by one who sees the universe as an unrolling, as the Supreme’s self-awareness of Himself.

(*Silence*)

To tell you the truth, all these things are of no importance; for that which *is*, goes in every way entirely and absolutely beyond everything that human consciousness can think about it. It is only when you are no longer human that you *know*; but as soon as this knowledge is expressed, human

limits reimpose themselves and then you cease to know.

This is incontestable.

And because of this incapacity, there is a kind of futility also in wanting to reduce the problem altogether to something which human reason can understand. In this case it is very wise to say like someone I knew: "We are here, we have a work to do, and what is needed is to do it as well as we can, without worrying about the why and how." Why is the world as it is?... When we are capable of understanding, we shall understand.

From the practical point of view, this is evident.

Only, each one takes a position.... I have all the examples here. I have a sample collection of all attitudes and see very clearly their reactions. I see the same Force — the same, one Force — acting in this sample collection and producing naturally different effects; but these "different" effects, to a deeper vision, are very superficial: it is only "It pleases them to think in this way, that's all, it just pleases them to think thus." But as a matter of fact, the inner journey, the inner development, the essential vibration is not affected — not at all. One aspires with all his heart for Nirvana, another aspires with all his will for the supramental manifestation, and in both of them the vibratory result is almost the same. And it is a whole mass of vibrations which is prepared more and more to... to receive what must be.

There is a state, a state essentially pragmatic, spiritually pragmatic, in which of all human futilities, the most futile is metaphysics.

14 March 1951

CHAPTER 11

Religion and Spirituality

The Necessity of Religion

Sweet Mother, is religion a necessity in the life of the ordinary man ?

In the life of societies it is a necessity, for it serves as a corrective to collective egoism which, without this control, could take on excessive proportions.

The level of collective consciousness is always lower than the individual level. It is very noticeable, for example, that when men gather in a group or collect in great numbers, the level of consciousness falls a great deal. The consciousness of crowds is much lower than individual consciousness, and the collective consciousness of society is certainly lower than the consciousness of the individuals constituting it.

There it is a necessity. In ordinary life, an individual, whether he knows it or not, always has a religion but the object of his religion is sometimes of a very inferior kind.... The god he worships may be the god of success or the god of money or the god of power, or simply a family god: the god of children, the god of the family, the god of the ancestors. There is always a religion. The quality of the religion is very different according to the individual, but it is difficult for a human being to live and to go on living, to survive in life without having something like a rudiment of an ideal which serves as the *centre* for his existence. Most of the time he doesn't know it and if he were asked what his ideal is, he would be unable to formulate it; but he has one, vaguely, something that seems to him the most precious thing in life.

For most people, it is security, for instance: living in security, being in conditions where one is sure of being able to go on existing. That is one of the great "aims", one might say, one of the great motives of human effort. There are people for whom comfort is the important thing; for others it is

pleasure, amusement.

All that is very low and one would not be inclined to give it the name of an ideal, but it is truly a form of religion, something which may seem to be worth consecrating one's life to.... There are many influences which seek to impose themselves on human beings by using that as a basis. The feeling of insecurity, uncertainty, is a kind of tool, a means used by political or religious groups to influence individuals. They play on these ideas.

Every political or social idea is a sort of lower expression of an ideal which is a rudimentary religion. As soon as there is a faculty of thought, there is necessarily an aspiration for something higher than the most brutal daily existence from minute to minute, and this is what gives the energy and possibility of living.

Of course, one could say that it is the same thing for individuals as for collectivities, that their value is exactly proportionate to the value of their ideal, their religion, that is, of the thing they make the summit of their existence.

Of course, when we speak of religion, if we mean the recognised religions, truly, everyone has his own religion, whether he knows it or not, even when he belongs to the great religions that have a name and a history. It is certain that even if one learns the dogmas by heart and complies with a prescribed ritual, everybody understands and acts in his own way, and only the name of the religion is the same, but this same religion is not the same for all the individuals who think they are practising it.

We can say that without some expression of this aspiration for the Unknown and the highest, human existence would be very difficult. If there were not at the heart of every being the hope of something better — of whatever kind — he would have difficulty in finding the energy needed to go on living.

(*Silence*)

But as very few individuals are capable of thinking freely, it is much easier to join a religion, accept it, adopt it and become a part of that religious collectivity than to formulate one's own cult for oneself. So, apparently,

one is this or that, but in fact it is only an appearance.

16 July 1958

Religion and Spiritual Life

What is exactly the nature of religion? Is it an obstacle in the way of the spiritual life?

Religion belongs to the higher mind of humanity. It is the effort of man's higher mind to approach, as far as lies in its power, something beyond it, something to which humanity gives the name God or Spirit or Truth or Faith or Knowledge or the Infinite, some kind of Absolute, which the human mind cannot reach and yet tries to reach. Religion may be divine in its ultimate origin; in its actual nature it is not divine but human. In truth we should speak rather of religions than of religion; for the religions made by man are many. These different religions, even when they had not the same origin, have most of them been made in the same way. We know how the Christian religion came into existence. It was certainly not Jesus who made what is known as Christianity, but some learned and very clever men put their heads together and built it up into the thing we see. There was nothing divine in the way in which it was formed, and there is nothing divine either in the way in which it functions. And yet the excuse or occasion for the formation was undoubtedly some revelation from what one could call a Divine Being, a Being who came from elsewhere bringing down with him from a higher plane a certain Knowledge and Truth for the earth. He came and suffered for his Truth; but very few understood what he said, few cared to find and hold to the Truth for which he suffered. Buddha retired from the world, sat down in meditation and discovered a way out of earthly suffering and misery, out of all this illness and death and desire and sin and hunger. He saw a Truth which he endeavoured to express and communicate to the disciples and followers who gathered around him. But even before he was dead, his teaching had already begun to be twisted and distorted. It was only after his disappearance that Buddhism as a full-fledged religion reared its head founded upon what the Buddha is supposed to have said and on the supposed significance of these reported sayings. But soon too, because the disciples and the disciples'

disciples could not agree on what the Master had said or what he meant by his utterances, there grew up a host of sects and sub-sects in the body of the parent religion — a Southern Path, a Northern Path, a Far Eastern Path, each of them claiming to be the only, the original, the undefiled doctrine of the Buddha. The same fate overtook the teaching of the Christ; that too came to be made in the same way into a set and organised religion. It is often said that, if Jesus came back, he would not be able to recognise what he taught in the forms that have been imposed on it, and if Buddha were to come back and see what has been made of his teaching, he would immediately run back discouraged to Nirvana! All religions have each the same story to tell. The occasion for its birth is the coming of a great Teacher of the world. He comes and reveals and is the incarnation of a Divine Truth. But men seize upon it, trade upon it, make an almost political organisation out of it. The religion is equipped by them with a government and policy and laws, with its creeds and dogmas, its rules and regulations, its rites and ceremonies, all binding upon its adherents, all absolute and inviolable. Like the State, it too administers rewards to the loyal and assigns punishments for those that revolt or go astray, for the heretic and the renegade.

The first and principal article of these established and formal religions runs always, "Mine is the supreme, the only truth, all others are in falsehood or inferior." For without this fundamental dogma, established credal religions could not have existed. If you do not believe and proclaim that you alone possess the one or the highest truth, you will not be able to impress people and make them flock to you.

This attitude is natural to the religious mind; but it is just that which makes religion stand in the way of the spiritual life. The articles and dogmas of a religion are mind-made things and, if you cling to them and shut yourself up in a code of life made out for you, you do not know and cannot know the truth of the Spirit that lies beyond all codes and dogmas, wide and large and free. When you stop at a religious creed and tie yourself in it, taking it for the only truth in the world, you stop the advance and widening of your inner soul. But if you look at religion from another angle, it need not always be an obstacle to all men. If you regard it as one of the higher activities of humanity and if you can see in it the aspirations of man without ignoring the imperfection of all man-made things, it may

well be a kind of help for you to approach the spiritual life. Taking it up in a serious and earnest spirit, you can try to find out what truth is there, what aspiration lies hidden in it, what divine inspiration has undergone transformation and deformation here by the human mind and a human organisation, and with an appropriate mental stand you can get religion even as it is to throw some light on your way and to lend some support to your spiritual endeavour.

In all religions we find invariably a certain number of people who possess a great emotional capacity and are full of a real and ardent aspiration, but have a very simple mind and do not feel the need of approaching the Divine through knowledge. For such natures religion has a use and it is even necessary for them; for, through external forms, like the ceremonies of the Church, it offers a kind of support and help to their inner spiritual aspiration. In every religion there are some who have evolved a high spiritual life. But it is not the religion that gave them their spirituality; it is they who have put their spirituality into the religion. Put anywhere else, born into any other cult, they would have found there and lived there the same spiritual life. It is their own capacity, it is some power of their inner being and not the religion they profess that has made them what they are. This power in their nature is such that religion to them does not become a slavery or a bondage. Only as they have not a strong, clear and active mind, they need to believe in this or that creed as absolutely true and to give themselves up to it without any disturbing question or doubt. I have met in all religions people of this kind and it would be a crime to disturb their faith. For them religion is not an obstacle. An obstacle for those who can go farther, it may be a help for those who cannot, but are yet able to travel a certain distance on the paths of the Spirit. Religion has been an impulse to the worst things and the best; if the fiercest wars have been waged and the most hideous persecutions carried on in its name, it has stimulated too supreme heroism and self-sacrifice in its cause. Along with philosophy it marks the limit the human mind has reached in its highest activities. It is an impediment and a chain if you are a slave to its outer body; if you know how to use its inner substance, it can be your jumping-board into the realm of the Spirit.

One who holds a particular faith or who has found out some truth, is disposed to think that he alone has found the Truth, whole and entire. This

is human nature. A mixture of falsehood seems necessary for human beings to stand on their legs and move on their way. If the vision of the Truth were suddenly given to them they would be crushed under the weight.[...]

Things have an inner value and become real to you only when you have acquired them by the exercise of your free choice, not when they have been imposed upon you. If you want to be sure of your religion, you must choose it; if you want to be sure of your country, you must choose it; if you want to be sure of your family, even that you must choose. If you accept without question what has been given you by Chance, you can never be sure whether it is good or bad for you, whether it is the true thing for your life. Step back from all that forms your natural environment or inheritance, made up and forced upon you by Nature's blind mechanical process; draw within and look quietly and dispassionately at things. Appraise them, choose freely. Then you can say with an inner truth, "This is my family, this my country, this my religion."

If we go a little way within ourselves, we shall discover that there is in each of us a consciousness that has been living throughout the ages and manifesting in a multitude of forms. Each of us has been born in many different countries, belonged to many different nations, followed many different religions. Why must we accept the last one as the best? The experiences gathered by us in all these many lives in different countries and varying religions, are stored up in that inner continuity of our consciousness which persists through all births. There are multiple personalities there created by these past experiences, and when we become aware of this multitude within us, it becomes impossible to speak of one particular form of truth as the only truth, one country as our only country, one religion as the only true religion. There are people who have been born into one country, although the leading elements of their consciousness obviously belong to another. I have met some born in Europe who were evidently Indians; I have met others born in Indian bodies who were as evidently Europeans. In Japan I have met some who were Indian, others who were European. And if any of them goes to the country or enters into the civilisation to which he has affinity, he finds himself there perfectly at home.

If your aim is to be free, in the freedom of the Spirit, you must get rid

of all the ties that are not the inner truth of your being, but come from subconscious habits. If you wish to consecrate yourself entirely, absolutely and exclusively to the Divine, you must do it in all completeness; you must not leave bits of yourself tied here and there. You may object that it is not easy to cut away altogether from one's moorings. But have you never looked back and observed the changes that have taken place in you in the course of a few years? When you do that, almost always you ask yourself how it was that you could have felt in the way you felt and acted as you did act in certain circumstances; at times, even, you can no longer recognise yourself in the person you were only ten years ago. How can you then bind yourself to what was or to what is or how can you fix beforehand what may or may not be in the future?

All your relations must be newly built upon an inner freedom of choice. The traditions in which you live or are brought up have been imposed on you by the pressure of the environment or by the general mind or by the choice of others. There is an element of compulsion in your acquiescence. Religion itself has been imposed on men; it is often supported by a suggestion of religious fear or by some spiritual or other menace. There can be no such imposition in your relation with the Divine; it must be free, your own mind's and heart's choice, taken up with enthusiasm and joy. What union can that be in which one trembles and says, "I am compelled, I cannot do otherwise"?

9 June 1929

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Can one realise the Divine by this method [of religion]?

Those who carry within themselves a spiritual destiny and are born to realise the Divine, to become conscious in Him and live Him, will arrive, no matter what path, what way they follow. That is to say, even in religion there are people who have had the spiritual experience and found the Divine — not because of the religion, usually in spite of it, notwithstanding it — because they had the inner urge and this urge led them there despite all obstacles and through them. Everything served their purpose.

But if these very people want to express their experience, they naturally use the terms of the religion in which they were brought up, so they restrict their experience and inevitably limit it very much, they make it sectarian, so to say. But they themselves may very well have gone beyond all the forms and all the limitations and all the conventions and may have had the true experience in its pure simplicity.

23 May 1956

Mental Knowledge and Divine Truth

Sweet Mother, here it is written: “Do not be troubled by your surroundings and their opposition. These conditions are often imposed at first as a kind of ordeal.” (Sri Aurobindo) Imposed by the Divine?

He has not put it that way, has he? You must take it in the way it helps you most. This is a very difficult question.

Oh, I have already explained to you very often that when you live in an ordinary consciousness, and to the extent you remain on a certain plane which is a combination of the most material mind, vital, physical, that is, the ordinary plane of life, you are subject to the determinism of this plane and it is this subjection to the determinism of this plane which puts you exactly in these conditions, for you have deep within you something which aspires for another life but doesn't yet know how to live that other life, and which pushes from inside in order to get the conditions necessary for this other life. These are inner conditions, they are not outer conditions. But this takes its support on outside obstacles in order to strengthen itself in its will to progress; and so, if you look at it from within, you can even say that it is you yourself who create the difficulties to help you to go forward.

Now, if you enter another plane and tell yourself (but this is a thing subject to many explanations and discussions), if you say that there is nothing in the universe that is not the work of the Divine, which is essentially true, though not true here, then you say, “Good. It is the Divine who organises everything; consequently it is He who has organised the difficulties also.” But this is indeed a very childish way of putting things — oversimple. Only, as I said at the beginning, “If it helps you to think in

this way, think in this way.” You see, thought is so approximate a thing, it is so far from *the* truth... it is only a kind of vague, incomplete, confused reflection, full of falsehood, even at its best. So, in truth, it is the moment to be practical and tell yourself, “Well, I shall adopt this thought if it helps me to progress.” But if you think that it is the absolute truth, you are sure to go wrong, for there is not a single thought which is the absolute truth. [...]

Whatever your thought may be, even if it is very high, very pure, very noble, very true, it is only a very tiny microscopic aspect of the Truth, and consequently it is not entirely true. So in that field one must be practical, as I said, adopt the thought for the time being, the one which will help you to make progress when you have it. Sometimes it comes as an illumination and this helps you to progress. So long as it helps you to make progress, keep it; when it begins to crumble, not to act any longer, well, drop it, and try to get another which will lead you a little farther.

Many miseries and misfortunes in the world would disappear if people knew the relativity of knowledge, the relativity of faith, the relativity of the teachings and also the relativity of circumstances... to what extent a thing is so relatively important! For the moment it may be capital, it may lead you to life or to death — I am not speaking of physical life and death, I am speaking of the life and death of the spirit — but this is for the moment; and when you have made a certain progress, when you have grown a few years older from the spiritual point of view, and you look back on this thing, this circumstance or idea which perhaps has decided your life, it will seem so relative, so insignificant to you... and you will need something much higher to make new progress.

If one could always remember this, well, one would avoid much sectarianism, much intolerance, and annul all quarrels immediately, because a quarrel means just this, that one thinks in one way and the other in another, that one has taken one attitude and the other another, and that instead of trying to bring them together and find out how they could be harmonised, one puts them over against each other as one fights with one’s fists. It is nothing else.

But if you become aware of the complete relativity of your point of view, your thought, your conviction of what is good, to what an extent it is

relative in the march of the universe, then you will be less violent in your reactions and more tolerant.

6 October 1954

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One becomes conscious of the reality only when one becomes conscious of it in oneself. All this is true. Indeed, it is true: you cannot say that it exists unless you experience it yourself. When you do not experience it, if you say, "It is like this", well... You can say, "There was a time when it was like this for me"; then that's right. But if you say, "It is like this", at a time when you don't feel it, it is quite simply a mental statement.

But everything is there! Everything is there... all the things which you can experience and infinitely more which you cannot, because a being is not absolutely complete in himself. If he were complete in himself, he could have the experience of the whole, without any exception. And in fact, potentially it is like that. Only, each one develops according to his own line. It comes to saying this: that one is conscious of the universe only to the extent to which the universe is in his consciousness. For you the universe stops at your consciousness, no matter what others may say. Everything that you read, for example, all the descriptions you are given, all the sentences you hear, you can understand only as far as they correspond to something in your consciousness; and if they are not in your consciousness, you do not understand them, and consequently they do not exist for you. But this does not mean that they do not exist outside you.

13 October 1954

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"Each religion has helped mankind. Paganism increased in man the light of beauty, the largeness and height of his life, his aim at a many-sided perfection; Christianity gave him some vision of divine love and charity; Buddhism has shown him a noble way to be wiser, gentler, purer; Judaism and Islam how to be religiously faithful in action and zealously devoted to God; Hinduism has opened to him the largest and

profoundest spiritual possibilities. A great thing would be done if all these God-visions could embrace and cast themselves into each other; but intellectual dogma and cult-egoism stand in the way.

“All religions have saved a number of souls, but none yet has been able to spiritualise mankind. For that there is needed not cult and creed, but a sustained and all-comprehending effort at spiritual self-evolution.” (Sri Aurobindo)

Mother, here Sri Aurobindo writes; “A great thing would be done if all these God-visions could embrace and cast themselves into each other; but intellectual dogma and cult-egoism stand in the way.” How is it possible to fuse into one all these views?

It is not in the mental consciousness that these things can be harmonised and synthesised. For this it is necessary to rise above and find the idea behind the thought. Sri Aurobindo shows here, for example, what each of these religions represents in human effort, aspiration and realisation. Instead of taking these religions in their outward forms which are precisely dogmas and intellectual conceptions, if we take them in their spirit, in the principle they represent, there is no difficulty in unifying them. They are simply different aspects of human progress which complete each other perfectly well and should be united with many others yet to form a more total and more complete progress, a more perfect understanding of life, a more integral approach to the Divine. And even this unification which already demands a return to the Spirit behind things, is not enough; there must be added to it a vision of the future, the goal towards which humanity is moving, the future realisation of the world, that last “spiritual revolution” Sri Aurobindo speaks about, which will open a new age, that is, the supramental revolution.

In the supramental consciousness all these things are no longer contradictory or exclusive. They all become complementary. It is only the mental form which divides. What this mental form represents should be united to what all the other mental forms represent in order to make a harmonious whole. And that is the essential difference between a religion and the true spiritual life.

Religion exists almost exclusively in its forms, its cults, in a certain set

of ideas, and it becomes great only through the spirituality of a few exceptional individuals, whereas true spiritual life, and above all what the supramental realisation will be, is independent of every precise, intellectual form, every limited form of life. It embraces all possibilities and manifestations and makes them the expression, the vehicle of a higher and more universal truth.

A new religion would not only be useless but very harmful. It is a new *life* which must be created; it is a new *consciousness* which must be expressed. This is something beyond intellectual limits and mental formulae. It is a living truth which must manifest.

Everything in its essence and its truth should be included in this realisation. This realisation must be an expression as total, as complete, as universal as possible of the divine reality. Only that can save humanity and the world. That is the great spiritual revolution of which Sri Aurobindo speaks. And this is what he wanted us to realise.

He has traced its broad outline in [...] *The Supramental Manifestation*.

And the first sentence I read today remains the key of the entire problem not only for the individual but also for the collectivity:

“All would change if man could once consent to be spiritualised; but his nature, mental and vital and physical, is rebellious to the higher law. He loves his imperfection.” (Sri Aurobindo)

3 April 1957

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The forms of Divine Power which have incarnated in different beings, have incarnated with a specific aim, for a specific action, at a specific moment of universal development, but essentially they are only differentiated aspects of the One Being; therefore, it is in the particular purpose of the action that the difference lies. Otherwise it is always the same Truth, the same Power, the same eternal Life which manifests in these forms and creates these forms at a given moment for a specific reason and a specific aim; this is preserved in history, but eternally they are new forms which are used for new progress.

Old forms can endure as a vibration lasts, but their purpose historically, it could be said, was momentary, and one form is replaced by another in order that a new step forward may be taken. The mistake humanity makes is that it always hangs on to what is behind it and wants to perpetuate the past indefinitely. These things must be used at the time when they are useful. For there is a history of *each* individual development; you may pass through stages in which these disciplines have their momentary utility, but when you have gone beyond that moment you ought to enter into something else and see that historically it was useful but now is so no longer. Certainly, to those who have reached, for instance, a certain state of development and mental control, I won't say, "Read the Dhammapada and meditate on it"; it would be a waste of time. I give it to those who have not gone beyond the stage where it is necessary. But always man takes upon his shoulders an interminable burden. He does not want to drop anything of the past and he stoops more and more under the weight of a useless accumulation.

You have a guide for a part of the way but when you have travelled this part leave the road and the guide and go farther! This is something men find difficult to do. When they get hold of something which helps them, they cling to it, they do not want to move any more. Those who have progressed with the help of Christianity do not want to give it up and they carry it on their shoulders; those who have progressed with the help of Buddhism do not want to leave it and they carry it on their shoulders, and so this hampers the advance and you are indefinitely delayed.

Once you have passed the stage, let it drop, let it go! Go farther.

2 October 1957

Spirituality and Active Life

But this very attitude of wanting to become identified with the Unmanifest and letting the world suffer, isn't this selfishness?

Yes. And so what happens is very remarkable, the result is always the same: those who have done that, at the last minute, have received a sort of intimation that they had to return to the world and do their work. It is as though they reached the door and — “Ah! no, no, not yet — go back and work. When the world is ready, then this will be all right.”

Indeed this attitude of flight in the face of difficulty is a supreme selfishness. You are told, “Do this, and then, when all the others have done it, all will be well with the whole world”, but it is only a very small elite among men who are ready to be able to do it. And these precisely are those who can be the most useful to the earth, for they know more about things than others, they have overcome many difficulties and can be of help to others just where those others can't. But the whole human mass, the immense human mass.... For when some have succeeded — even a few hundred — one may tend to think it is “humanity”, but truly speaking it is only a kind of elite of humanity, it is a selection. The immense mass, all the people living all over the earth — merely in India, the immense population — formidable — which lives in the villages, the countryside, there is no question of their making an effort for liberation, to come out of the world in order to live the spiritual life. They don't even have the time to become aware of themselves! They are just there, attached to their work like a horse to the plough. They move in a rut from which, generally, they can't get out. So they can't be told, “Do as I do and all will be well.” Because “Do as I do” means nothing at all. There are perhaps a few hundred who can do the same thing, no more!

24 February 1954

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“... all work must be a field of endeavour and a school of experience.”
(Sri Aurobindo) “All work” is “a school of experience”?

Yes, surely. You don't understand?

No, Mother.

If you don't do anything, you cannot have any experience. The whole life is a field of experience. Each movement you make, each thought you have, each work you do, can be an experience, and *must be* an experience; and naturally work in particular is a field of experience where one must apply all the progress which one endeavours to make inwardly.

If you remain in meditation or contemplation without working, well, you don't know if you have progressed or not. You may live in an illusion, the illusion of your progress; while if you begin to work, all the circumstances of your work, the contact with others, the material occupation, all this is a field of experience in order that you may become aware not only of the progress made but of all the progress that remains to be made. If you live closed up in yourself, without acting, you may live in a completely subjective illusion; the moment you externalise your action and enter into contact with others, with circumstances and the objects of life, you become aware absolutely objectively of whether you have made progress or not, whether you are more calm, more conscious, stronger, more unselfish, whether you no longer have any desire, any preference, any weakness, any unfaithfulness — you can become aware of all this by working. But if you remain enclosed in a meditation that's altogether personal, you may enter into a total illusion and never come out of it, and believe that you have realised extraordinary things, while really you have only the impression, the illusion that you have done so.[...]

Then, Mother, why do all the spiritual schools in India have as their doctrine escape from action?

Yes, because all this is founded upon the teaching that life is an illusion. It began with the teaching of the Buddha who said that existence was the fruit of desire, and that there was only one way of coming out of misery and suffering and desire; it was to come out of existence. And then this continued with Shankara who added that not only is it the fruit of desire

but it is a total illusion, and as long as you live in this illusion you cannot realise the Divine. For him there was not even the Divine, I think; for the Buddha, at least, there wasn't any.

Then did they truly have experiences?

That depends on what you call “experience”. They certainly had an inner contact with something.

The Buddha certainly had an inner contact with something which, in comparison with the external life, was a non-existence; and in this non-existence, naturally, all the results of existence disappear. There is a state like this; it is even said that if one can keep this state for twenty days, one is sure to lose one's body; if it is exclusive, I quite agree with it.

But it may be an experience which remains at the back, you see, and is conscious even while not being exclusive, and which causes the contact with the world and the outer consciousness to be supported by something that is free and independent. This indeed is a state in which one can truly make very great progress externally, because one can be detached from everything and act without attachment, without preference, with that inner freedom which is expressed outwardly.

Yet this is the real necessity: once this inner freedom has been attained and the conscious contact with what is eternal and infinite, then, without losing this consciousness one must return to action and let that influence the whole consciousness turned towards action.

This is what Sri Aurobindo calls bringing down the Force from above. In this way there is a chance of being able to change the world, because one has brought in a new Force, a new region, a new consciousness and put it into contact with the outer world. So its presence and action will produce inevitable changes and, let us hope, a total transformation in what this outer world is.

So we could say that the Buddha quite certainly had the first part of the experience, but that he never dreamt of the second, because it was contrary to his own theory. His theory was that one had to run away; but it is obvious that there is only one way of escape, to die, and yet, as he himself has said so well, you may be dead and be completely attached to life, and

still be in the cycle of births and not have liberation. And in fact he has admitted the idea that it is by successive passing lives on the earth that one can manage to develop oneself to reach this liberation. But for him the ideal was that the world would not exist any longer. It was as though he accused the Divine of having made a mistake and that there was only one thing to do, to rectify the mistake by annulling it. But naturally, to be reasonable and logical, he did not admit the Divine. It was a mistake made by whom, how, in what way? — this he never explained. He simply said that it was made and that the world had begun with desire and had to end with desire. He was just on the point of saying that this world was purely subjective, that is, a collective illusion, and that if the illusion ceased the world would cease to be. But he did not come so far. It is Shankara who took over and made the thing altogether complete in his teaching.

If we go back to the teaching of the Rishis, for example, there was no idea of flight out of the world, for them the realisation had to be terrestrial. They conceived a Golden Age very well, in which the realisation would be terrestrial. But starting from a certain decline of vitality in the spiritual life of the country, perhaps, from a different orientation which came in, you see... it is certainly starting from the teaching of the Buddha that this idea of flight came, which has undermined the vitality of the country [India], because one had to make an effort to cut oneself off from life. The outer reality became an illusory falsehood, and one had no longer to have anything to do with it. So naturally one was cut off from the universal energy, and the vitality went on diminishing, and with this vitality all the possibilities of realisation also diminished.

7 September 1955

Spiritual Life and Morality

The spiritual life, the life of Yoga, has for its object to grow into the divine consciousness and for its result to purify, intensify, glorify and perfect what is in you. It makes you a power for manifesting of the Divine; it raises the character of each personality to its full value and brings it to its maximum expression; for this is part of the Divine plan. Morality proceeds by a mental construction and, with a few ideas of what is good and what is not, sets up an ideal type into which all must force themselves. This moral

ideal differs in its constituents and its ensemble at different times and different places. And yet it proclaims itself as a unique type, a categoric absolute; it admits of none other outside itself; it does not even admit a variation within itself. All are to be moulded according to its single ideal pattern, everybody is to be made uniformly and faultlessly the same. It is because morality is of this rigid unreal nature that it is in its principle and its working the contrary of the spiritual life. The spiritual life reveals the one essence in all, but reveals too its infinite diversity; it works for diversity in oneness and for perfection in that diversity. Morality lifts up one artificial standard contrary to the variety of life and the freedom of the spirit. Creating something mental, fixed and limited, it asks all to conform to it. All must labour to acquire the same qualities and the same ideal nature. Morality is not divine or of the Divine; it is of man and human. Morality takes for its basic element a fixed division into the good and the bad; but this is an arbitrary notion. It takes things that are relative and tries to impose them as absolutes; for this good and this bad differ in differing climates and times, epochs and countries.

4 August 1929

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Sweet Mother, hasn't morality helped us to increase our consciousness?

That depends on people. There are people who are helped by it, there are people who are not helped *at all*.

Morality is something altogether artificial and arbitrary, and in most cases, among the best, it checks the true spiritual effort by a sort of moral satisfaction that one is on the right path and a true gentleman, that one does one's duty, fulfils all the moral requirements of life. Then one is so self-satisfied that one no longer moves or makes any progress.

It is very difficult for a virtuous man to enter the path of God; this has been said very often, but it is altogether true, for he is *most* self-satisfied, he thinks he has realised what he ought to have realised, he no longer has either the aspiration or even that elementary humility which makes one

want to progress. You see, one who is known here [in India] as a sattvic man is usually very comfortably settled in his own virtue and never thinks of coming out of it. So, that puts you a million leagues away from the divine realisation.

What really helps, until one has found the inner light, is to make for oneself a certain number of rules which naturally should not be too rigid and fixed, but yet should be precise enough to prevent one from going completely out of the right path or making irreparable mistakes — mistakes the consequences of which one suffers all one's life.

To do that, it is good to set up a certain number of principles in oneself, which, however, should be for each one, in conformity with his own nature. If you adopt a social, collective rule, you immediately make yourself a slave to this social rule, and that prevents you almost radically from making any effort for transformation.

16 May 1956

Religion and Spiritual Experience

One point is very remarkable — I don't remember whether Sri Aurobindo speaks about it in what follows — but among the four activities or realisations he mentions — religion, occultism, spiritual philosophy and spiritual experience — which are necessary for the development and transformation of man, all are not equally accessible to humanity.

The one which can be practised and, one might say, "understood" — although it is certainly not an "understanding" — by the greatest number of human beings — those who live almost exclusively in the physical consciousness — is the religious method, precisely because it is based on fixed creeds and practices. Simply by an act of faith or a collective suggestion — above all a collective suggestion — many human beings who have not yet reached any considerable inner development can take up the path of religion.

For occultism we must already have come to a second stage of development and be more conscious in the vital world to be able to come into contact with the play of forces, which is indispensable in order to manipulate them.

As for spiritual philosophy, only the few who have a fairly complete mental development and are fully conscious on the intellectual plane, can usefully adopt this method; otherwise it is a dead letter for all those who don't have an ability for mental gymnastics and so cannot follow all the acrobatics of the mind.

And finally, Sri Aurobindo has told us somewhere in *The Life Divine* that to follow the path of spiritual experience, one must have within oneself a "spiritual being", one must be "twice born" as it is said, for if one doesn't have a spiritual being within, which is at least on the point of becoming self-aware, one may try to imitate these experiences but it will only be crude imitation or hypocrisy, it won't be a reality.

Therefore, in order to follow these four paths simultaneously and to practise them with an integral benefit for the being, one must already be a complete individual, capable of having a conscious life in the four principal elements of human and spiritual nature.

Of course, this inner development is not always apparent and we may meet someone who has within him a conscious spiritual entity, ready for the most beautiful experiences, though externally he seems quite crude and incomplete.

Nor is it necessary to follow this development in the order in which it has been mentioned, but if we want our realisation to be integral and to arrive at a total transformation of our being, we must be able to use the essence of what each of these methods can bring.

The psychic or spiritual consciousness gives you the deep inner realisation, contact with the Divine, liberation from external fetters; but for this liberation to be effective, for it to have an action on the rest of the being, the mind must be open enough to be able to hold the spiritual light of Knowledge, the vital must be powerful enough to handle the forces behind appearances and dominate them, and the physical should be disciplined, organised enough to be able to express the deep experience, in the movements of each day and each moment, and live it integrally.

If one of these things is lacking, the result is not complete. One can make light of this thing or that under the pretext that it is not the most important, the central Thing — and to neglect outer things certainly cannot prevent you from entering into spiritual communion with the Supreme, but

that is good only for a flight from life.

If we are to be total, complete beings, to have an integral realisation, we should be able to express our spiritual experience mentally, vitally and physically. And the more our expression is perfect, executed by a complete and perfect being, the more integral and perfect will our realisation be.

For someone who wants to follow the integral yoga nothing is useless and nothing must be neglected.... The main thing is to know how to put each thing in its place and to hand over the government to what truly has the right to govern.

18 June 1958

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“Our thinking mind is concerned mainly with the statement of general spiritual truth, the logic of its absolute and the logic of its relativities, how they stand to each other or lead to each other, and what are the mental consequences of the spiritual theorem of existence...” (Sri Aurobindo)

I have a question here, but it is a verbal question, which means that it is not very interesting. It is a phrase from the beginning of the passage: What is the meaning of “the mental consequences of the spiritual theorem of existence”?

It is probably from someone who doesn’t know what “theorem” means!

A theorem is the statement of a truth which has been arrived at through reasoning. The word is used quite concretely in mathematics and all the external sciences. From the philosophical point of view it is the same thing. In the present instance, the spiritual theorem of existence may be stated in this way: the Absolute in the relativities or Oneness in multiplicity. But to explain “the mental consequences”, we must go into philosophy and I believe you are rather unprepared for that. And to really understand what it means, one feels that philosophy is always skirting the truth, like a tangent that draws closer and closer but never touches — that there is something that escapes. And this something is in truth everything.

To understand these things... there is only experience — *to live* this truth, not to feel it in the way the ordinary senses do but to realise within oneself the truth, the concrete existence of both states, simultaneously, existing together even while they are opposite conditions. All words can lead only to confusion; only experience gives the tangible reality of the *thing*: the simultaneous existence of the Absolute and the relativities, of Oneness and multiplicity, not as two states following each other and one resulting from the other, but as a state which can be perceived in two opposite ways depending on... the position one takes in relation to the Reality.

Words in themselves falsify the experience. To speak in words one must take not a step backwards but a step downwards, and the essential truth escapes. One must use them simply as a more or less accessible path to reach the *thing* itself which cannot be formulated. And from this point of view no formulation is better than any other; the best of all is the one that helps each one to remember, that is, the way in which the intervention of the Grace has crystallised in the thought.

Probably no two ways are identical, everyone must find his own. But one must not be mistaken, it is not “finding” by reasoning, it is “finding” by aspiration; it is not by study and analysis, but by the intensity of the aspiration and the sincerity of the inner opening.

When one is truly and exclusively turned to the spiritual Truth, whatever name may be given to it, when all the rest becomes secondary, when that alone is imperative and inevitable, then, *one single moment* of intense, absolute, total concentration is enough to receive the answer.

The experience comes first, in this case, and it is only later, as a consequence and a memory that the formulation becomes clear. In this way one is sure not to make a mistake. The formulation may be more or less exact, that is of no importance, so long as one doesn't make a dogma out of it.

It is good for you, that is all that is needed. If you want to impose it on others, whatever it may be, even if it is perfect in itself, it becomes false.

That is why religions are always mistaken — always — because they want to standardise the expression of an experience and impose it on everyone as an irrefutable truth. The experience was true, complete in

itself, convincing — for the one who had it. The formulation he made of it was excellent — for himself. But to want to impose it on others is a fundamental error which has altogether disastrous consequences, always, which always leads far, very far from the Truth.

That is why all the religions, however beautiful they may be, have always led man to the worst excesses. All the crimes, the horrors perpetrated in the name of religion are among the darkest stains on human history, and simply because of this little initial error: wanting what is true for one individual to be true for the mass or collectivity.

(*Silence*)

The path must be shown and the doors opened but everyone must *follow* the path, pass through the doors and go towards his personal realisation.

The only help one can and should receive is that of the Grace which formulates itself in everyone according to his own need.

24 September 1958

CHAPTER 12

Science and Materialism

Understanding the World

The climax of the ordinary consciousness is Science. For Science, what is upon the earth is true, simply because it is there. What it calls Nature is for it the final reality, and its aim is to build up a theory to explain the workings of it. So it climbs as high as the physical mind can go and tries to find out the causes of what it assumes to be the true, the real world. But in fact it adapts "causes" to "effects", for it has already taken that which is for the true, the real, and seeks only to explain it mentally. For the yogic consciousness, however, this world is not the final reality. Rising above the mind into the Overmind and then into the Supermind, it enters the divine world of first truths, and looking down from there sees what has happened to those truths here. How distorted they have become, how completely falsified! So the so-called world of fact is for the Yogi a falsehood and not at all the only true reality. It is not what it ought to be, it is almost the very opposite; whereas for the scientist it is absolutely fundamental.

Our aim is to change things. The scientist says that whatever is, is natural and cannot be changed at heart. But, really speaking, the laws of which he usually speaks are of his own mental making; and because he accepts Nature as it is as the very basis, things do not and cannot change for him in any complete sense. But, according to us, all this can be changed, because we know that there is something above, a divine truth seeking manifestation. There are no fixed laws here; even Science in its undogmatic moments recognises that the laws are mere mental constructions. There are only cases, and if the mind could apply itself to all the circumstances it would find that no two cases are similar. Laws are for the mind's convenience, but the process of the supramental manifestation is different, we may even say it is the reverse of the mind. In the supramental realisation, each thing will carry in itself a truth which will manifest at each instant without being bound by what has been or what

will follow. That elaborate linking of the past with the present, which gives things in Nature such an air of unchangeable determinism, is altogether the mind's way of conceiving, and is no proof that all that exists is inevitable and cannot be otherwise.

The knowledge possessed by the Yogi is also an answer to the terrible theory that all that takes place is God's direct working. For once you rise to the Supermind you immediately perceive that the world is false and distorted. The supramental truth has not at all found manifestation. How then can the world be a genuine expression of the Divine? Only when the Supermind is established and rules here, then alone the Supreme Will may be said to have authentically manifested. At the same time, we must steer clear of the dangerous exaggeration of the sense of the falsehood of the world, which comes to those who have risen to the higher consciousness. What happened with Shankara and others like him was that they had a glimpse of the true consciousness, which threw the falsehood of this world into such sharp contrast that they declared the universe to be not only false but also a really non-existent illusion which should be entirely abandoned. We, on the other hand, see its falsehood, but realise also that it has to be replaced and not abandoned as an illusion. Only, the truth has got mistranslated, something has stepped in to pervert the divine reality, but the world is in fact meant to express it. And to express it is indeed our Yoga.

1930-1931

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I think one of the greatest difficulties in understanding things comes from an arbitrary simplification which puts spirit on one side and matter on the other. It is this foolishness that makes you incapable of understanding anything. There is spirit and matter — this is very convenient. So if one does not belong to spirit, one belongs to matter; if one does not belong to matter, one belongs to spirit. But what do you call spirit and what do you call matter? It is a countless crowd of things, an interminable ladder. The universe is a seemingly infinite gradation of worlds and states of consciousness, and in this increasingly subtle gradation, where does your matter come to an end? Where does your spirit begin? You speak of

“spirit” — where does this spirit begin? With what you don’t see? Is that it? So you include in “spirit” all the beings of the vital world, for instance, because you don’t see them in your normal state.[...]

It is like those people who say, “When you are alive you are in matter; when you are dead, you enter the spirit. There, then! So, liberate the spirit from matter, die, and you liberate your spirit from matter.” It is these stupidities which prevent you from understanding anything at all. But all this has nothing to do with the world as it really is.

For the human consciousness as it is, there are certainly infinitely more invisible things than visible things. What you know, the things which are visible to you and which you are conscious of — it’s almost like the skin of an orange compared with the orange itself — and even an orange with a very thin skin, not a thick one! And so, if you know only the skin of the orange, you know nothing about the orange.

And this is more or less what happens. All that you know about the universe is just a superficial little crust — and even this you hardly know. But that is all you know about it, and all the rest escapes you.

7 March 1956

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If one enters into a somewhat philosophical, psychological and subjective consciousness, one can very easily become aware of a sort of “objective unreality” of things; and the one thing which is real, tangible, concrete, measurable, so to speak, for the ordinary consciousness becomes so fluid, almost unsubstantial, and has a reality only in the consciousness that perceives it — an absolutely variable reality and at times quite contradictory according to the perception of the consciousness. If we put before us the different explanations that have been given about the world, the different ways in which it has been expressed, we shall have a series of notions that are sometimes absolutely contradictory, which are nevertheless perceptions of one identical thing by different consciousnesses. In fact, with this last paragraph, [in *The Life Divine*] we have an extreme point which is the affirmation that all that is, is the total and complete expression of the Divine Will there is what could be called a

certain school of thinkers who, on the basis of their personal experience, have asserted that everything is the expression of the Divine Will in a perfect way — and then, at the other extreme, the affirmation that the world is a sort of chaos without rhyme or reason, which has come into being one doesn't know how or why, which is going one doesn't know where, which has no logic, no reason, no coordination — it is just chance. It happens to be like this, one doesn't know why. Well, if you take these two extremes and put before you all that has been said, written, taught, thought about the world from one end to the other, and if you can see all that together, you will realise that, since it is all about the same world and yet the explanations are so totally different, this world exists, so to say, only in the consciousness of the one who sees it.... There must indeed be "something" there, but that something must be beyond what men think about it — far beyond, very different. And so the whole feeling is of an elusive unreality.

And in fact, the reality of the world is entirely subjective for each person's consciousness. The world has no objective reality, for in one case it can be said that it is the result of the supremely conscious, supreme Will and that all is ruled by that, and in the other case, it may be said that it is something without any reason for existence except an elusive chance — and yet, these two notions apply to one and the same thing.[...]

Everyone has his own idea which is more or less clear, more or less organised, more or less precise, and this idea he calls the world. Everyone has his own way of seeing, his own way of feeling and his particular relationship with everything else, and this he calls the world. He naturally puts himself at the centre, and then everybody is organised around him, according to the way in which he sees it, feels it, understands and desires it, according to his own reaction, but since for each consciousness, individually, it is different, this means that what we call the world — the thing in itself—escapes our perception completely. It must be something else. And we must come out of our individual consciousness to be able to understand what it is; and this is what Sri Aurobindo calls the passage from the lower to the higher hemisphere. In the lower hemisphere there are as many universes as individuals, and in the higher hemisphere there is "something" — which is what it is — in which all consciousnesses must meet. This is what he calls the "Truth-Consciousness".

As the human consciousness progresses, it has a greater and greater sense of this relativity, and at the same time a sort of feeling, it could be said, a vague impression that there is a Truth, which is not perceptible by ordinary means but must be perceptible in some way or other.

9 October 1957

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The only really important thing modern science has discovered is that from the purely outer and physical point of view things are not what they seem to be. When you look at a body, a human being, an object, a landscape, you perceive these things with the help of your eyes, your touch, hearing and, for the details, smell and taste; well, science tells you: "All that is illusory, you don't see things at all as they are, you don't touch them as they really are, you don't smell them as they really are, you don't taste them as they really are. It is the structure of your organs which puts you in contact with these things in a particular way which is entirely superficial, external, illusory and unreal."

From the point of view of science, you are a mass of— not even of atoms — of something infinitely more imperceptible than an atom, which is in perpetual movement. There is absolutely nothing which is like a face, a nose, eyes, a mouth; it is only just an appearance. And scientists come to this conclusion — like the uncompromising spiritualists of the past — that the world is an illusion. That is a great discovery, very great.... One step more and they will enter into the Truth. So, when somebody comes and says, "But I *see* this, I *touch* it, I *feel* it, I am sure of it", from the scientific point of view it's nonsense. This could be said only by someone who has never made a scientific study of things as they are. So, by diametrically opposite roads they have come to the same result: the world as you see it is an illusion.

Now what is the truth behind this? People who have sought spiritual knowledge tell you, "We have experienced it", but of course it is a purely subjective experience; there are as yet no grounds on which one can say absolutely that the experience is beyond question for everybody, Everyone's experience is beyond question for him. And if one takes it a

little further...

In fact, the value of an experience or a discovery could perhaps be proved by the power it gives, the power to change these appearances and transform things, circumstances and the world as it appears to us, in accordance with the will that manifests through that experience. It seems to me that the most universal proof of the validity of an individual or collective experience would be its power to make things — these appearances that we call the world — different from what they are. From the subjective point of view, the effect of the experience on an individual consciousness is an undeniable proof; for one who attains bliss, sovereign peace, unchanging delight, the profound knowledge of things, it is more than proved. The effects on the outer form depend on many other things besides the experience itself — depend perhaps on the first cause of these experiences — but out of all this, *one* thing seems to be a proof which is accessible to other people as well as to the one who has the experience; it is the power over other people and things — which for the ordinary consciousness is “objective”. For instance, if a person who has attained the state of consciousness I am speaking about, had the power of communicating it to others, it would be partially — only partially — a proof of the reality of his experiences; but further, if the state of consciousness in which he is — for instance, a state of perfect harmony — could create this harmony in the outer world, in what apparently is not harmony, it would be, I think, the proof most readily accepted, even by the materialist scientific mind. If these illusory appearances could be changed into something more beautiful, more harmonious, happier than the world we live in now, this would perhaps be an undeniable proof. And if we take it a little farther, if, as Sri Aurobindo promises us, the supramental force, consciousness and light transform this world and create a new race, then, just as the apes and animals — if they could speak — could not deny the existence of man, so too man would not be able to deny the existence of these new beings — provided that they are different enough from the human race for this difference to be perceptible even to the deceptive organs of man.

18 December 1957

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*You have said that the world and the darkness were concomitant.
What is the cause of this concomitance?*

The cause... is the light which has become the darkness and the consciousness which has become the unconscious! How to speak about these things? You may call this an accident if you like, if that satisfies your mind. It was perhaps, after all, the best thing that could have happened, one can't tell. All depends upon the point of view one takes. There must certainly be a consciousness in which this was foreseen, and if it has not been avoided, it means that it forms part of the programme!... It is a human way of looking at the problem, for things do not happen quite like that in those regions. One may also relate a story which could make a subject, a magnificent drama, but it would be only a story, a way of saying things.

A story is of value only to the extent it can help you to understand things. Ah! here is an interesting subject.... A story, that is, a way of saying things, is of value only if it can make you understand the thing. A language (which is a kind of story) is of value only to the extent it is capable of putting you in contact with the Reality. Science is a language, Art is a language — all activity is a sort of language, that is, a way of expression. And the way of expression is of value only in as far as it puts you in contact with what it wants to express. It is a very interesting generalisation, for you can bring into it all the categories you want and you will see that it is true.

It is the same for everything. The way of approaching the universe and the universal truth is also a language and all depends upon the person who uses it, the person to whom the understanding is to be communicated. Whatever may be the way of telling, if you understand, that is all that is necessary. If you do not understand, even if it be the wonder of wonders, the truth of truths, it will have no value for you. This is an essentially pragmatic point of view of the universe; things have value only in so far as they realise that for which they have been made, and the most beautiful philosophies of the world are of no use to those who do not understand them. The most beautiful works of art in the world are quite useless to those whom they do not put on the path of the Truth. And the most perfect yoga in the world is useless to those whom it does not lead to the Realisation. And if you have this sense of relativity, you have finished with

all dogmatism, all sectarianism, all that kind of absolutism which leads one always to think that all that has done us good is “the truth” — it is the truth for us, it is not necessarily the truth for our neighbour. And what our neighbour thinks is the truth for him, and when you say, “It is idiotic, it is quite useless”, if it helps him to realise the truth, it is excellent, it is the best thing possible for him. And everything, everything on earth is like that. And if you do not want to be altogether narrow, to put on visors and not see farther than the tip of your nose, you must first of all understand this. You must understand that all things in the universe tend towards a goal and that it is to the extent they help to realise this goal that they have a value, and that this value is quite relative; and what is good for one may not be so for another, what is good at one moment may not be so at another and, consequently, every kind of dogmatism is an absurdity.

It is very easy to say, “That, that’s true, now I know that it is true and I shall not think otherwise”; this is very easy, and in fact something has suddenly put you in touch with a light, you have had an experience, you have become conscious of yourself, conscious of something which transcends you and is the reality of your being, so for you it is perfect. But do not imagine that you must go from door to door, from city to city, country to country, telling people, “I proclaim the Truth”, because what is true for you may not be at all good for another. What you have seen has its truth in itself — everything has its truth in itself — but the true *raison d’être* of this truth is that it has helped you to find yourself, to find the truth of your being, and it may quite possibly not help your neighbour, unless you have a considerable power of persuasion and oblige him to see things as you have seen them yourself, but this is not tremendously valuable.

When you have understood this, you will no longer say, “Why is there such a diversity in the world, why all this multiplicity, why all this confusion, why... ?” It is a confusion simply because you don’t understand and things are not in their place. If things were in their place, there would be no confusion. And we come to this, that you cannot take away one atom from this world without dislocating the universe. All that is, was necessary — if it had not been necessary, it would not have been. The whole totality of things is indispensable for realising the Divine. If you took away one of these things, there would be a hole in the realisation. And I am not

speaking only of material things, material points, I am speaking of all the depths. So when you say as many do, "Ah! if that were not there in the world, how fine the world would be", you are displaying your ignorance.

5 April 1951

Knowledge by Identification

Is it not possible to know the universe in its reality as it is in itself, independently of the observer or thinker?

Yes, there is a way: it is by identification. But obviously it is a means which eludes absolutely all physical methods. I think that this weakness comes solely from the method used, because one has remained in an absolutely superficial consciousness; and the phenomenon which took place the first time takes place again a second time. If you push your investigation far enough, you suddenly come to a point where your physical methods are no longer of any worth. And in fact one can know only what one is. So if you want to know the universe, you must become the universe. You cannot become the universe physically, you know; but perhaps there is a way of becoming the universe: it is in the consciousness.

If you identify your consciousness with the universal consciousness, then you know what is happening.

But that's the only way; there are no others. It is an absolute fact that one knows only what one is, and if one wants to know something, one must become that. So you see, there are many people who say, "It is impossible", but that's because they remain on a certain plane. It is obvious that if you remain only on the material plane or even on the mental plane, you cannot know the universe, because the mind is not universal; it is only a means of expression of the universe; and it is only by an essential identification that you can then know things, not from outside inwards but from inside outwards. This is not impossible It is altogether possible. It has been done. But it can't be done with Instruments, however perfected they may be. Here one must once again make something else intervene, other regions, other realities than purely material ones.[...]

One can know everything, but one must know the way. And the way is

not learnt through books, it cannot be written in numbers. It is only by practising... And here then, it demands an abnegation, a consecration, a perseverance and an obstinacy — still more considerable than what the sincerest, most honest, most unselfish scientists have ever shown. But I must say that the scientific method of work is a marvellous discipline; and what is curious is that the method recommended by the Buddha for getting rid of desires and the illusion of the world is also one of the most marvellous disciplines ever known on the earth. They are at the two ends, they are both excellent; those who follow one or the other in all sincerity truly prepare themselves for yoga. A small click, somewhere, is enough to make them leave their fairly narrow point of view on one side or the other, so as to be able to enter into an integrality which will lead them to the supreme Truth and mastery.

I don't know whether ignorance is the greatest obstacle on the path of humanity... We said that it was an almost exclusively mental obstacle and that the human being is much more complex than a mental being, though he is supremely mental, for he is its new creation in the world. He represents the last possibility of Nature, and in that, naturally his mental life has taken immense proportions, because he has the pride of being the only one upon earth to have it. He does not always make a good use of it, still it is like this. But it's not here that he will find the solution. He must go beyond.

5 October 1955

Materialism and Spiritual Life

Throughout this teaching [in the Dhammapada] there is one thing to be noticed; it is this: you are never told that to live well, to think well, is the result of a struggle or of a sacrifice; on the contrary it is a delightful state which cures all suffering. At that time, the time of the Buddha, to live a spiritual life was a joy, a beatitude, the happiest state, which freed you from all the troubles of the world, all the sufferings, all the cares, making you happy, satisfied, contented.

It is the materialism of modern times that has turned spiritual effort into a hard struggle and a sacrifice, a painful renunciation of all the so-called

joys of life.

This insistence on the exclusive reality of the physical world, of physical pleasures, physical joys, physical possessions, is the result of the whole materialistic tendency of human civilisation. It was unthinkable in ancient times. On the contrary, withdrawal, concentration, liberation from all material cares, consecration to the spiritual joy, that was happiness indeed.

From this point of view it is quite evident that humanity is far from having progressed; and those who were born into the world in the centres of materialistic civilisation have in their subconscious this horrible notion that only material realities are real and that to be concerned with things that are not material represents a wonderful spirit of sacrifice, an almost sublime effort. Not to be preoccupied from dawn to dusk and from dusk to dawn with all the little physical satisfactions, physical pleasures, physical sensations, physical preoccupations, is to bear evidence of a remarkable spirit. One is not aware of it, but the whole of modern civilisation is built on this conception: "Ah, what you can touch, you are sure that is true; what you can see, you are sure that is true; what you have eaten, you are sure of having eaten it; but all the rest — pooh! We are not sure whether they are not vain dreams and whether we are not giving up the real for the unreal, the substance for the shadow. After all, what are you going to gain? A few dreams! But when you have some coins in your pocket, you are sure that they are there!"

And that is everywhere, underneath everything. Scratch the appearances just a little, it is there, within your consciousness; and from time to time you hear this thing whispering within you, "Take care, don't be taken in." Indeed, it is lamentable.

We have been told that evolution is progressive and that it follows a spiral of ascending progression. I do not doubt that what one calls comfort in modern cities is a much higher degree of evolution than the comfort of the cave-man. But in ancient narratives, they always spoke of a power of foresight, of the prophetic spirit, the announcement of future events through visions, life's intimacy with something more subtle that had for the simple people of that age a more concrete reality.

Now, in those beautiful cities that are so comfortable, when one wants

to condemn anything, what does one say? — “It’s a dream, it is imagination.”

And precisely, if a person lives in an inner perception, people look at him slightly askance and wonder whether he is altogether mentally sound. One who does not pass his time in striving for wealth or in trying to increase his comforts and well-being, to secure a good position and become an important person, a man who is not like that is mistrusted, people wonder whether he is in his right mind.

And all that is so much the stuff of the atmosphere, the content of the air you breathe, the orientation of the thoughts received from others that it seems absolutely natural. You do not feel that it is a grotesque monstrosity.

To become a little more conscious of oneself, to enter into relation with the life behind the appearances, does not seem to you to be the greatest good. When you sit in a comfortable chair, in front of a lavish meal, when you fill your stomach with delicious dishes, that certainly appears to you much more concrete and much more interesting. And if you look at the day that has passed, if you take stock of your day, if you have had some material advantage, some pleasure, a physical satisfaction, you mark it as a good day; but if you have received a good lesson from life, if it has given you a knock on your nose to tell you that you are a stupid fellow, you do not give thanks to the Grace, you say, “Oh, life is not always fun!”

When I read these ancient texts, I really have the impression that from the inner point of view, from the point of view of the true life, we have fallen back terribly and that for the acquisition of a few ingenious mechanisms, a few encouragements to physical laziness, the acquisition of instruments and gadgets that lessen the effort of living, we have renounced the reality of the inner life. It is that sense which has been lost and it needs an effort for you to think of learning the meaning of life, the purpose of existence, the goal towards which we must advance, towards which all life advances, whether you want it or not. One step towards the goal, oh! it needs so much effort to do that. And generally one thinks of it only when the outer circumstances are not pleasant.[...]

It is very unfortunate that one has to give up one thing in order to gain another. When I speak of the inner life, I am far from opposing any modern inventions, far from it, but how much these inventions have made

us artificial and stupid! How much we have lost the sense of true beauty, how much we burden ourselves with useless needs!

Perhaps the time has come to continue the ascent in the curve of the spiral and now with all that this knowledge of matter has brought us, we shall be able to give to our spiritual progress a more solid basis. Strong with what we have learnt of the secrets of material Nature, we shall be able to join the two extremes and rediscover the supreme Reality in the very heart of the atom.

24 January 1958

Miracles

[Performing miracles] is a temptation that every teacher meets at each step, for the very simple reason that ordinary humanity, in a general way, not being in personal contact with the divine powers, understands nothing of what an illumined consciousness may be and asks for material proofs. It is on this demand that most religions are established and, for reasons which I may very frankly call “political”, they have put at the origin of their religion a more or less considerable number of miracles as having been performed by the founders, and they have thus more or less crudely encouraged among ignorant people the taste, the necessity for seeing what they call “miracles” in order to believe in the divine power of a person. This is an extraordinary ignorance, because it is not at all necessary to have a divine power or consciousness to perform miracles. It is infinitely more easy to perform miracles with the help of small entities of the vital world who are material enough to be in touch with the physical world and act upon it, than to live in the consciousness of the higher regions and to work upon Nature only through the intermediary of all the other domains. It has been repeated over and over again to all human intellects that the proof of a being’s divinity is that he can raise the dead, cure maladies, and do many other things of the same kind (except making a fool wise).¹³ Well, I

¹³ The Mother added later: This is a Mohamedan story, I believe. As it was said that Jesus raised the dead, healed the sick, made the dumb speak, gave sight to the blind, one day an idiot was brought to him to be made intelligent, and Jesus ran away! “Why did you run away?” he was asked. “I can do everything,” he answered, “except give intelligence to an idiot.”

guarantee that this is not a proof; it proves only one thing, that these “Masters” are in contact with the powers of the vital world and that with the help of those beings they can perform these miracles, that’s all. If one relies upon that to recognise the superiority of a man, one would make a glaring mistake.

Naturally, there are other religions which are established on revelations made to their founders. These revelations are more or less happy mental transcriptions of the knowledge they received. This is already of a higher order but it is not yet a proof. And I would finally say, the human demand for proofs is not at all favourable to one’s development. Because the true divine power has organised the world according to a certain plan and in this plan there was no question of things happening in an illogical way; otherwise from the very beginning the world would have been illogical and it is not so. Men imagine for the most part one of two things, either that there is a material world to which they belong, that all comes from there, all returns there and all ends there — these are the unbelievers — or, the believers, most of them, that there is something which they call “God” and then the physical world, and that this physical world is the creation of that God who knows what he is doing or does what he wants; and the confusion lies in saying that everything happens by a kind of arbitrariness, natural or supernatural.

There are very few people who know that there exists in the universe an infinite number of gradations and that each one of these gradations has its own reality, its own life, its own law, its own determinism, and that the creation did not come about “like that”, by an arbitrary will, in an arbitrary way but is a deploying of consciousness and each thing has evolved as a logical result of the preceding one. I am telling you all this as simply as I can, you know, it is a very incomplete expression, but if I wanted to tell you the story exactly as it is, it would be a little difficult to make you understand. Only my conclusion I would like you to know, [...] it is this: each one of these numberless regions has its own very logical determinism — everything proceeds from cause to effect; but these worlds, although differentiated, are not separate from each other and, by numerous processes which we may study, the inner or higher worlds are in constant contact with the lower or external worlds and act upon these, so that the determinism of one changes the determinism of the other.

If you take the purely material domain, for instance, and if you notice that the material laws, the purely material laws are altered by something all of a sudden, you ought to say that it was a “miracle”, because there is a rupture of the determinism of one plane through the intervention of another, but usually we do not call this a miracle. For example, when the human will intervenes and changes something, that seems to you quite natural, because you have been accustomed to it from your childhood; you remember, don't you, the example I gave you the other day: a stone falls according to the law of its own determinism, but you wish to interrupt its fall and you stretch out your hand and catch it; well you ought to call this a “miracle”, but you don't because you are used to it (but a rat or a dog would perhaps call it a miracle if they could speak). And note that it is the same for what people call a “miracle”; they speak of a “miracle” because they are absolutely ignorant, unaware of the gradations between the will which wants to express itself and the plane on which it expresses itself. When they have a mental or a vital will, the thing seems quite natural to them, but when it is a question of the will of a higher world — the world of the gods or of a higher entity — which all of a sudden upsets all your little organisation, that seems to you a miracle. But it is a miracle simply because you are unable to follow the gradations by which the phenomenon took place. Therefore, the Supreme Will, that which comes from the very highest region, if you saw it in its logical action, if you were aware of it continually, it would seem to you altogether natural.

You can express this in two ways: either say, “It is quite natural, it is like this that things must happen, it is only an expression of the divine Will”, or, each time you see on the material plane an intervention coming from another plane, you ought to say, “It is miraculous!” So I may say with certainty that people who want to see miracles are people who cherish their ignorance! You understand my logic, don't you? These people love their ignorance, they insist upon seeing miracles and being astounded! And that is why people who have done yoga seriously consider it altogether fatal to encourage this tendency; hence it is forbidden.

There is a “miracle” because you do not give people time to see the procedure by which you do things, you do not show them the stages.

8 February 1951

It is the ignorant, limited, egoistic consciousness which demands miracles. As soon as one is enlightened, one knows that everywhere and always there is miracle.

And the more faith one has in this miracle and this Grace, the more capable one becomes of seeing it, or perceiving it constantly at every place where it is. It is ignorance and lack of faith, it is blind egoism which prevents one from seeing.

23 November 1955

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Therefore things are as one looks at them. But I have seen other things which are like this, but not very pleasant. It is from the time men have invented — not invented but discovered — and begun to play like babies with things they did not know, and have made atom bombs and other worse things still. This has truly disturbed *terribly* all these little entities¹⁴ which lived indeed according to a certain rhythm which was their own, and were in the habit of commanding at least events that can be foreseen. This has disturbed them very very much, they have suffered terribly from it, and it has made them lose their heads, they no longer know what they are doing.

There was a time at the end of the War, when things had truly become *terribly* chaotic up there, they lived in a kind of absurdity; and as these unfortunate experiences continue, they have not yet come out of their panic. They are panic-stricken. Truly men play with things which they know only from outside, that is, don't know at all. They know just enough to make a wrong use of them. Anything may happen, including, alas, catastrophes which were foretold long ago. It may happen... It depends... on what will intervene.

30 November 1955

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¹⁴ Conscious entities of the vital plane who are behind the forces of Nature and influence such things as the weather.

Mother, can physical science by its progress open to occultism?

It does not call it “occultism”, that’s all. It is only a question of words.... They are making sensational discoveries which people with occult knowledge already knew thousands of years ago! They have made a long circuit and come to the same thing.

With the most recent discoveries in medicine, in the applied sciences, for instance, they are contacting in this way, with a wonder-struck interest, things which were known to certain sages a very, very long time ago. And then they present all this before you as new marvels — but indeed they are rather old, their marvels!

They will end up by practising occultism without knowing that they are doing so! For, in fact, as soon as one draws close, however slightly, to the truth of things and when one is sincere in one’s search, not satisfied by mere appearances, when one really wants to find something and goes deep, penetrates behind appearances, then one begins to advance towards the truth of things; and as one comes closer to it, well, one finds again the same knowledge that others who began by going within have brought back from their inner discoveries.

Only the method and the path are different but the thing discovered will be the same, because there are not two things to be found, there is only one. It will necessarily be the same. It all depends on the path one follows; some go fast, others slowly, some go straight, others, as I said, go a long way round — and what labour! How they have laboured!... Besides, it is very respectable.

10 September 1958

“Chance”

What do we understand by the term “chance”? Chance can only be the opposite of order and harmony. There is only one true harmony and that is the supramental — the reign of Truth, the expression of the Divine Law. In the Supermind, therefore, chance has no place. But in the lower Nature the supreme Truth is obscured: hence there is an absence of that divine unity of purpose and action which alone can constitute order. Lacking this unity,

the domain of lower Nature is governed by what we may call chance — that is to say, it is a field in which various conflicting forces intermix, having no single definite aim. Whatever arises out of such a rushing together of forces is a result of confusion, dissonance and falsehood — a product of chance. Chance is not merely a conception to cover our ignorance of the causes at work; it is a description of the uncertain *melee* of the lower Nature which lacks the calm one-pointedness of the divine Truth. The world has forgotten its divine origin and become an arena of egoistic energies; but it is still possible for it to open to the Truth, call it down by its aspiration and bring about a change in the whirl of chance. What men regard as a mechanical sequence of events, owing to their own mental associations, experiences and generalisations, is really manipulated by subtle agencies each of which tries to get its own will done. The world has got so subjected to these undivine agencies that the victory of the Truth cannot be won except by fighting for it. It has no right to it: it has to gain it by disowning the falsehood and the perversion, an important part of which is the facile notion that, since all things owe their final origin to the Divine, all their immediate activities also proceed directly from it. The fact is that here in the lower Nature the Divine is veiled by a cosmic Ignorance and what takes place does not proceed directly from the divine knowledge. That everything is equally the will of God is a very convenient suggestion of the hostile influences which would have the creation stick as tightly as possible to the disorder and ugliness to which it has been reduced.

1930-1931

CHAPTER 13

Occultism

The Capacity for Occultism

[Occultism] is a domain about which I have so far refrained from speaking to you, for one must be already very conscious of oneself, have a good mastery over one's reflexes and be above all fear, precisely — above all possibility of fear, in order to be able to enter upon it. It is a knowledge which in the modern world is hardly recognised as scientific, but it *is* scientific in the sense that it has exact processes and that if the circumstances are correctly reproduced, the same results are obtained. It is a progressive science and one can devote oneself to it, can make quite a regular progress, as logical as in all the sciences that are acknowledged as such in modern times. But this one concerns a reality or certain realities which do not belong to the most material domain. One needs special capacities and a special development to be conscious in that domain, for it escapes our ordinary senses.

We have subtle senses; even as we have a physical body, we have other more subtle bodies which also have senses, and much more refined senses, much more precise and much more powerful than our physical senses. But naturally, as it is not customary in modern education to work in these domains, these things generally escape our ordinary knowledge. Yet children spontaneously live a great deal in this domain. They see things which are as real for them as physical things, they speak about them — and they are usually told that they are stupid because they speak of things others don't see but which are as true for them, as tangible and real as what can be seen by everyone. Their dreams have an intensity and a capital importance in their life, and it is only with intensive mental growth that those capacities diminish. Now, there are people who have the good luck to be born with a spontaneous development, with inner senses, and nothing can prevent them from remaining awake. If these people meet in good time someone who can help them in a methodical development, they can

become very interesting instruments for the study and discovery of this occult world.

In all ages there have been initiatory schools which took up these particularly talented people and educated them in this kind of science. These schools were always more or less secret or hidden, for ordinary men are quite intolerant of those capacities which are beyond them — and disturb them. But there were fine periods in human history when these schools were recognised and much appreciated and respected, as in ancient Egypt, ancient Chaldea, ancient India, and even partially in Greece and Rome. There were always schools of initiation, even in mediaeval Europe, but there they had to be very carefully hidden, for they were pursued and persecuted by the official Christian religion, and if perchance it was discovered that such and such men or women were practising these occult sciences, they were tied to the stake and burnt alive as sorcerers!... In our times this knowledge is almost lost; there are only a very few people who have it; but with mental growth the intolerance also has gone. People don't like these things very much — they are disturbed, annoyed by them — but still they are obliged to admit that these things are not crimes and people practising occultism are no longer burnt at the stake or imprisoned.

Only, there are many people who claim to know but there are very few who do know. In any case, before entering upon this study, one must have, as I told you at the beginning, a very great self-mastery, must have attained a kind of abnegation, a self-forgetfulness, an egolessness, a disinterestedness and sense of sacrifice which enables one to practise this without any danger. For, if you keep all egoistic or passionate movements, full of desires, you are sure, in the practice of this science, to meet with accidents which may have fatal consequences. As I said at the beginning, the *absolutely* indispensable condition is to have an intrepidity which does not allow any fear to enter into you. For this has been very often said, and it is quite true, that when you enter the invisible realm, the first things you meet are literally terrifying. If you have no fear, there is no danger, but the least fear puts you into danger. So, before anybody at all was allowed to practise this science, for a very long time, sometimes for years, the novice was submitted to a discipline which gave him the assurance that he could practise it without experiencing the least fear and without any danger. That is why, my children, I have never spoken to you about it.[...]

(The Mother tells the story of a Danish painter to whom she taught occultism. In an occult experience he saw a formidable tiger coming towards him. As he had no fear, the tiger "began to grow smaller and smaller and smaller and — it became a tiny little cat!")

What does the tiger represent?

It was probably... That day he had become angry with somebody, he had lost his temper and entertained bad thoughts; he had hoped that something very unpleasant would happen to this person. Now, in occultism there is the "rebound". You send out a bad thought, it returns to you as an attack. That is exactly one of the reasons why you must have a complete control over your feelings, sensations, thoughts, for if you become angry with someone or think badly of him, or if, still worse, you wish him ill, well, in your very dream you see this person coming with an extreme violence to attack you. Then, if you do not know these things, you say, "Why, I was right in having bad thoughts against him!" But in fact, it is not at all that. It is your own thought that comes back to you. And the person may be absolutely unaware of all that has happened, for — and this is one of the commonest laws in occultism — if you make a formation, for instance a mental formation that an accident or something unpleasant should happen to a certain person and you send out this formation, if it so happens that this person is in a very high state of consciousness, does not at all wish anything bad, is quite indifferent and disinterested in the affair, the formation will come up against his atmosphere and instead of entering will rebound upon the one who has made it.

3 March 1954

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Everybody practises occultism without knowing that he does. Everybody has this power spontaneously but doesn't know he has it. It may be a very slight one, like a pin-head; it may be as vast as the Earth or even the universe. But you cannot live without practising occultism, only you don't know it.[...]

When you think — I have explained this to you I don't know how

many times — when you think, you are practising occultism. Only, you don't know it. When you are thinking of someone, some part of you is automatically in contact with this person, and if to your thought is added a will that this person may be like this or like that or do this or that or understand this or that — whatever it may be — well, you are practising occultism, only you don't know it.... There are people who do this with power, and when they have a strong thought it manifests and is realised. There are people in whom it is very feeble and they do not obtain many results. It depends on the power of your thought and also on your power of concentration. But this kind of occultism everybody practises without even knowing it. So the difference from someone who really practises occultism is that he knows he is doing it and perhaps how he does it.

18 September 1957

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Sweet Mother, Sri Aurobindo is speaking about occult endeavour here and says that those who don't have the capacity must wait till it is given to them. Can't they get it through practice?

No. That is, if it is latent in someone, it can be developed by practice. But if one doesn't have occult power, he may try for fifty years, he won't get anywhere. Everybody cannot have occult power. It is as though you were asking whether everybody could be a musician, everybody could be a painter, everybody could... Some can, some can't. It is a question of temperament.

What is the difference between occultism and mysticism?

They are not at all the same thing.

Mysticism is a more or less emotive relation with what one senses to be a divine power — that kind of highly emotional, affective, very intense relation with something invisible which is or is taken for the Divine. That is mysticism.

Occultism is exactly what he [Sri Aurobindo] has said: it is the knowledge of invisible forces and the power to handle them. It is a science.

It is altogether a science. I always compare occultism with chemistry, for it is the same kind of knowledge as the knowledge of chemistry for material things. It is a knowledge of invisible forces, their different vibrations, their interrelations, the combinations which can be made by bringing them together and the power one can exercise over them. It is absolutely scientific; and it ought to be learnt like a science; that is, one cannot practise occultism as something emotional or something vague and imprecise. You must work at it as you would do at chemistry, and learn all the rules or find them if there is nobody to teach you. But it is at some risk to yourself that you can find them. There are combinations here as explosive as certain chemical combinations.

Is occultism necessary in this life?

In this life? That depends upon what one wants to do. You mean in the life of yoga? Not at all necessary. And besides, as he [Sri Aurobindo] says, there are many who are not gifted, who don't have the faculty. Lots of people, as soon as they have the least experience, the least experience, for instance when they just begin to come out of their body, are panic-stricken, and this indeed is something very difficult to cure. It can be cured if one has a strong will and a great self-mastery. But many people are not able to dissociate their states of being. If they dissociate them, something goes wrong, their body suffers; while there are others who go out, take a walk, return. For them this is quite natural. Usually, those who are interested in this — unless it is only a kind of mental curiosity — are also gifted. They may not know it but they can be taught.

But these things have to be practised with precaution. For instance — I am going to give you an example: as soon as one goes out of the body, no matter how slightly, and even just mentally, well, that part of the mind which controls the functioning goes out; and the automatic side of the mind which makes or produces movements or glandular secretions, that whole automatic side, you see, remains without the protection and control of the conscious, thinking part. Well, in the atmosphere there are always numerous little entities, very tiny, usually originating from human disintegrations, which are like physical microbes, some kind of microbes of the vital. They are more visible and have a will of their own. One can't say they are wicked but they are full of mischief. They like to have a good

time and enjoy themselves at people's expense. So, as soon as they see that you are not sufficiently protected, they get hold of the automatic mind and bring upon you all sorts of quite unpleasant things — as, for example, some people swallow their tongue when in a trance; this suffocates them if they don't take care. Others bite their tongue; sometimes this hurts very badly. All sorts of things like this may happen to you — which means that normally you should never enter into a trance without having somebody nearby to watch over you, and not only watch just physically but... watch with the conscious power of preventing these little entities from getting hold of your nervous centres which are not protected by the conscious Presence. This is a general rule.

There are greater dangers than that. When one goes out of the body materially — and nothing but the contact of a link remains, you understand, it is a kind of link like a thread of light joining the being that has gone out with the one that remains behind — if this link is protected, nothing happens. But if it is not protected, there may be adverse forces, not only full of mischief but with much ill-will also, which could come and cut it. And then, once it is cut, you may try as hard as you like, but you cannot get back into the body.

One dies?

Yes, after a while. Which means that all this is not at all a joke, you understand, or just a matter of having fun or something one can do simply to amuse oneself. It must be done in the right way and in the required conditions, and with great care. And then, one thing is *absolutely* essential, absolutely: you must not touch this occult science if you have the least fear in you. For instance, if in your dreams you meet terrible things and get frightened, you should not practise occultism. If, on the other hand, the most frightful dreams you have leave you absolutely calm, and even at times amused and very much interested, if you can handle all that and know how to get out of the difficulty in every circumstance, then that means you have the ability and can do it. Some people are very brave warriors in their dreams. When they meet enemies, they know how to fight; they know not only how to defend themselves, but also to conquer; they are full of ardour, energy, courage; these indeed are the true candidates for occultism. But those who rush back into their body as fast as

a rat into its hole, they should surely not touch it.

And then, you must also have an infinite patience; because just as it takes many years to learn how to handle the different chemical substances, just as you have to work for long periods without getting any visible results when you want to discover the least thing that's new, so in occultism you may try for years together and not have the least experience. And that becomes very monotonous and hardly interesting; and there is always in man that kind of physical mind, practical and positive, which keeps on telling you, "Why are you trying? You see quite well there is nothing in it, these are all stories people tell you; why are you working for nothing? You are wasting your time. There is nothing at all in it, it is all imagination." It is very difficult to keep one's conviction and faith when there is nothing upon which to found them.

30 June 1954

The Occult World

Well, the occult world is not one single region where everything is mixed, which only becomes occult because we can't see it. The occult world is a gradation of regions, one could perhaps say, of more and more ethereal or subtle regions, anyway, those farther and farther removed in their nature from the physical materiality we ordinarily see. And each one of these domains is a world in itself, having its forms and inhabited by beings with a density, one might say, analogous to that of the domain in which they live. Just as in the physical world we are of the same materiality as the physical world, so in the vital world, in the mental world, in the overmind world and in the supramental world — and in many others, infinite others — there are beings which have a form whose substance is similar to the one of that world. This means that if you are able to enter consciously into that world with the part of your being which corresponds to that domain, you can move there quite objectively, as in the material world.

And there, there are as many, and even many more things to see and observe than in our poor little material world, which belongs to only *one* zone of this infinite gradation. You meet all sorts of things in these domains, and you need to make a study as profound, perhaps still more

profound than in the physical world, to be able to know what is happening there, to have relations with the beings who live there.

It is obvious that as one goes farther, as it were, from the material world, the forms and consciousness of those beings are of a purity, beauty and perfection much higher than our ordinary physical forms. It is only in the nearest vital world, the one which is, so to say, mixed with our material life — though it lies beyond it and there is a zone where the vital is no longer mixed with the material world — of that material vital one can say that in some of its aspects it is even uglier than things here, for it is filled with a bad will which is not counterbalanced by the presence of the psychic being which, in the physical world, amends, corrects, puts right, directs this bad will. But it is rather a limited zone and, as soon as one goes beyond it, one can find and meet things that are not favourable to human life, beings not on the same scale as human existence, but having their own beauty and grandeur, with whom one may establish relations which may become quite pleasant and even useful.

Only, as I have already told you, it is not very prudent to venture into these domains without a previous initiation and, above all, a purification of nature which prevents you from entering there all weighed down and deformed by your desires, your passions, egoisms, fears and weaknesses. Before undertaking these activities one needs a complete preparation of self-purification and widening of the consciousness which is absolutely indispensable.

In these invisible worlds there are also regions which are the result of human mental formations. One can find there all one wants. In fact, one very often finds there exactly what one expects to find. There are hells, there are paradises, there are purgatories. There are all sorts of things in accordance with the different religions and their conceptions. These things have only a very relative existence, but with a relativity similar to that of material things here; that is to say, for someone who finds himself there, they are entirely real and their effects quite tangible. One needs an inner liberation, a wideness of the consciousness and a contact with a deeper and higher truth to be able to escape from the illusion of their reality. But this is something almost similar to what happens here: human beings here are mostly convinced that the only reality is the physical reality — the reality of what one can touch, can see — and for them, all that cannot be seen,

cannot be touched, cannot be felt, is after all, problematical; well, what happens there is an identical phenomenon. People who at the moment of death are convinced, for one reason or another, that they are going to paradise or maybe to hell, *do find* themselves there after their death; and for them it is truly a paradise or a hell. And it is extremely difficult to make them come out of it and go to a place which is more true, more real.

So it is difficult to speak of all these worlds, these innumerable worlds, in a few minutes. It is a knowledge which needs a lived experience of many years, thoroughly systematic, and which requires, as I said, an inner preparation absolutely indispensable, to make it harmless.

We all get the chance to have a little contact — very partial, very superficial — with these worlds in our dreams. And the study of dreams itself already demands much time and care, and in itself may constitute a preparation for a deeper study of the invisible worlds.

11 July 1956

Mother, can we go to the other planets by occult means?

Ah! Yes, one can go everywhere. What prevents us from going? One goes everywhere. Only, you see, we must know that it is not the physical body which goes; it is the most material thing... the most material vital; and this is already very difficult.

Usually it is the mental part of the vital which goes out; not the mind, the vital. For short distances one can go out from his body with the subtle physical, and in these cases one sees things materially as they are. But one can't go long distances. There are practical reasons, but above all there is the reason of safety; because if one goes too far with the subtle physical, the body is not only in a trance, it is in a cataleptic state, and then, unless it is guarded by someone who has a very profound knowledge and a great power, this can turn out badly. Therefore, for these long journeys it is usually the most subtle part of the vital (which corresponds to a kind of mental consciousness of the vital), which goes out.

So one sees everything which has a similar quality. But supposing there is something very material, one doesn't see it as it is. So one can't say with certainty, "It is like this or like that." One can say, "I saw this," that's all.

But one can't recount stories like those in the papers about what is happening on the moon or Jupiter or Venus. One can have an experience and know certain things but usually they are things of a more psychological nature.

However, if it is in order to know whether there are some beings there, I don't think there's any place in the universe where there aren't beings, because that's the very principle of this universe: individual creations. Everywhere there are individual creations but they have different densities. Most of them are invisible except to those with a similar density, and only those who have the capacity of coming out of their bodies and going for a stroll can see these things. But so long as you use these eyes you can't see very much.

Such a limited field of vision! In fact, when you think of it, such an absolutely ridiculous limitation! The field of our sense experience has an absolutely ridiculous limitation; while in the mind, if you think of someone or something, a city or a place, you are there immediately, instantaneously, you see. And you are there — it is not that you are not there, you are there, and you can have so precise a mental contact that you can have a conversation, ask questions and receive answers, on condition that the other person is fairly sensitive. Why, this is something which happens constantly, constantly. Only, you must have a little knowledge, naturally, for otherwise you don't even understand what is happening.

18 May 1955

The Practice of Magic

Sweet Mother, what is white magic?

What we call "white magic" is a beneficial magic and "black magic" is a harmful magic. But in fact these are mere words, they have no meaning.

Magic?... It is a knowledge that has been reduced to purely material formulas. They are some kind of words or numbers or combinations of words and numbers, which, if they are simply pronounced or written, even by someone who has no inner power, must act. In occultism, this is what corresponds to chemical formulas in science. You see, in science you have

chemical formulas for combining certain elements and producing others from them; even if you do not have any mental or vital or even physical power, if you just follow to the letter the formula you have, you obtain the required result — it is enough simply to have a memory. Well, the same thing has been tried in occultism, making combinations of sounds, letters, numbers, words, which, by their inherent qualities, have the power to obtain a certain result. In this way, any fool, if he learns this and does exactly what he is told, obtains — or believes he will obtain — the result he wants. While... let us take the mantra, for instance, which is a form of occultism; unless the mantra is given by a guru and the guru transmits his occult or spiritual power to you with the mantra, you may repeat your mantra thousands of times, it will have no effect.

That is to say, in *true* occultism, one must have the quality, the ability, the inner gift in order to use it, and that is the safeguard. True occultism cannot be practised by any fool. And this is no longer magic — neither white magic nor black nor golden — it is not magic at all, it is a spiritual power which must be acquired by long discipline; and finally, it is given to you only by a divine grace.

This means that as soon as one draws near the Truth, one is safe from all charlatanism, all pretension and falsehood. Of this I have had numerous and extremely conclusive proofs. And so someone who has the true occult power possesses at the same time, by the strength of this inner truth, the power to undo any magic, white or black or whatever colour it may be, simply by applying a drop of that truth, one might say. There is nothing that can resist that power. And this is very well known to those who practise magic, for they always take very great care, in all countries but especially in India, never to try out any of their formulas against yogis and saints, because they know that these formulas which they send out with their little mechanical, very superficial power, will go and strike, like a ball on a wall, the true power that protects one who leads a spiritual life, and quite naturally their formula will rebound and fall back on them.

The yogi or saint doesn't need to do anything, he doesn't even have to want to protect himself: it is something automatic.

He is in a state of consciousness and inner power which automatically protects him from everything that is inferior. Naturally, he can also use his

power deliberately to protect others. This rebounding of the bad formation from his atmosphere automatically protects him, but if this bad formation is made against someone he is protecting or simply someone who asks for his help, then he can, by a movement of his own atmosphere, his own aura, surround the person who is exposed to the evil magic spells, and the rebounding process acts in the same way and causes the bad formation to fall back quite naturally on the one who made it. But in this case the conscious will of the yogi or saint or sage is needed. He has to be informed about what has happened and he must decide to intervene.

That is the difference between true knowledge and magic.

10 September 1958

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Sweet Mother, I have heard that the magicians who use occult powers for their work suffer a great deal after their death. Is it true?

What sort of magicians are you speaking about? Any kind?

Those who have occult powers and use them for their personal interest?
You mean these?

Yes.

I don't know whether they suffer after their death or lose their consciousness, but in any case, obviously they are not in any state of peace or happiness, that's absolutely certain. For it is a kind of absolute rule from the spiritual point of view: it is by an inner discipline and by consecration to the Divine that the powers come to you. But if with your aspiration, your discipline and consecration, an ambition is mixed up, that is, an intention to obtain powers, then if they come to you it is almost like a curse. Usually they don't come to you, but something vital which tries to imitate them comes to you with adverse influences which put you entirely under the domination of beings who give you powers simply with the intention of making use of you, using you to do all the work they have the intention of doing, and to create all the disorder they want to create. And when they find that you have served them enough and are no longer good

for anything, they just destroy you. They may not be able to destroy you physically because they don't always have the power to do it, but they destroy you mentally, vitally and in your consciousness, and after that you are good for nothing, even before dying. And after death, as you are entirely under their influence, the first thing they do is to swallow you up, because this is their way of making use of people — to swallow them. So it cannot be a very pleasant experience. It is a very, very, very dangerous game.

But everywhere, in all the teachings, in all the disciplines, in all ages, the same thing has been repeated: that one must never intermingle ambition and personal interest with the sadhana, otherwise he is inviting trouble. So it is not only a particular case, it is all the instances of this kind which have fatal consequences.

Sweet Mother, are there any magicians who do not work magic for their personal interest?

You mean magical rites? Because, you see, you must not mix up magic with occultism.

Occultism is a science and it is the knowledge of invisible forces and the capacity to handle them, as one has the capacity of handling material forces if one has studied them scientifically.

Magic: these are different kinds of processes which were fixed probably by people who had a certain knowledge, and still more a certain power of vital formation. These things can be learnt without having any special capacity, that is, someone who has no inner power can learn this as he learns chemistry, for example, or mathematics. It is one of the things which are learnt like that, it is not a thing one acquires. So it doesn't itself carry any special virtues except the same kind of qualities as those one learns through chemical manipulations. You may reproduce these manipulations, but if you are an intelligent and capable being, you can by the help of these manipulations obtain an interesting and useful result, and in any case, be sheltered from all danger; whereas if you are an idiot, misfortunes may come to you. It is something similar.

With the help of magical formulas one may produce a certain result, but this result is necessarily limited and has no particular interest for those

who, through their inner development, spontaneously receive powers of which they have a higher knowledge, not a mechanical one. It is not for someone who is truly a yogi; it has no interest except that of curiosity. It is interesting only for people who are precisely not yogis and who want to have certain powers which, in fact, they have in a very limited way — it is always limited.

What is special about it is that it has a direct action upon matter; while usually, apart from some rare exceptions, with people who have spiritual powers, yogic powers, it acts through the intermediary of the mental forces usually — either spiritual or mental forces — sometimes of the vital forces (more rarely), but not directly upon matter, except naturally with those who have done yoga in matter, but these are exceptional cases of which one doesn't speak. These things put into motion certain small entities which are usually the result of the decomposition of human beings and yet have a sufficient contact with the material world to be able to act there. But anyhow, if the action is of a lower order, the power is of a lower order, and it is something almost repugnant for one who is truly in relation with the higher forces.

To act in order to accomplish a work with the spontaneous powers of spiritual realisation, that is well understood. But one may say that everybody does that, because just the fact of thinking means that you are acting invisibly; and according to the power of your thought your action is more or less wide-spread. But to use small magical formulas to obtain a result is something that has no true relation with the spiritual life. From the spiritual point of view it appears even surprising that these things can always prove effective, because for each case the need is different; and how putting together certain words and making certain signs can always have an effect seems surprising.

When one wants to act spiritually and for some reason or other it is necessary, for example, to formulate words, the words come spontaneously and are exactly the words needed for the particular occasion. But things written beforehand which one repeats mechanically most of the time, without even knowing what one is saying and why one is saying it — it is difficult to see how this can always work. There is bound to be a great imprecision in the action. And one thing is certain, that this same formula cannot have exactly the same effect, and that one factor is indispensable

for it to take effect: fear. The first thing is a kind of fear, a fright created in the person against whom the magic is done; for if he has no fear I am quite sure that it cannot have any effect or has so ridiculously small an effect that it's not worth speaking about it.

What opens the door to the action of these forces is fear, a kind of apprehension, the feeling that something is going to happen; and it is these vibrations of fear which put out certain forces from you, forces which give these entities the power to act.

Sweet Mother, there are people who do hypnotism. Then, when they always practise it on the same person, does that person fall ill after a while?

Not necessarily ill. It depends on the kind of hypnotism and hypnotiser. Not necessarily ill. One thing is certain, that this person loses his personal will, that the hypnotiser's will takes the place of the personal will, otherwise it would not work. But not necessarily ill, terribly dependent! It creates almost a kind of slavery.

3 August 1955

The Stone-Throwing Incident

There was a time we were living in the Guest House.¹⁵ Sri Aurobindo lived on the first floor, in the room right at the end which is now the meditation-room of the children's boarding. I believe there are two rooms side by side, one used to be a bathroom but is now an ordinary room, and a room next to it which was mine — the bathroom and another room. Sri Aurobindo was on one side.

How many of us were there in that house?... Amrita was there (*turning to the disciple*), weren't you, Amrita, do you remember that day? (*Laughter*) We had a cook called Vatel. This cook was rather bad-tempered and didn't like being reproved about his work. Moreover, he was in contact with some Musulmans who had, it seems, magical powers — they had a book of magic and the ability to practise magic. One day, this

¹⁵ Sri Aurobindo lived in the building known as the Guest House between 1913 and September 1922. The incident related by Mother here occurred in December 1921.

cook had done something very bad and had been scolded — I don't know if any of you knew Datta, it was Datta who had scolded him — and he was furious. He had threatened us, saying, "You will see, you will be compelled to leave this house." We had taken no notice of it.

Two or three days later, I think, someone came and told me that stones had fallen in the courtyard — a few stones, three or four: bits of brick. We wondered who was throwing stones from the next house. We did exactly what we forbid children to do: we went round on the walls and roofs to see if we could find someone or the stones or something — we found nothing.

That happened, I believe, between four and five in the afternoon. As the day declined, the number of stones increased. The next day, there were still more. They started striking specially the door of the kitchen and one of them struck Datta's arm as she was going across the courtyard. The number increased very much. The interest was growing. And as the interest grew, it produced a kind of effect of multiplication! And the stones began falling in several directions at the same time, in places where there were neither doors nor windows; there was a staircase, but it had no opening in those days: there was only a small bull's-eye. And the stones were falling on the staircase this way (*vertical gesture*); if they had come through the bull's-eye, they would have come like this (*slantwise movement*), but they were falling straight down. So, I think everyone began to become truly interested. I must tell you that this Vatel had informed us that he was ill and for the last two days — since the stones had started falling — he hadn't come. But he had left with us his under-cook, a young boy of about thirteen or fourteen, quite fat, somewhat lifeless and a little quiet, perhaps a little stupid. And we noticed that when this boy moved around, wherever he went the stones increased. The young men who were there¹⁶ — Amrita among them — shut the boy up in a room, with all the doors and windows closed. [...] And there was the boy sitting there inside and the stones began falling, with all the doors and windows closed! And more and more fell, and finally the boy was wounded in the leg. Then they started feeling the thing was going too far.

I was with Sri Aurobindo: quietly we were working, meditating together. The boys cast a furtive glance to see what was going on and

¹⁶ Sri Aurobindo's early disciples.

began warning us, for it was perhaps time to tell us that the thing was taking pretty serious proportions. I understood immediately what the matter was.

I must tell you that we had made an attempt earlier to exhaust all possibilities of an ordinary, physical explanation. We had called in the police, informed them that there was somebody throwing stones at us, and they wanted very much to come and see what was happening. So a policeman — who was a fine fellow — immediately told us, “Oh! you have Vatel as your cook. Yes, yes, we know what it is!” He had a loaded pistol and stood waiting there in the courtyard — not a stone! I was on the terrace with Sri Aurobindo; I said to Sri Aurobindo, “That’s a bit too bad, we call the police and just then the stones stop falling! But that is very annoying, in this way he will think we haven’t told the truth, for no stones are falling.” Instantaneously the stones began falling again. (*Laughter*)

You should note that the stones were falling quite a long way off from the terrace and not one of them came anywhere near us.¹⁷

So the policeman said, “It’s not worthwhile, my staying here, I know what it is, it is Vatel who has done this against you, I am going.”

It was after this that we made the experiment of shutting up the boy, and the stones began to fall in the closed room and I was informed that the boy had been wounded. Then I said, “All right, send the boy out of the house immediately. Send him to another house, anywhere, and let him be looked after, but don’t keep him here, and then, that’s all. Keep quiet and don’t be afraid.” I was in the room with Sri Aurobindo and I thought, “We’ll see what it is.” I went into meditation and gave a little call. I said, “Let us see, who is throwing stones at us now? You must come and tell us who is throwing stones.” ... I saw three little entities of the vital, those small entities which have no strength and just enough consciousness confined to one action — it is nothing at all; but these entities are at the service of people who practise magic. When people practise magic, they order them to come and they are compelled to obey. There are signs, there are words. So, they came, they were frightened — they were terribly frightened! I said, “But why do you fling stones like that? What does it mean, this bad joke?” They replied, “We are compelled, we are compelled... (*Laughter*) It

¹⁷ Near Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

is not our fault, we have been ordered to do it, it is not our fault.”

I really felt so much like laughing but still I kept a serious face and told them, “Well, you must stop this, you understand!” Then they told me, “Don’t you want to keep us? We shall do all that you ask.” “Ah!” I thought, “let us see, this is perhaps going to be interesting.” I said to them, “But what can you do?” — “We know how to throw stones.” (*Laughter*) — “That doesn’t interest me at all, I don’t want to throw stones at anyone... but could you perchance bring me flowers? Can you bring me some roses?” Then they looked at one another in great dismay and answered, “No, we are not made for that, we don’t know how to do it.” I said, “I don’t need you, go away, and take care specially never to come back, for otherwise it will be disastrous!” They ran away and never came back.

There was one thing I had noticed: it was only at the level of the roof that the stones were seen — from the roof downwards, we saw the stones; just till the roof, above it there were no stones. This meant that it was like an automatic formation. In the air nothing could be seen: they materialised in the atmosphere of the house and fell.

And to complete the movement, the next morning — all this happened in the evening — the next morning I came down to pay a visit to the kitchen — there were pillars in the kitchen — and upon one of the pillars I found some signs with numbers as though made with a bit of charcoal, very roughly drawn — I don’t remember the signs now — and also words in Tamil. Then I rubbed out everything carefully and made an invocation, and so it was finished, the comedy was over.

However, not quite. Vatel’s daughter was the *ayah* in the house, the maid-servant. She came early in the afternoon in a state of intense fright saying, “My father is in the hospital, he is dying; this morning something happened to him; suddenly he felt very ill and he is dying, he has been taken to the hospital, I am terribly frightened.” I knew what it was. I went to Sri Aurobindo and said to him, “You know, Vatel is in the hospital, he is dying.” Then Sri Aurobindo looked at me, he smiled: “Oh, just for a few stones!” (*Laughter*)

That very evening Vatel was cured. But he never started anything again.

How could the stones be seen?

That's what is remarkable. There are beings that have the power of dematerialising and rematerialising objects. These were quite ordinary pieces of bricks, but these pieces materialised only in the field where the magic acted. The magic was practised for this house, especially for its courtyard, and the action of vital forces worked only there. That was why when I sent away the boy and he went to another house, not a single stone hit him any more. The magical formation was made specially for this house, and the stones materialised in the courtyard. And as it was something specially directed against Datta, she was hit on her arm.

There was yet something else.... Ah, yes! We came to know later to which magician Vatel had gone. He had gone to a magician who, it seems, is very well known here and he had said that he wanted definitely to make us leave that house — I don't know why. He was furious. And so he asked the magician to make stones fall there. The magician told him, "But that's the house Sri Aurobindo lives in!" He said, "Yes." — "Ah! no, I am not going to meddle in this business; you manage it, I am not getting involved." Then Vatel insisted very much; he even promised him a greater reward, a little more money. The magician said, "Well, look here; we are going to make a rule: in a circle of twenty-five metres around Sri Aurobindo" — I think he said twenty or twenty-five metres — "the stones will not fall. Always there will have to be twenty-five metres' distance between the stones and Sri Aurobindo." And he arranged his order of magic in this way. And that was why never did a single stone come anywhere near us, never. They fell at the other end of the courtyard.

They know how to do all that, it is written in their books. These are words and ceremonies having a certain power. Naturally, those who do that must have a vital force. A vital force is necessary — a little mental force also, not much, even very little — but quite a strong vital power to control these little entities, govern them. And these people rule them precisely through fear, for they have the power to dissolve them, so these entities fear this very much. But upon all these formations, all these entities, it is enough to put simply one drop of the true, pure light, the pure white light — the true, pure light which is the supreme light of construction — you put one drop upon them: they dissolve as though there

had been nothing at all there. And yet this is not a force of destruction; it is a force of construction but it is so alien to their nature that they disappear. It is this they feared, for I had called them by showing them this white light; I had told them, "Look, here is this! Come." But their offer was touching: "Oh! we shall do everything you want." I said, "Good, what can you do?" — "Throw stones!"

10 March 1954

Twelve Senses

What are the twelve senses?¹⁸

We are granted five, aren't we? In any case, there is one other which, precisely, has a relation with consciousness. I don't know if you have ever been told this, but a person who is blind, for instance, who does not see, can become aware of an object at some distance through a kind of perception which is not touch for he does not feel it, which is not vision for he does not see, but which is a contact — something that enables him to make a contact without hearing, seeing or touching. This is one of the most developed senses apart from those we habitually use. There is another sense, a sort of sense of proximity: when one comes close to a thing, one feels it as if one had contacted it. Another sense, which is also physical, puts you in touch with events at a great distance; it is a physical sense for it belongs to the physical world, it is not purely mental: there is a sensation. Some people have a sort of sensation of contact with what is happening at a very great distance. You must not forget that in the physical consciousness there are several levels; there is a physical vital and a physical mind which are not solely corporeal. Foresight on the material plane is also one of the physical senses.... We have, then, something that sees at a short distance, something that sees at a long distance and something that sees ahead; this already makes three. These are a sort of improvement of the senses we have; as for instance, hearing at a great distance — there are people who can hear noises at a great distance, who can smell at a great distance. It is a kind of perfecting of these senses.

¹⁸ In a previous conversation the Mother said that a fully developed physical being has not five but twelve senses.

Indications from Books

Once or twice, as a game, you took one of your books or Sri Aurobindo's and opened a page at random, and read out a sentence. Can these sentences give one a sign or an indication? What should we do to get a true answer?

Everybody can do it. It is done in this way: you concentrate. Now, it depends on what you want. If you have an inner problem and want the solution, you concentrate on this problem; if you want to know the condition you are in, which you are not aware of — if you want to get some light on the state you are in, you just come forward with simplicity and ask for the light. Or else, quite simply, if you are curious to know what the invisible knowledge has to tell you, you remain silent and still for a moment and then open the book. I always used to recommend taking a paper-knife, because it is thinner; while you are concentrated you insert it in the book and with the tip indicate something. Then, if you know how to concentrate, that is to say, if you really do it with an aspiration to have an answer, it always comes.

For, in books of this kind (*Mother shows The Synthesis of Yoga*), books of revelation, there is always an accumulation of forces — at least of higher mental forces, and most often of spiritual forces of the highest knowledge. Every book, on account of the words it contains, is like a small accumulator of these forces. People don't know this, for they don't know how to make use of it, but it is so. In the same way, in every picture, photograph, there is an accumulation, a small accumulation representative of the force of the person whose picture it is, of his nature and, if he has powers, of his powers. Now, you, when you are sincere and have an aspiration, you emanate a certain vibration, the vibration of your aspiration which goes and meets the corresponding force in the book, and it is a higher consciousness which gives you the answer.

Everything is contained potentially. Each element of a whole potentially contains what is in the whole. It is a little difficult to explain,

but you will understand with an example: when people want to practise magic, if they have a bit of nail or hair, it is enough for them, because within this, potentially, there is all that is in the being itself. And in a book there is potentially — not expressed, not manifest — the knowledge which is in the person who wrote the book. Thus, Sri Aurobindo represented a totality of comprehension and knowledge and power; and every one of his books is at once a symbol and a representation. Every one of his books contains symbolically, potentially, what is in him. Therefore, if you concentrate on the book, you can, through the book, go back to the source. And even, by passing through the book, you will be able to receive much more than what is just in the book.

There is always a way of reading and understanding what one reads, which gives an answer to what you want. It is not just a chance or an amusement, nor is it a kind of diversion. You may do it just "like that", and then nothing at all happens to you, you have no reply and it is not interesting. But if you do it seriously, if seriously your aspiration tries to concentrate on this instrument — it is like a battery, isn't it, which contains energies — if it tries to come into contact with the energy which is there and insists on having the answer to what it wants to know, well, naturally, the energy which is there — the union of the two forces, the force given out by you and that accumulated in the book — will guide your hand and your paper-knife or whatever you have; it will guide you exactly to the thing that expresses what you ought to know.... Obviously, if one does it without sincerity or conviction, nothing at all happens. If it is done sincerely, one gets an answer.

Certain books are like this, more powerfully charged than others; there are others where the result is less clear. But generally, books containing aphorisms and short sentences — not very long philosophical explanations, but rather things in a condensed and precise form — it is with these that one succeeds best.

Naturally, the value of the answer depends on the value of the spiritual force contained in the book. If you take a novel, it will tell you nothing at all but stupidities. But if you take a book containing a condensation of forces — of knowledge or spiritual force or teaching power — you will receive your answer.

6 June 1956

A Flu Epidemic in Japan

I was in Japan. It was at the beginning of January 1919. Anyway, it was the time when a terrible flu raged there in the whole of Japan, which killed hundreds of thousands of people.¹⁹ It was one of those epidemics the like of which is rarely seen. In Tokyo, every day there were hundreds and hundreds of new cases. The disease appeared to take this turn: it lasted three days and on the third day the patient died. And people died in such large numbers that they could not even be cremated, you understand, it was impossible, there were too many of them. Or otherwise, if one did not die on the third day, at the end of seven days one was altogether cured; a little exhausted but all the same completely cured. There was a panic in the town, for epidemics are very rare in Japan. They are a very clean people, very careful and with a fine morale. Illnesses are very rare. But still this came, it came as a catastrophe. There was a terrible fear. For example, people were seen walking about in the streets with a mask on the nose, a mask to purify the air they were breathing, so that it might not be full of the microbes of the illness. It was a common fear....

Now, it so happened I was living with someone who never ceased troubling me: "But what is this disease? What is there behind this disease?" What I was doing, you know, was simply to cover myself with my force, my protection so as not to catch it and I did not think of it any more and continued doing my work. Nothing happened and I was not thinking of it. But constantly I heard: "What is this? Oh, I would like to know what is there behind this illness. But could you not tell me what this illness is, why it is there? ..." etc. One day I was called to the other end of the town by a young woman whom I knew and who wished to introduce me to some friends and show me certain things: I do not remember now what exactly was the matter, but anyway I had to cross the whole town in a tram-car. And I was in the tram and seeing these people with masks on their noses, and then there was in the atmosphere this constant fear, and so there came a suggestion to me; I began to ask myself: "Truly, what is this illness? What is there behind this illness? What are the forces that are in this illness?..." I came to the house, I passed an hour there and I returned.

¹⁹ In 1919-20, at the end of the First World War, there was a worldwide epidemic of "Spanish flu". This epidemic alone took more lives than the entire war.

And I returned with a terrible fever. I had caught it. It came to you thus, without preparation, instantaneously. Illnesses, generally illnesses from germs and microbes take a few days in the system: they come, there is a little battle inside; you win or you lose, if you lose you catch the illness, it is not complicated. But there, you just receive a letter, open the envelope, hop! puff! The next minute you have the fever. Well, that evening I had a terrible fever.

The doctor was called (it was not I who called him), the doctor was called and he told me: "I must absolutely give you this medicine." It was one of the best medicines for the fever, he had just a little (all their stocks were exhausted, everyone was taking it); he said: "I have still a few packets, I shall give you some." — "I beg of you, do not give it to me, I won't take it. Keep it for someone who has faith in it and will take it." He was quite disgusted: "It was no use my coming here." So I said: "Perhaps it was no use!" And I remained in my bed, with my fever, a violent fever. All the while I was asking myself: "What is this illness? Why is it there? What is there behind it?..." At the end of the second day, as I was lying all alone, I saw clearly a being, with a part of the head cut off, in a military uniform (or the remains of a military uniform) approaching me and suddenly flinging himself upon my chest, with that half a head to suck my force. I took a good look, then realised that I was about to die. He was drawing all my life out (for I must tell you that people were dying of pneumonia in three days). I was completely nailed to the bed, without movement, in a deep trance. I could no longer stir and he was pulling. I thought: now it is the end. Then I called on my occult power, I gave a big fight and I succeeded in turning him back so that he could not stay there any longer. And I woke up.

But I had seen. And I had learnt, I had understood that the illness originated from beings who had been thrown out of their bodies. I had seen this during the First Great War, towards its end, when people used to live in trenches and were killed by bombardment. They were in perfect health, altogether healthy and in a second they were thrown out of their bodies, not conscious that they were dead. They did not know they hadn't a body any more and they tried to find in others the life they could not find in themselves. That is, they were turned into so many countless vampires. And they vampirised upon men. And then over and above that, there was a

decomposition of the vital forces of people who fell ill and died. One lived in a kind of sticky and thick cloud made up of all that. And so those who took in this cloud fell ill and usually got cured, but those who were attacked by a being of that kind invariably died, they could not resist. I know how much knowledge and force were necessary for me to resist. It was irresistible. That is, if they were attacked by a being who was a centre of this whirl of bad forces, they died. And there must have been many of these, a very great number. I saw all that and I understood.

22 July 1953

CHAPTER 14

Day-to-Day Life

Make Use of Reason

Ordinary people enter life without even knowing what it is to live, and at each step they have to learn how to live. And before knowing what they want to realise, they must at least know how to walk; as we teach a tiny little child how to walk, in life one has also to learn how to live. Which people know how to live? And it is through experience, through mistakes, through all kinds of misfortunes and troubles of every sort that gradually one begins to be what is called reasonable; that is, when one has made a mistake a certain number of times and has had troublesome consequences from this mistake, one learns not to make it again. But there is a moment, when the brain is developed enough and you can use the reason, well, reason can help you to reduce the number of these mistakes, to teach you to walk the path without stumbling too often.

The immense majority of human beings are born, live and die without knowing why this has happened to them. They take it... it is like that; they are born, they live, they have what they call their joys and their sorrows, and they come to the end and go away. They came in and went out without learning anything. This indeed is the immense majority.

There is among them a small number of people called the elite, who try to know what has happened to them, why they are upon earth and why all that happens to them happens. Then among these there are some who use their reason and they find a way of walking properly on the path, much faster than the others. These are reasonable beings.

Now there is a handful — a big handful — of people who are born with the feeling that there is something else to find in life, a higher purpose to life, that there is an aim, and they strive to find it. So for these the path goes beyond reason, to regions which they have to explore either with or without help, as chance takes them, and they must then discover the higher

worlds. But there are not many of this kind. I don't know how many of these there are now in the world, but I have the impression that they could still be counted. So for these it depends on when they begin.

Now there are beings, I think, who are born and whose rational period of life may begin very early, when they are very young, and it may last for a very short time; and then they are almost immediately ready to set out on new and unexplored paths towards the higher realities. But in order to set out on these paths without fear and without any danger, one must have organised his being with the help of reason around the highest centre he consciously possesses, and organised it in such a way that it is inwardly in his control and he has not to say at every moment, "Ah! I have done this, I don't know why. Ah! that's happened to me, I don't know why" — and always it is "I don't know, I don't know, I don't know", and as long as it is like that, the path is somewhat dangerous. Only when one does what he wants, knows what he wants, does what he wants and is able to direct himself with certitude, without being tossed about by the hazards of life, then one can go forward on the supranational paths fearlessly, unhesitatingly and with the least danger. But one need not be very old for this to happen. One can begin very young: even a child of five can already make use of reason to control himself; I know it. There is enough mental organisation in the being in these little tots who look so spontaneous and irresponsible; there is enough cerebral organisation for them to organise themselves, their life, their nature, their movements, actions and thoughts with reason.[...]

Do the laws of Nature follow the law of human reason?

Oh, no!

Then how can we explain so many laws of Nature by human reason ?

Because human reason is higher than Nature.

Nature is infrarational. The laws of Nature are infrarational laws. So when men come along and tell you, "But what do you want, it is the law of Nature", as for me, it makes me laugh. It is not worth being a man, it would be better for you to be a monkey or an elephant or a lion. The laws of Nature are infrarational.

This is the only superiority that man has, his having a reason, and when he doesn't make use of it he becomes absolutely an animal.

That's the last excuse to give: "What do you want, it's the law of Nature!"

25 May 1955

Attraction and Repulsion

Sweet Mother, why does one feel attracted at first sight to some people and feel a repulsion for others?

Usually this is based on vital affinities, nothing else. There are vital vibrations which harmonise and vital vibrations which don't. It is usually this, nothing else. It is vital chemistry.

One would have to be in a much deeper and more clear-sighted consciousness for it to be otherwise. There is an inner perception based on a psychic consciousness, which makes you feel which people have the same aspiration, the same aim, and can be your companions on the way; and this perception also makes you clear-sighted about those who follow a very different way or carry in them forces which are hostile to you and may harm you in your development. But to attain such a perception one must oneself be exclusively occupied with one's own spiritual progress and integral realisation. Now, that is not often the case. And usually too, when one has attained this inner clear-sightedness, it is not expressed by attraction and repulsion, but by a very "objective" knowledge, it might be said, and a kind of inner certainty which makes you act calmly and reasonably, and without attractions and repulsions.

Therefore, it may be said in a general and almost absolute way that those who have very definite and impulsive likes and dislikes live in a vital consciousness. Mixed with this, there may be mental affinities; that is, some minds like to have relationships in common activities, but here too, these are people on a much higher level intellectually, and this is also expressed even more by a comparative ease in relationships and by something much more calm and detached. One takes pleasure in speaking with certain people; for others there is no attraction, one gains nothing

from it. It is a little more distant and quiet; it belongs more to the field of reason. But likes and dislikes clearly belong to the vital world. Well, there is a vital chemistry just as there is physical chemistry: there are bodies which repel each other and others which attract; there are substances which combine and others which explode, and it is like that. There are some vital vibrations which harmonise, and harmonise to such an extent that ninety-nine times out of a hundred these sympathies are taken for what men call love, and suddenly people feel, "Oh! he is the one I was waiting for", "Oh! she is the one I was seeking!" (*laughing*), and they rush towards each other, till they find out that it was something very superficial and that these things can't last. There. So the first advice given to those who want to do yoga: "Rise above likes and dislikes." This is something without any deeper reality and it can at the very least lead you into difficulties which are at times quite hard to overcome. You can ruin your life with these things. And the best thing is not to take any notice of them — to draw back a little into yourself and ask yourself why — it's nothing very mysterious — you like to meet this person, don't like to meet that one.

But, as I say, there comes a moment when one is exclusively occupied with one's sadhana, when one can feel — but both more subtly and much more quietly — that a particular contact is favourable to sadhana and another harmful. But that always takes a much more "detached" form, so to say, and often it even contradicts the so-called attractions and repulsions of the vital; very often it has nothing to do with them.

So, the best thing is to look at all that from a little distance and to lecture yourself a little on the futility of these things.

Obviously there are some natures which are almost fundamentally bad, beings who are born wicked and love to do harm; and logically, if one is quite natural, not perverted, natural as animals are — for from this point of view they are far superior to men; perversion begins with humanity — then one keeps out of the way, as one would stand aside from something fundamentally harmful. But happily these cases are not very frequent; what one meets in life are usually very mixed natures where there is a kind of balance, so to say, between the good and the bad, and one may expect to have both good and bad relations. There is no reason to feel any deep dislike, for, as one is quite mixed oneself (*laughing*), like meets like!

It is also said that some people are like vampires, and when they come near a person they spontaneously suck up his vitality and energy, and that one should beware of them as of a very serious danger. But that also... Not that it doesn't exist, but it is not very frequent, and certainly not so total that one need run away when one meets such a person.

So, essentially, if one wants to develop spiritually, the first thing to do is to overcome one's dislikes... and one's likes. Look at all that with a smile.

11 September 1957

No Two Things Are Identical

It is said that there are people who are very intelligent, and others who are foolish. Why?

Why? But, my child, there are all kinds of things in Nature! No two things are identical. All the possibilities exist in Nature: everything you can imagine and a hundred million times more. So you notice that there are intelligent people and again others who are not. And then there are others still who are unbalanced. And yet, your observations cover a very narrow field. But you can tell yourself that all this exists and hundreds of thousands of millions of other things also exist, and that no two things are alike in the world. And I don't think there is anything one can imagine which doesn't exist somewhere. This is exactly what amuses Nature most — she tries out everything, does everything, makes everything, undoes everything, and she makes all possible combinations and goes on changing them, re-handling them, remaking them, and it is a perpetual movement of all the possibilities following one another, clashing, intermingling, combining and falling apart. No two moments of terrestrial life are alike; and for how long has the earth existed?... Very well-informed people will perhaps tell you approximately. And for how long will it yet live? They will perhaps tell you that also: figures with many zeros, so many zeros that you won't be able to read them. But it won't ever be the same thing twice over nor will there be two similar moments. If you find things looking alike, that is only an appearance. There are no two things alike, and no two identical moments. And all this goes back so far that you cannot count.

And it goes so far in front that you cannot count. And it will never be twice the same thing. So, you can't ask me why this exists and why that exists!...

You wanted to ask me why? Nature has much more imagination than you, you know! She imagines new things all the time. It must be so for it is changing all the time and all combinations are always new. Not two seconds in the universe are identical. She has a great deal of imagination. Have you never thought about that?... Do you ever really have two similar moments? No. You know very well that you are not today what you were yesterday and you won't be tomorrow what you are today... and that if you went back only... say, ten years, you wouldn't recognise yourself at all any longer! You don't know even what you used to think about, granting that you thought about anything!

So, there is no problem. All that you can do is to try and investigate the field of experience given to you which is extremely limited, to see all the possibilities. And you could begin noting them; you would see that it would make a huge volume immediately, simply in that tiny little field of experience which is yours!

And what are you?... One second in Eternity!

12 August 1953

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Things come to you because they have an affinity. There is something to which they can cling, a kind of sympathy somewhere, which may not be very conscious or very open, but there is one. And if it were not there, the thing would no longer come. There is a whole set of things which never come to bother you any longer, once you have changed the essential points in your nature.

23 March 1955

Meat-Eating and Fasting

What happens if one eats meat?

Do you want me to tell you a story? I knew a lady, a young Swedish woman, who was doing sadhana; and she was by habit a vegetarian, from both choice and habit. One day she was invited by some friends who gave her chicken for dinner. She did not want to make a fuss, she ate the chicken. But afterwards, during the night suddenly she found herself in a basket with her head between two pieces of wicker-work, shaken, shaken, shaken, and feeling wretched, miserable; and then, after that she found herself head down, feet in the air, and being shaken, shaken, shaken. (*Laughter*) She felt perfectly miserable; and then all of a sudden, somebody began pulling out things from her body, and that hurt her terribly, and then someone came along with a knife and chopped off her head; and then she woke up. She told me all this; she said she had never had such a frightful nightmare, that she had not thought of anything before going to sleep, that it was just the consciousness of the poor chicken that had entered her, and that she had experienced in her dream all the anguish the poor chicken had suffered when it was carried to the market, sold, its feathers plucked and its neck cut! (*Laughter*)

That's what happens! That is to say, in a greater or lesser proportion you swallow along with the meat a little of the consciousness of the animal you eat. It is not very serious, but it is not always very pleasant. And obviously it does not help you in being on the side of man rather than of the beast! It is evident that primitive men, those who were still much closer to the beast than to the spirit, apparently used to eat raw meat, and that gives much more strength than cooked meat. They killed the animal, tore it apart and bit into it, and they were very strong. And moreover, this is why there was in their intestines that little piece, the appendix, which in those days was much bigger and served to digest the raw meat. And then man began to cook. He found out that things tasted better that way, and he ate cooked meat and gradually the appendix grew smaller and was no longer of any use at all. So now it is an encumbrance which at times brings on an illness.

This is to tell you that perhaps now it is time to change one's food and go over to something a little less bestial! It depends absolutely on each one's state of consciousness. For an ordinary man, living an ordinary life, having ordinary activities, not thinking at all of anything else except earning his living, of keeping himself fit and perhaps taking care of his family, it is good to eat meat, it is all right for him to eat anything at all, whatever agrees with him, whatever does him good.

But if one wishes to pass from this ordinary life to a higher one, the problem begins to become interesting; and if, after having come to a higher life, one tries to prepare oneself for the transformation, then it becomes very important. For there certainly are foods which help the body to become subtle and others which keep it in a state of animality. But it is only at that particular time that this becomes very important, not before; and before reaching that moment, there are many other things to do. Certainly it is better to purify one's mind and purify one's vital before thinking of purifying one's body. For even if you take all possible precautions and live physically taking care not to absorb anything except what will help to subtilise your body, if your mind and vital remain in a state of desire, inconscience, darkness, passion and all the rest, that won't be of any use at all. Only, your body will become weak, dislocated from the inner life and one fine day it will fall ill.

One must begin from inside, I have already told you this once. One must begin from above, first purify the higher and then purify the lower. I am not saying that one must indulge in all sorts of degrading things in the body. That's not what I am telling you. Don't take it as an advice not to exercise control over your desires! It isn't that at all. But what I mean is, do not try to be an angel in the body if you are not already just a little of an angel in your mind and vital; for that would dislocate you in a different way from the usual one, but not one that is better. We said the other day that what is most important is to keep the equilibrium. Well, to keep the equilibrium everything must progress at the same time. You must not leave one part of your being in darkness and try to bring the other into light. You must take great care not to leave any corner dark.

23 June 1954

How does fasting produce a state of receptivity?

It is because usually the vital being is very closely concentrated on the body and when the body is well fed it takes its strength from the food, its energy from the food, and it is one way — it is obviously almost the only way, not the only one, but the most important in the present conditions of life — but it is a very tamasic way of absorbing energy.

If you think about it, you see, it is the vital energy which is in either plants or animals, that is, logically it is of an inferior quality to the vital energy which should be in man, who is a slightly higher being in the gradation of the species. So if you draw from below you draw at the same time the unconsciousness that is below. It is impossible to eat without absorbing a considerable amount of unconsciousness; this makes you heavy, coarsens you; and then if you eat much, a large amount of your consciousness is absorbed in digesting and assimilating what you have eaten. So already, if you don't take food, you don't have all this unconsciousness to assimilate and transform inside you; it sets free the energies. And then, as there is an instinct in the being to recuperate the energies spent, if you don't take them from food, that is, from below, you instinctively make an effort to take them through union with the universal vital forces which are free, and if one knows how to assimilate them one does so directly and then there is no limit.

It is not like your stomach which can digest only a certain amount of food, and therefore you can't take in more than that: and even the food you take liberates only a little bit, a very small quantity of vital energy. And so what can remain with you after all the work of swallowing, digesting, etc.? Not much, you see. But if you learn... and this indeed is a kind of instinct, one learns instinctively to draw towards himself the universal energies which move freely in the universe and are unlimited in quantity... as much of these as you are capable of drawing towards you, you can absorb — so instinctively when there is no support from below which comes from food, you make the necessary movement to recuperate the energies from outside, and absorb as much of them as you are capable of doing, and sometimes more. So this puts you in a kind of state of excitement, and if your body is

very strong and can bear being without food for a certain length of time, then you keep your balance and can use these energies for all kinds of things, as for example, to progress, to become more conscious and transform your nature.

But if your physical body doesn't have much in reserve and grows considerably weak from not eating, then this creates an imbalance between the intensity of the energies you absorb and the capacity of the body to hold them, and then this causes disturbances. You lose your balance, and all the balance of forces is destroyed, and anything at all may happen to you. In any case, you lose much control over yourself and become usually very excited, and you take this excitement for a higher state. But often it is simply an inner imbalance, nothing more. It sharpens the receptivity very much. For example, precisely when one fasts and no longer takes the energies from below, well, if you breathe in the scent of a flower it nourishes you, the perfume nourishes you, it gives you a great deal of energy; but otherwise you do not notice it.

There are certain faculties which get intensified, and so one takes that for a spiritual effect. It has very little to do with the spiritual life except that there are people who eat much, think much about their food, are very deeply absorbed in it, and then when they have eaten well — and as I say, they must digest it, and so all their energies are concentrated on their digestion — these people are dull in mind, and this pulls them down very much towards matter; so if they stop eating and stop thinking about food — because there is one thing, that if one fasts and thinks all the time that he is hungry and would like to eat, then it is ten times worse than eating — and can truly fast because they think of something else and are occupied with something else and are not interested in food — then that can help one to climb to a slightly higher degree of consciousness, to free himself from the slavery to material needs. But fasting is above all good for those who believe in it — as everything. When you have the faith that this will make you progress, is going to purify you, it does you good. If you don't believe in it, it doesn't do much, except that it makes you thin.

23 February 1955

The Need for Diversity

If you arrive at the conception of the world as the expression of the Divine in all His complexity, then the necessity for complexity and diversity has to be recognised, and it becomes impossible for you to want to make others think and feel as you do.

Each one should have his own way of thinking, feeling and reaction. Why do you want others to do as you do and be like you? And even granting that your truth is greater than theirs — though this word means nothing at all, for from a certain point of view all truths are true; they are all partial, but they are true because they are truths — but the minute you want your truth to be greater than your neighbour's, you begin to wander away from the truth.

This habit of wanting to compel others to think as you do has always seemed very strange to me; this is what I call “the propagandist spirit”, and it goes very far. You can go one step further and want people to do what you do, feel as you feel, and then it becomes a frightful uniformity.

In Japan I met Tolstoy's son who was going round the world for “the good of mankind's great unity”. And his solution was very simple: everybody ought to speak the same language, lead the same life, dress in the same way, eat the same things.... And I am not joking, those were his very words. I met him in Tokyo; he said: “But everybody would be happy, all would understand one another, nobody would quarrel if everyone did the same thing.” There was no way of making him understand that it was not very reasonable! He had set out to travel all over the world for that, and when people asked him his name he would say “Tolstoy” — now, Tolstoy, you know... People said, “Oh!” — some people didn't know that Tolstoy was dead — and they thought: “Oh! what luck, we are going to hear something remarkable” — and then he came out with that!

Well, this is only an exaggeration of the same attitude.

Anyway, I can assure you that there comes a time when one no longer feels any necessity at all, at all, of convincing others of the truth of what one thinks.

4 April 1956

Money

You see, when one thinks of money, one thinks of bank-notes or coins or some kind of wealth, some precious things. But this is only the physical expression of a force which may be handled by the vital and which, when possessed and controlled, almost automatically brings along these more material expressions of money. And that is a kind of power. (*Silence*) It is a power of attracting certain very material vibrations, which has a capacity for utilisation that increases its strength — which is like the action of physical exercise, you see — it increases its strength through utilisation. [...]

The money-power belongs to a world which was created deformed. It is something that belongs to the vital world; and he [Sri Aurobindo] says this, doesn't he, he says that it belongs to the vital and materia] worlds. And so at all times, always it was under the control of the Asuric forces; and what must be done is precisely to reconquer it from the Asuric forces.

That is why in the past, all those who wanted to do Yoga or follow a discipline, used to say that one should not touch money, for it was something — they said — diabolic or Asuric or at least altogether opposed to the divine life. But the whole universe, in all its manifestation, is the Divine Himself, and so belongs entirely to Him; and it is on this ground that he says that the money-forces belong to the Divine. One must reconquer them and give them to Him. They have been under the influence of the Asuric forces: one must win them back in order to put them at the disposal of the Divine so that He may be able to use them for His work of transformation.

Sweet Mother, it is men who have created money. Then how is it a divine power?

Hm! (*laughing*) It is as though you told me: it is a man and woman who have created another person, then how can he be divine in essence? It is exactly the same thing! The whole creation is made externally by external things, but behind that there are divine forces. What men have invented — paper or coins or other objects — all these are but means of expression, nothing else but that.... I just said this a moment ago, it is not the force itself, it is its material expression as men have created it. But this is purely

conventional. For example, there are countries where small shells are exchanged instead of money.[...]

It is purely conventional. What is behind is the force I am speaking about, you see, and so it manifests in all sorts of ways. For example, even gold, you know... men have given a certain value to gold, because of all metals it deteriorates the least. It is preserved almost indefinitely. And this is the reason, there's no other. But it is a mere convention. The proof is that each time a new gold-mine is found and exploited, the value of gold has fallen. These are mere conventions between human beings. But what makes money a power is not this, it is the force that's behind. As I was saying a while ago, it is a force that is able to attract and use anything whatever, all material things and...

So this is used according to a convention. Now, it is understood that wealth is represented by bits of paper which become very dirty, and on which something is printed. They are altogether disgusting, most often good only for lighting the lire. But it is considered a great fortune. Why? Because that's the convention. Yet one who is capable of attracting this and using it for something good, to increase the welfare of this world, the welfare and well-being of the world, that man has a hold on the money-power, that is to say, the force that is behind money.

28 May 1954

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Friends from outside have often asked me this question: "When one is compelled to earn his living, should one just conform to the common code of honesty or should one be still more strict?"

This depends upon the attitude your friend has taken in life. If he wants to be a sadhak, it is indispensable that rules of ordinary morality do not have any value for him. Now, if he is an ordinary man living the ordinary life, it is a purely practical question, isn't it? He must conform to the laws of the country in which he lives to avoid all trouble! But all these things which in ordinary life have a very relative value and can be looked upon with a certain indulgence, change totally the minute one decides to do yoga and

enter the divine life. Then, all values change completely: what is honest in ordinary life, is no longer at all honest for you. Besides, there is such a reversal of values that one can no longer use the same ordinary language. If one wants to consecrate oneself to the divine life, one must do it truly, that is, give oneself entirely, no longer do anything for one's own interest, depend exclusively upon the divine Power to which one abandons oneself. Everything changes completely, doesn't it? — everything, everything, it is a reversal. What I have just read from this book [by Sri Aurobindo] applies solely to those who want to do yoga; for others it has no meaning, it is a language which makes no sense, but for those who want to do yoga it is imperative. It is always the same thing in all that we have recently read: one must be careful not to have one foot on one side and the other foot on the other, not to bestride two different boats each following its own course. This is what Sri Aurobindo said: one must not lead a "double life". One must give up one thing or the other — one can't follow both.

This does not mean, however, that one is obliged to get out of the conditions of one's life: it is the inner attitude which must be totally changed. One may do what one is in the habit of doing, but do it with quite a different attitude. I don't say it is necessary to give up everything in life and go away into solitude, to an ashram necessarily, to do yoga. Now, it is true that if one does yoga in the world and in worldly circumstances, it is more difficult, but it is also more complete. Because, every minute one must face problems which do not present themselves to someone who has left everything and gone into solitude; for such a one these problems are reduced to a minimum — while in life one meets all sorts of difficulties, beginning with the incomprehension of those around you with whom you have to deal; one must be ready for that, be armed with patience, and a great indifference. But in yoga one should no longer care for what people think or say; it is an absolutely indispensable starting-point. You must be absolutely immune to what the world may say or think of you and to the way it treats you. People's understanding must be something quite immaterial to you and should not even slightly touch you. That is why it is generally much more difficult to remain in one's usual surroundings and do yoga than to leave everything and go into solitude; it is much more difficult, but we are not here to do easy things — easy things we leave to those who do not think of transformation.

If someone has acquired a lot of money by dishonest means, could some of it be asked for the Divine?

Sri Aurobindo has answered this question. He says that money in itself is an impersonal force: the way in which you acquire money concerns you alone personally. It may do you great harm, it may harm others also, but it does not in any way change the nature of the money which is an altogether impersonal force: money has no colour, no taste, no psychological consciousness. It is a force. It is like saying that the air breathed out by a scoundrel is more tainted than that breathed out by an honest man I don't think so. I think the result is the same. One may for reasons of a practical nature refuse money which has been stolen, but that is for altogether practical reasons, it is not because of divine reasons. This is a purely human idea. One may from a practical point of view say, "Ah! no, the way in which you have acquired this money is disgusting and so I don't want to offer it to the Divine", because one has a human consciousness. But if you take someone (let us suppose the worst) who has killed and acquired money by the murder; if all of a sudden he is seized by terrible scruples and remorse and tells himself, "I have only one thing to do with this money, give it where it can be utilised for the best, in the most impersonal way", it seems to me that this movement is preferable to utilising it for one's own satisfaction.

I said that the reasons which could prevent one from receiving ill-gotten money may be reasons of a purely practical kind, but there may also be more profound reasons, of a (I do not want to say moral but) spiritual nature, from the point of view of tapasya; one may tell somebody, "No, you cannot truly acquire merit with this fortune which you have obtained in such a terrible way; what you can do is to restore it", one may feel that a restitution, for instance, will help to make more progress than simply passing the money on to any work whatever. One may see things in this way — one can't make rules. This is what I never stop telling you: it is impossible to make a rule. In every case it is different. But you must not think that the money is affected; money as a terrestrial force is not affected by the way in which it is obtained, that can in no way affect it. Money remains the same, your note remains the same, your piece of gold remains the same, and as it carries its force, its force remains there. It harms only the person who has done wrong, that is evident.

Then the question remains: in what state of mind and for what reasons does your dishonest man want to pass on his money to a work he considers divine? Is it as a measure of safety, through prudence or to lay his heart at rest? Evidently this is not a very good motive and it cannot be encouraged, but if he feels a kind of repentance and regret for what he has done and the feeling that there is but one thing to do and that is precisely to deprive himself of what he has wrongly acquired and utilise it for the general good as much as possible, then there is nothing to say against that. One cannot decide in a general way — it depends upon the instance. Only, if I understand well what you mean, if one knows that a man has acquired money by the most unnamable means, obviously, it would not be good to go and *ask* him for money for some divine work, because that would be like “rehabilitating” his way of gaining money. One cannot ask, that is not possible. If, spontaneously, for some reason, he gives it, there is no reason to refuse it. But it is quite impossible to go and ask him for it, because it is as though one legitimised his manner of acquiring money. That makes a great difference.

3 May 1951

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The more money we have, the more we need...

The more money one has, the more one is in a state of calamity, my child. Yes, it is a calamity.

It is a catastrophe to have money. It makes you stupid, it makes you miserly, it makes you wicked. It is one of the greatest calamities in the world. Money is something one ought not to have until one no longer has desires. When one no longer has any desires, any attachments, when one has a consciousness vast as the earth, then one may have as much money as there is on the earth; it would be very good for everyone. But if one is not like that, all the money one has is like a curse upon him. This I could tell anyone at all to his face, even to the man who thinks that it is a merit to have become rich. It is a calamity and perhaps it is a disgrace, that is, it is an expression of a divine displeasure.

It is infinitely more difficult to be good, to be wise, to be intelligent and generous, to be more generous, you follow me, when one is rich than when one is poor. I have known many people in many countries. and the most generous people I have ever met in all the countries, were the poorest. And as soon as the pockets are full, one is caught by a kind of illness, which is a sordid attachment to money. I assure you it is a curse.

So the first thing to do when one has money is to give it. But as it is said that it should not be given without discernment, don't go and give it like those who practise philanthropy, because that fills them with a sense of their own goodness, their generosity and their own importance. You must act in a sattvic way, that is, make the best possible use of it. And so, each one must find in his highest consciousness what the best possible use of the money he has can be. And truly money has no value unless it circulates. For each and every one, money is valuable only when one has spent it. If one doesn't spend it... I tell you, men take care to choose things which do not deteriorate, that is, gold — which does not decompose. Otherwise, from the moral point of view it rots. And now that gold has been replaced by papers, if you keep papers for a long time without taking care of them, you will see when you open your drawer that there are small silverfish which have regaled themselves on your paper-rupees. So they will have left a lace-work which the bank will refuse.

There are countries and religions which always say that God makes those whom He loves poor. I don't know if that is true; but there is one thing which is true, that surely when someone is born rich or has become very rich, in any case when he possesses much from the point of view of material riches, it is certainly not a sign that the Divine has chosen him for His divine Grace, and he must make honourable amends if he wants to walk on the path, the true path, to the Divine.

Wealth is a force — I have already told you this once — a force of Nature; and it should be a means of circulation, a power in movement. as flowing water is a power in movement. It is something which can serve to produce, to organise. It is a convenient means, because in fact it is only a means of making things circulate fully and freely.

This force should be in the hands of those who know how to make the best possible use of it, that is, as I said at the beginning, people who have

abolished in themselves or in some way or other got rid of every personal desire and every attachment. To this should be added a vision vast enough to understand the needs of the earth, a knowledge complete enough to know how to organise all these needs and use this force by these means.

If, besides this, these beings have a higher spiritual knowledge, then they can utilise this force to construct gradually upon the earth what will be capable of manifesting the divine Power, Force and Grace. And then this power of money, wealth, this financial force, of which I just said that it was like a curse, would become a supreme blessing for the good of all.

For I think that it is the best things which become the worst. Perhaps the worst also can become the best. Some people also say that it is the worst men who become the best. I hope the best don't become the worst, for that indeed would be sad.

But still, certainly, the greatest power, if badly used, can be a very great calamity: whereas this same very great power if well utilised can be a blessing. All depends on the use that's made of things. Each thing in the world has its place, its work, a real use; and if used for something else it creates a disorder, confusion, chaos. And that's because in the world as it is, very few things are utilised for their true work, very few things are really in their place, and it is because the world is in a frightful chaos that there is all this misery and suffering. If each thing was in its place, in a harmonious balance, the whole world could progress without needing to be in the state of misery and suffering in which it is. There!

So there is nothing that's bad in itself, but there are many things — almost all — which are not in their place.

Perhaps in the body also it is like that. There is nothing that's bad in itself; but many things are not in their place, and that is why one becomes ill. There is created an inner disharmony. So the result is that one is ill. And people always think that it is not their fault that they are ill, and it is always their fault, and they are very angry when they are told this. "You have no pity." And yet it is true.

16 February 1955

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It is often said in fairy tales that a treasure is guarded by serpents. Is this true?

Yes, but it is not a physical serpent, it is a vital serpent. The key to the treasures is in the vital world and it is guarded by an immense black serpent — a tremendous serpent, ten times, fifty times larger than an ordinary one. It keeps the gates of the treasure. It is magnificent, black, always erect and awake. I happened once to be standing before it (usually these beings obey me when I give them an order), and I said to it, "Let me pass." It replied, "I would willingly let you pass, but if I do, they will kill me; so I cannot let you pass." I asked, "What must I bring you in order to gain entrance?" It said, "Oh, only one thing would oblige me to give way to you: if you could become master of the sex impulse in man, if you succeeded in conquering that in humanity, I could no longer resist, I would allow you to pass."

It has not yet allowed me to pass. I must admit that I have not fulfilled the condition, I have not been able to obtain such a mastery of it as to conquer it in all men.

That is quite difficult.

10 March 1951

Sleep and Dreams

Most people do so many things in their sleep that they wake up more tired than before. We have already spoken about this once. Naturally, if you keep yourself from sleeping, you won't sleep. I always tell those who complain of not being able to sleep, "Meditate then and you will end up by sleeping." It is better to fall asleep while concentrating than "like that", scattered and strewn without knowing even where one is To sleep well one must learn how to sleep.

If one is physically very tired, it is better not to go to sleep immediately, otherwise one falls into the unconscious. If one is very tired, one must stretch out on the bed, relax, loosen all the nerves one after another until one becomes like a rumpled cloth in one's bed, as though one had neither bones nor muscles. When one has done that, the same thing

must be done in the mind. Relax, do not concentrate on any idea or try to solve a problem or ruminate on impressions, sensations or emotions you had during the day. All that must be allowed to drop off quietly: one gives oneself up, one is indeed like a rag. When you have succeeded in doing this, there is always a little flame, there — that flame never goes out and you become conscious of it when you have managed this relaxation. And all of a sudden this little flame rises slowly into an aspiration for the divine life, the truth, the consciousness of the Divine, the union with the inner being, it goes higher and higher, it rises, rises, like that, very gently. Then everything gathers there, and if at that moment you fall asleep, you have the best sleep you could possibly have. I guarantee that if you do this carefully, you are sure to sleep, and also sure that instead of falling into a dark hole you will sleep in light, and when you get up in the morning you will be fresh, fit, content, happy and full of energy for the day.

When one is conscious in sleep, does the brain sleep or not?

When does the brain ever sleep? When does it sleep? This is of all things the most difficult. If you succeed in making your brain sleep, it would be wonderful. How it runs on! That is vagabondage. It is this I meant when I spoke of relaxation in the brain. If you do it really well, your brain enters a silent restfulness and that is wonderful; when you attain that, five minutes of that and you are quite fresh afterwards, you can solve a heap of problems.

If the brain is always working, why don't we remember what has happened during the night?

Because you have not caught the consciousness at its work. And perhaps because if you remembered what was going on in your brain, you would be horrified! It is really like a madhouse, all these ideas which clash, all dancing a saraband in the head! It is as if one were throwing balls in all directions at once. So, if you saw that, you would be a bit troubled.

23 April 1951

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Sometimes, on waking up, one forgets everything, one forgets where one is. Why?

It is because you have gone into the inconscient and lost all contact with the consciousness, and this takes a little time to be re-established. Of course, it may happen that instead of going into the inconscient one goes into the superconscious, but this is not frequent. And the feeling is not the same because, instead of having this negative impression of not knowing who one is or where one is or what is what, one has a positive sensation of having risen into something other than one's ordinary life, of no longer being the same person. But when one has altogether lost contact with one's ordinary consciousness, generally it is that one has slept away and been for a long time in the inconscient. Then the being is scattered, it is absorbed by this inconscient and all the pieces have to be put together again. Naturally, this is done much more quickly than at the beginning of existence, but the conscious elements have to be gathered up again and a cohesion re-formed to begin to know once more who one is.

Sometimes in dreams one goes into houses, streets, places one has never seen. What does this mean?

There may be many reasons for this. Perhaps it is an exteriorisation: one has come out of the body and gone for a stroll. They may be memories of former lives. Perhaps one has become identified with someone else's consciousness and has the memories of this other person. Perhaps it is a premonition (this is the rarest case, but it may happen): one sees ahead what one will see later.

The other day I spoke to you about those landscapes of Japan; well, almost all — the most beautiful, the most striking ones — I had seen in vision in France; and yet I had not seen any pictures or photographs of Japan, I knew nothing of Japan. And I had seen these landscapes without human beings, nothing but the landscape, quite pure, like that, and it had seemed to me they were visions of a world other than the physical; they seemed to me too beautiful for the physical world, too perfectly beautiful. Particularly I used to see very often those stairs rising straight up into the sky; in my vision there was the impression of climbing straight up, straight up, and as though one could go on climbing, climbing, climbing.[...]

There are always many explanations possible and it is very difficult to explain for someone else. For oneself, if one has studied very carefully one's dreams and activities of the night, one can distinguish fine nuances. I was saying I thought I had a vision of another world — I knew it was something which existed, but I could not imagine there was a country where it existed; this seemed to me impossible, so very beautiful it was. It was the active mind which interfered. But I knew that what I was seeing truly existed, and it was only when I saw these landscapes physically that I realised in fact that I had seen something which existed, but I had seen it with inner eyes (it was the subtle-physical) before seeing it physically.

Everyone has certain very small indications, but for that one must be very, very methodical, very scrupulous, very careful in one's observation and not neglect the least signs, and above all not give favourable mental explanations to the experiences one has. For if one wants to explain to oneself (I don't even speak of explaining to others), if one wants to explain the experience to oneself advantageously, to draw satisfaction, one does not understand anything any more. That is, one may mix up the signs without even noticing that they are mixed up. For instance, when one sees somebody in a dream (I am not speaking of dreams in which you see somebody unknown, but of those where you see somebody you know, who comes to see you) there are all sorts of explanations possible. If it is someone living far away from you, in another country, perhaps that person has written a letter to you and the letter is on the way, so you see this person because he has put a formation of himself in his letter, a concentration; you see the person and the next morning you get the letter. This is a very frequent occurrence. If it is a person with a very strong thought-power, he may think of you from very far, from his own country and concentrate his thought, and this concentration takes the form of that person in your consciousness. Perhaps it is that this person is calling you intentionally; deliberately he comes to tell you something or give you a sign, if he is in danger, if he is sick. Suppose he has something important to tell you, he begins to concentrate (he knows how to do it, as everyone does not) and he enters your atmosphere, comes to tell you something special. Now if you are passive and attentive, you receive the message.

And then, two more instances still: someone has exteriorised himself more or less materially in his sleep and has come to see you. And you

become conscious of this person because (almost by miracle) you are in a corresponding state of consciousness. And finally, a last instance, this person may be dead and may come to see you after his death (one part of him or almost the whole of his being according to the relation you have with him). Consequently, for someone who is not very, very careful it is very difficult to distinguish these nuances, very difficult. On the other hand, quite often imaginative people will tell you, "Oh! I saw this person — he is dead." I have heard that I don't know how many times. These are people whose imagination runs freely. It is possible that the person is dead, but not because he has appeared to you!... One must pay great attention to the outer forms things take. There are shades very difficult to distinguish, one must be very, very careful. For oneself, if one is in the habit of studying all this, one can become aware of the differences, but to interpret another's experiences is very difficult, unless he gives you in great detail all that surrounds the dream, the vision: the ideas he had before, the ideas he had later, the state of his health, the feelings he experienced when going to sleep, the activities of the preceding day, indeed, all sorts of things. People who tell you, "Oh! I had this vision, explain it to me!", that is childishness — unless it is someone whom you have followed very carefully, whom you yourself have taught how to recognise the planes, and whose habits, whose reactions you know; otherwise it is impossible to explain, for there are innumerable explanations for one single thing.

14 April 1951

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Why do we forget our dreams?

Because you do not dream always at the same place. It is not always the same part of your being that dreams and it is not at the same place that you dream. If you were in conscious, direct, continuous communication with all the parts of your being, you would remember all your dreams. But very few parts of the being are in communication.

For example, you have a dream in the subtle physical, that is to say, quite close to the physical. Generally, these dreams occur in the early hours of the morning, that is between four and five o'clock, at the end of

the sleep. If you do not make a sudden movement when you wake up, if you remain very quiet, very still and a little attentive — quietly attentive — and concentrated, you will remember them, for the communication between the subtle physical and the physical is established — very rarely is there no communication.

Now, dreams are mostly forgotten because you have a dream while in a certain state and then pass into another. For instance, when you sleep, your body is asleep, your vital is asleep, but your mind is still active. So your mind begins to have dreams, that is, its activity is more or less coordinated, the imagination is very active and you see all kinds of things, take part in extraordinary happenings.... After some time, all that calms down and the mind also begins to doze. The vital that was resting wakes up; it comes out of the body, walks about, goes here and there, does all kinds of things, reacts, sometimes lights, and finally eats. It does all kinds of things. The vital is very adventurous. It watches. When it is heroic it rushes to save people who are in prison or to destroy enemies or it makes wonderful discoveries. But this pushes back the whole mental dream very far behind. It is rubbed off, forgotten: naturally you cannot remember it because the vital dream takes its place. But if you wake up suddenly at that moment, you remember it. There are people who have made the experiment, who have got up at certain fixed hours of the night and when they wake up suddenly, they do remember. You must not move brusquely, but awake in the natural course, then you remember.

After a time, the vital having taken a good stroll, needs to rest also, and so it goes into repose and quietness, quite tired at the end of all kinds of adventures. Then something else wakes up. Let us suppose that it is the subtle physical that goes for a walk. It starts moving and begins wandering, seeing the rooms and... why, this thing that was there, but it has come here and that other thing which was in that room is now in this one, and so on. If you wake up without stirring, you remember. But this has pushed away far to the back of the consciousness all the stories of the vital. They are forgotten and so you cannot recollect your dreams.

But if at the time of waking up you are not in a hurry, you are not obliged to leave your bed, on the contrary you can remain there as long as you wish, you need not even open your eyes; you keep your head exactly where it was and you make yourself like a tranquil mirror within and

concentrate there. You catch just a tiny end of the tail of your dream. You catch it and start pulling gently, without stirring in the least. You begin pulling quite gently, and then first one part comes, a little later another. You go backward; the last comes up first. Everything goes backward, slowly, and suddenly the whole dream reappears: "Ah, there! it was like that." Above all, do not jump up, do not stir; you repeat the dream to yourself several times — once, twice — until it becomes clear in all its details. Once that dream is settled, you continue not to stir, you try to go further in, and suddenly you catch the tail of something else. It is more distant, more vague, but you can still seize it. And here also you hang on, get hold of it and pull, and you see that everything changes and you enter another world; all of a sudden you have an extraordinary adventure — it is another dream. You follow the same process. You repeat the dream to yourself once, twice, until you are sure of it. You remain very quiet all the time. Then you begin to penetrate still more deeply into yourself, as though you were going in very far, very far; and again suddenly you see a vague form, you have a feeling, a sensation... like a current of air, a slight breeze, a little breath; and you say, "Well, well...." It takes a form, it becomes clear — and the third category comes. You must have a lot of time, a lot of patience, you must be very quiet in your mind and body, very quiet, and you can tell the story of your whole night from the end right up to the beginning.

Even without doing this exercise which is very long and difficult, in order to recollect a dream, whether it be the last one or the one in the middle that has made a violent impression on your being, you must do what I have said when you wake up: take particular care not even to move your head on the pillow, remain absolutely still and let the dream return.

Some people do not have a passage between one state and another, there is a little gap and so they leap from one to the other; there is no highway passing through all the states of being with no break of the consciousness. A small dark hole, and you do not remember. It is like a precipice across which one has to extend the consciousness. To build a bridge takes a very long time; it takes much longer than building a physical bridge.... Very few people want to and know how to do it. They may have had magnificent activities, they do not remember them or sometimes only the last, the nearest, the most physical activity, with an uncoordinated

movement — dreams having no sense.

But there are as many different kinds of nights and sleep as there are different days and activities. There are not many days that are alike, each day is different. The days are not the same, the nights are not the same. (*To the child that who asked the question*) You and your friends are doing apparently the same thing, but for each one it is very different. And each one must have his own procedure.

Why are two dreams never alike?

Because all things are different. No two minutes are alike in the universe and it will be so till the end of the universe, no two minutes will ever be alike. And men obstinately want to make rules! One must do this and not that.... Well! we must let people please themselves.

6 May 1953

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Sweet Mother, you have said that one can exercise one's conscious will and change the course of one's dreams.

Ah, yes, I have already told you that once. If you are in the middle of a dream and something happens which you don't like (for instance, somebody shouts that he wants to kill you), you say: "That won't do at all, I don't want my dream to be like that", and you can change the action or the ending. You can organise your dream as you want. One can arrange one's dreams. But for this you must be conscious that you are dreaming, you must know you are dreaming.

But these dreams are not of much importance, are they?

Yes, they are, and one must be conscious of what can happen. Suppose that you have gone for a stroll in the vital world; there you meet beings who attack you (that's what happens usually), if you know that it is a dream, you can very easily gather your vital forces and conquer. That's a true fact; you can with a certain attitude, a certain word, a certain way of being do things you would not do if you were just dreaming.

If in the dream someone kills you it doesn't matter, for it is just a dream!

I beg your pardon! Usually, the next day you are ill, or may be a little later. That's a warning. I know someone whose eye was thus hurt in a dream, and who really lost his eye a few days later. As for me, once I happened to dream about getting blows on my face. Well, when I woke up the next morning, I had a red mark in the same place, on the forehead and the cheek.... Inevitably, a wound received in the vital being is translated in the physical body.

But how does it happen? There must be some intermediary?

It was in the vital that I was beaten. It is from within that this comes. Nothing, nobody touched anything from outside. If you receive a blow in the vital, the body suffers the consequence. More than half of our illnesses are the result of blows of this kind, and this happens much more often than one believes. Only, men are not conscious of their vital, and as they are not conscious they don't know that fifty per cent of their illnesses are the result of what happens in the vital: shocks, accidents, fighting, ill-will.... Externally this is translated by an illness. If one knows how it reacts on the physical, one goes to its source and can cure oneself in a few hours.

How is it that the symbolism of dreams varies according to traditions, races, religions?

Because the form given to the dream is mental. If you have learnt that such and such a form represents such and such a mythological person, you see that form and say: "It is that." In your mind there is an association between certain ideas and certain forms, and this is continued in the dream. When you translate your dream you give it an explanation corresponding to what you have learnt, what you have been taught, and it is with the mental image you have in your head that you know. Moreover, I have explained this to you a little later in the vision of Joan of Arc (*Mother takes her book and reads*):

“The beings who were always appearing and speaking to Jeanne d’Arc would, if seen by an Indian, have quite a different appearance; for when one sees, one projects the forms of one’s mind.... You have the vision of one in India whom you call the Divine Mother; the Catholics say it is the Virgin Mary, and the Japanese call it Kwannon, the Goddess of Mercy; and others would give other names. It is the same force, the same power, but the images made of it are different in different faiths.” (The Mother)

You say that “each person has his own world of dream-imagery peculiar to himself.”

Each individual has his own way of expressing, thinking, speaking, feeling, understanding. It is the combination of all these ways of being that makes the individual. That is why everyone can understand only according to his own nature. As long as you are shut up in your own nature, you can know only what is in your consciousness. All depends upon the height of the nature of your consciousness. Your world is limited to what you have in your consciousness. If you have a very small consciousness, you will understand only a few things. When your consciousness is very vast, universal, only then will you understand the world. If the consciousness is limited to your little ego, all the rest will escape you.... There are people whose brain and consciousness are smaller than a walnut. You know that a walnut resembles the brain; well, these people look at things and don’t understand them. They can understand nothing else except what is in direct contact with their senses. For them only what they taste, what they see, hear, touch has a reality, and all the rest simply does not exist, and they accuse us of speaking fancifully! “What I cannot touch does not exist”, they say. But the only answer to give them is: “It does not exist *for you*, but there’s no reason why it shouldn’t exist for others.” You must not insist with these people, and you must not forget that the smaller they are the greater is the audacity in their assertions.

One’s cocksureness is in proportion to one’s unconsciousness; the more unconscious one is, the more is one sure of oneself. The most foolish are always the most vain. Your stupidity is in proportion to your vanity. The more one knows... In fact, there is a time when one is quite convinced that one knows nothing at all. There’s not a moment in the world which does

not bring something new, for the world is perpetually growing. If one is conscious of that, one has always something new to learn. But one can become conscious of it only gradually. One's conviction that one knows is in direct proportion to one's ignorance and stupidity.

29 April 1953

*

Sweet Mother, when one sees oneself dead in a dream, what does it signify?

Ah! I have already been asked this several times. It depends on the context.

It can mean that one has made enough progress to get rid totally of an old way of being which has no longer any reason for existing. This, I think, is the most frequent case. Otherwise it depends absolutely on the context, that is, the circumstances surrounding the dream.

That is... one sees himself dead... How does he see himself dead? Does he simply see the inert body or himself already dead, or does he take for dead what is not dead ?

You see, if you leave your body — by going out of the body as I explained a while ago — if you have gone out materially enough, in a very material vital, well, the body which is lying on the bed seems absolutely dead, but it is not dead for all that. But if you look at it or see it while you are outside and you don't know, it seems absolutely dead, it is in a cataleptic state. Then if you know what is necessary and what you ought to do it is very easy; but if you don't know and the imagination starts roaming, then you open the door to fear and anything may happen.

But in fact, I don't think that once in a million times it is a premonitory dream. I think it much more likely that it is a fragment of the being which has stopped being useful and so disappears; so the fragment takes the form of the whole and one sees himself dead because this fragment has stopped existing in him. This is the most frequent and the most logical instance.

Now, one may see not a death but, for example, an accident or an assassination or things like that... Then it is a very real violent dream, you

know, and this may mean that one is attacked by bad forces sent by someone with a precise purpose. Then one has only to strike hard and react violently.

Sweet Mother, sometimes when one is asleep, he knows that he is asleep but he can't open his eyes. Why?

This happens when one has gone out of his body, and one must not force things, one must quite simply, slowly, concentrate his consciousness in his body and wait a while for the fusion to be made normally; one must not force things.

Sometimes the eyes are a little open and one can also see things... And one can't move!

Yes.

It means that only a fragment of the consciousness has come back, not enough to bring back the full movement in the body. You must not shake yourself, because you risk losing a bit of yourself. You must remain quite still and concentrate slowly, slowly, on your body; it can take a minute or two at the most.

What can one lose?

Anything at all, something that has gone out, you see. It's because one part of the being has gone out; so if you shake yourself, it doesn't have the time to get back.[...]

One must never startle anyone out of his sleep because he must have time to get back into his body. It is not good, for instance, when getting up to jump out of bed — hop! You must remain quiet for a while, like this (*gesture*), as though you were bringing yourself back into yourself, like that, quietly... quietly.

27 April 1955

CHAPTER 15

Art

Art and Yoga

If one does Yoga can he rise to such heights as Shakespeare or Shelley? There has been no such instance.

Why not? The Mahabharata and Ramayana are certainly not inferior to anything created by Shakespeare or any other poet, and they are said to have been the work of men who were Rishis and had done Yogic *tapasyā*. The Gita which, like the Upanishads, ranks at once among the greatest literary and the greatest spiritual works, was not written by one who had no experience of Yoga. And where is the inferiority to your Milton and Shelley in the famous poems written whether in India or Persia or elsewhere by men known to be saints, Sufis, devotees? And, then, do you know all the Yogis and their work? Among the poets and creators can you say who were or who were not in conscious touch with the Divine? There are some who are not officially Yogis, they are not *gurus* and have no disciples; the world does not know what they do; they are not anxious for fame and do not attract to themselves the attention of men; but they have the higher consciousness, are in touch with a Divine Power, and when they create they create from there. The best paintings in India and much of the best statuary and architecture were done by Buddhist monks who passed their lives in spiritual contemplation and practice; they did supreme artistic work, but did not care to leave their names to posterity. The chief reason why Yogis are not usually known by their art is that they do not consider their art-expression as the most important part of their life and do not put so much time and energy into it as a mere artist. And what they do does not always reach the public. How many there are who have done great things and not published them to the world! [...]

Art is nothing less in its fundamental truth than the aspect of beauty of the Divine manifestation. Perhaps, looking from this stand-point, there will

be found very few true artists; but still there are some and these can very well be considered as Yogis. For like a Yogi an artist goes into deep contemplation to await and receive his inspiration. To create something truly beautiful, he has first to see it within, to realise it as a whole in his inner consciousness; only when so found, seen, held within, can he execute it outwardly; he creates according to this greater inner vision. This too is a kind of yogic discipline, for by it he enters into intimate communion with the inner worlds. A man like Leonardo da Vinci was a Yogi and nothing else. And he was, if not the greatest, at least one of the greatest painters,—although his art did not stop at painting alone.

Music too is an essentially spiritual art and has always been associated with religious feeling and an inner life. But, here too, we have turned it into something independent and self-sufficient, a mushroom art, such as in operatic music. Most of the artistic productions we come across are of this kind and at best interesting from the point of view of technique. I do not say that even operatic music cannot be used as a medium of a higher art expression; for whatever the form, it can be made to serve a deeper purpose. All depends on the thing itself, on how it is used, on what is behind it. There is nothing that cannot be used for the Divine purpose — just as anything can pretend to be the Divine and yet be of the mushroom species.

Among the great modern musicians there have been several whose consciousness, when they created, came into touch with a higher consciousness. César Franck played on the organ as one inspired; he had an opening into the psychic life and he was conscious of it and to a great extent expressed it. Beethoven, when he composed the Ninth Symphony, had the vision of an opening into a higher world and of the descent of a higher world into this earthly plane. Wagner had strong and powerful intimations of the occult world; he had the instinct of occultism and the sense of the occult and through it he received his greatest inspirations. But he worked mainly on the vital level and his mind came in constantly to interfere and mechanised his inspiration. His work for the greater part is too mixed, too often obscure and heavy, although powerful. But when he could cross the vital and the mental levels and reach a higher world, some of the glimpses he had were of an exceptional beauty, as in Parsifal, in some parts of Tristan and Iseult and most in its last great Act.

Look again at what the moderns have made of the dance; compare it with what the dance once was. The dance was once one of the highest expressions of the inner life; it was associated with religion and it was an important limb in sacred ceremony, in the celebration of festivals, in the adoration of the Divine. In some countries it reached a very high degree of beauty and an extraordinary perfection. In Japan they kept up the tradition of the dance as a part of the religious life and, because the strict sense of beauty and art is a natural possession of the Japanese, they did not allow it to degenerate into something of lesser significance and smaller purpose. It was the same in India. It is true that in our days there have been attempts to resuscitate the ancient Greek and other dances; but the religious sense is missing in all such resurrections and they look more like rhythmic gymnastics than dance.[...]

There is a domain far above the mind which we could call the world of Harmony and, if you can reach there, you will find the root of all harmony that has been manifested in whatever form upon earth. For instance, there is a certain line of music, consisting of a few supreme notes, that was behind the productions of two artists who came one after another — one a concerto of Bach, another a concerto of Beethoven. The two are not alike on paper and differ to the outward ear, but in their essence they are the same. One and the same vibration of consciousness, one wave of significant harmony touched both these artists. Beethoven caught a larger part, but in him it was more mixed with the inventions and interpolations of his mind; Bach received less, but what he seized of it was purer. The vibration was that of the victorious emergence of consciousness, consciousness tearing itself out of the womb of unconsciousness in a triumphant uprising and birth.

If by Yoga you are capable of reaching this source of all art, then you are master, if you will, of all the arts. Those that may have gone there before, found it perhaps happier, more pleasant or full of a rapturous ease to remain and enjoy the Beauty and the Delight that are there, not manifesting it, not embodying it upon earth. But this abstention is not all the truth nor the true truth of Yoga; it is rather a deformation, a diminution of the dynamic freedom of Yoga by the more negative spirit of Sannyasa. The will of the Divine is to manifest, not to remain altogether withdrawn in inactivity and an absolute silence; if the Divine Consciousness were really

an inaction of unmanifesting bliss, there would never have been any creation.

28 July 1929

Modern Art

Why is modern art so ugly?

I believe the chief reason is that people have become more and more lazy and do not want to work. They want to produce something before having worked, they want to know before having studied and they want to make a name before having done anything good. So, this is the open door for all sorts of things, as we see.... Naturally, there are exceptions.

I have known artists who were great artists, who had worked hard and produced remarkable things, classical, that is, not ultra-modern. But they were not in fashion because, precisely, one had not to be classical. When a brush was put in the hands of an individual who had never touched a brush, and when a brush was put on a palette of colours and the man had never touched a palette before, then if this individual had in front of him a bit of canvas on an easel and he had never done a picture before, naturally he daubed anything at all; he took the colours and threw them in a haphazard way; then everybody cried out "admirable", "marvellous", "it is the expression of your soul", "how well this reveals the truth of things", etc.! This was the fashion and people who knew nothing were very successful. The poor men who had worked, who knew their art well, were not asked for their pictures any longer; people said, "Oh! this is old-fashioned, you will never find customers for such things."

But, after all, they were hungry, you see, they had to pay their rent and buy their colours and all the rest, and that is costly. Then what could they do? When they had received rebuffs from the picture-dealers who all told them the same thing, "But try to be modern, my friend; look here, you are behind the times", as they were very hungry, what could they do?... I knew a painter, a disciple of Gustav Moreau; he was truly a very fine artist, he knew his work quite well, and then... he was starving, he did not know how to make both ends meet and he used to lament. One day, a friend

intending to help him, sent a picture-dealer to see him. When the merchant entered his studio, this poor man told himself, "At last! here's my chance", and he showed him all the best work he had done. The art-dealer made a face, looked around, turned over things and began rummaging in all the corners; and suddenly he found... Ah! I must explain this to you, you are not familiar with these things: a painter, after his day's work has at times some mixed colours left on his palette; he cannot keep them, they dry up in a day; so he always has with him some pieces of canvas which are not well prepared and which he daubs with what are called "the scrapings of palettes" (with supple knives he scrapes all the colours from the palette and applies them on the canvases) and as there are many mixed colours, this makes unexpected designs. There was in a corner a canvas like that on which he used to put his palette-scrapings. The merchant suddenly falls upon that and exclaims, "Here you are! my friend, you are a genius, this is a miracle, it is this you should show! Look at this richness of tones, this variety of forms, and what an imagination!" And this poor man who was starving said shyly, "But sir, these are my palette-scrapings!" And the art-dealer caught hold of him; "Silly fool, this is not to be told!" Then he said, "Give me this, I undertake to sell it. Give me as many of these as you like; ten, twenty, thirty a month, I shall sell them all for you and I shall make you famous." Then, as I told you, his stomach was protesting; he was not happy, but he said, "All right, take it, I shall see."

Then the landlord comes to demand his rent; the colour-man comes demanding payment of the old bill; the purse is quite empty, and what is to be done? So though he did not make pictures with palette-scrapings, he did something which gave the imagination free play, where the forms were not too precise, the colours were all mixed and brilliant, and one could not know overmuch what one was seeing; and as people did not know very much what they saw, those who understood nothing about it exclaimed, "How beautiful it is!" And he supplied this to his art-dealer. He never made a name for himself with his real painting, which was truly very fine (it was really very fine, he was a very good painter), but he won a world reputation with these honors! And this was just at the beginning of modern painting, this goes back to the Universal Exhibition of 1900; if I were to tell you his name, you would all recognise it.... Now, of course, they have gone far beyond, they have done much better. However, he had the sense

of harmony and beauty and his colours were beautiful. But at present, as soon as there is the least beauty, it won't do at all, it has to be outrageously ugly, then that, that is modern!

The story began with... the man who used to do still-life and whose plates were never round.... Cézanne! It was he who began it; he said that if plates were painted round that would not be living; that when one looks at things spontaneously, never does one see plates round: one sees them like this (*gesture*). I don't know why, but he said that it is only the mind that makes us see plates as round, because one knows they are round, otherwise one does not see them round. It is he who began.... He painted a still-life which was truly a very beautiful thing, note that; a very beautiful thing, with an impression of colour and form truly surprising.[...] But, of course, his plate was not round.[...]

What has made art what it is, do you want me to tell you this, psychologically? ... it is photography. Photographers did not know their job and gave you hideous things, frightfully ugly, it was mechanical, it had no soul, it had no art, it was horrible. All the first attempts of photography until... not very long ago, were like that. It is about fifty years ago that it became tolerable, and now with gradual improvement it has become something good; but it must be said that the process is absolutely different. In those days, when your portrait was taken, you sat in a comfortable chair, you had to sit leaning nicely and facing an enormous thing with a black cloth, which opened like this towards you. And the man ordered, "Don't move! Steady!" That, of course, was the end of the old painting. When the painter made something lifelike, a lifelike portrait, his friends said, "Why now, this is photography!"

It must be said that the art of the end of the last century, the art of the Second Empire [1852-71], was bad. It was an age of businessmen, above all an age of bankers, financiers, and taste, really, had gone very low. I don't believe that businessmen are people necessarily very competent in art, but when they wanted their portrait, they wanted a likeness! One could not leave out the least detail, it was quite comic: "But you know I have a little wrinkle there, don't forget to put it in!" and the lady who said, "You know, you must make my shoulders quite round", and so on. So the artists made portraits which indeed turned into photography. They were flat, cold, without soul and without vision. I can name a number of artists of that

period, it was truly a shame for art. This lasted till about the end of the last century, till about 1875. Afterwards, there started the reaction. Then there was an entire very beautiful period (I don't say this because I myself was painting) but all the artists I then knew were truly artists, they were serious and did admirable things which have remained admirable. It was the period of the impressionists; it was the period of Manet, it was a beautiful period, they did beautiful things.

But people tire of beautiful things as they tire of bad ones. So there were those who wanted to found the "Salon d'Automne". They wanted to surpass the others, go more towards the new, towards the truly anti-photographic. And my goodness, they went a little beyond the limit (according to my taste). They began to deprecate Rembrandt — Rembrandt was a dauber, Titian was a dauber, all the great painters of the Italian Renaissance were daubers. You were not to pronounce the name of Raphael, it was a shame. And all the great period of the Italian Renaissance was "not worth very much"; even the works of Leonardo da Vinci; "You know, you must take them and leave them." Then they went a little further; they wanted something entirely new, they became extravagant. And then, from there, there was only one more step to take for the palette-scrapings and then it was finished.

This is the history of art as I knew it.

Now, to tell you the truth, we are climbing up the curve again. Truly, I think we had gone down to the depths of incoherence, absurdity, nastiness — of the taste for the sordid and ugly, the dirty, the outrageous. We had gone, I believe, to the very bottom.

Are we really going up again?

I think so. Recently I saw some pictures which truly showed something other than ugliness and indecency. It is not yet art, it is very far from being beautiful, but there are signs that we are going up again. You will see, fifty years hence we shall perhaps have beautiful things to see. I felt this some days ago, that truly we had come to the end of the descending curve — we are still very low down, but are beginning to climb up. There is a kind of anguish and there is still a complete lack of understanding of what beauty can and should be, but one finds an aspiration towards something which

will not be sordidly material. For a time art had wanted to wallow in the mire, to be what they called “realistic”. They had chosen as “real” what was most repulsive in the world, most ugly: all deformities, all filth, all ugliness, all the honors, all the incoherences of colour and form; well, I believe this is behind us now. I had this feeling very strongly these last few days (not through seeing pictures, for we do not have a chance to see much here, but by “sensing the atmosphere”). And even in the reproductions we are shown, there is some aspiration towards something which would be a little higher. It will need about fifty years; then...

Unless there is another war, another catastrophe; because certainly, to a large extent, what is responsible for this taste for the sordid are the wars and the horrors of war. People were compelled to put aside all refined sensibility, the love of harmony, the need for beauty, to be able to undergo all that; otherwise, I believe, they would really have died of horror. It was so unspeakably foul that it could not be tolerated, so it perverted men’s taste everywhere and when the war was over (admitting that it ever ended), they wanted only one thing, to forget, forget, forget. To seek distraction, not to think of all the horror they had suffered. Now there, one goes very low. The whole vital atmosphere is completely vitiated and the physical atmosphere is terribly obscure.

Hence, if we can escape another world war... Because war is there, it has never stopped. It has been there from almost the beginning of this century; it began with China, Turkey, Tripolitania, Morocco — you are following? — the Balkans, it has never stopped, it has become worse, but each time it has become a world war, it has assumed altogether sordid proportions. All you my children, you have been born after the war (I am speaking of the First [World] War), so you do not know much about this, and then you have been born here [in India], in a country which has been truly privileged. But the children born in Europe, latterly, these little ones, who were children of the war, carry something in them which will be very difficult to efface, a kind of horror, a fright. One could not have been mixed up with that without knowing what horror is. The first war was perhaps worse than the second. The second was so atrocious that all was lost.... But the first, oh! I don’t know.... The last months I spent in Paris were truly fantastic. And it can’t be told. The life in the trenches, for example, is something that cannot be told. The new generations do not

know.... But, you see, the children born now will not even know if this was true, all these horrors which are related to them. What happened in the conquered countries, in Czechoslovakia, in Poland, in France — the frightful things, unbelievable, unthinkable, which took place — unless one has been very close by, has seen, one cannot believe it. It was... I was saying the other day that the vital world is a world of horrors; well, all the horrors of the vital world had descended upon earth, and upon earth they are still more horrible than in the vital world, because in the vital world, if you have an inner power, if you have the knowledge, if you have strength, you act upon them — you act, you can subdue them, you can show yourself stronger. But all your knowledge, all your power, all your strength is nothing in this material world when you are subjected to the horrors of a war. And this acts in the terrestrial atmosphere in such a way that it is very, very difficult to efface it.

Naturally, men are always very anxious to forget. There are already those who have begun to say, "Are you quite sure it was like that?" But those who have gone through that, do not want it to be forgotten; so the places of torture, massacre — hideous places which go beyond all the worst the human imagination can conceive — some of these places have been preserved. You can go and visit the torture-chambers the Germans built in Paris, and they will never be destroyed, I hope, so that those who come and say, "Oh! you know, these things have been exaggerated" (for one does not like to know that such frightful things have happened), could be taken by the hand and told, "Come and see, if you are not afraid."

This forms character. If it is taken in the right way (and I think there are people who have taken it in the right way), this may lead you straight to yoga, straight. That is, one feels such a deep detachment for all things in the world, such a great need to find something else, an imperious need to find something which is truly beautiful, truly fresh, truly good... then, quite naturally, this brings you to a spiritual aspiration. And these horrors have, as it were, divided men: there was a minority which was ready and rose very high, there was a majority which was not ready and went down very low. These wallow in the mud at present, and hence, for the moment, one does not get out of it; and if this continues, we shall go towards another war and this time it will truly be the end of this civilisation — I don't say the end of the world, because nothing can be the end of the world, but the

end of this civilisation, that is to say, another will have to be built. You will perhaps tell me that this would be very well, for this civilisation is in its decline, it is on the way to perishing; but after all, there are very beautiful things in it, worthy of being preserved, and it would be a great pity if all this disappeared. But if there is another war, I can tell you that all this will disappear. For men are very intelligent creatures and they have found the means of destroying everything, and they will make use of this, for what's the good of spending billions to find certain bombs, if one might not use them? What is the use of discovering that one can destroy a city in a few minutes, if it is not for destroying it! One wants to see the fruit of one's efforts. If there is war, this is what will happen.

There we are, I am telling you things which are not very cheerful, but it is sometimes good to put a little ballast in the head to make one think.

9 April 1951

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Why are today's painters not so good as those of the days of Leonardo da Vinci?

Because human evolution goes in spirals. I have explained this. I said that art had become altogether a mercenary affair, obscure and ignorant, from the beginning of the last century till its middle.[...] It was conventional, artificial and without any real life, so the reaction was to the very opposite, and naturally to another obscurity: "art" was no longer to express physical life but mental life or vital life. And so came all the schools, like the Cubists and others, who created from their head. But in art it is not the head that dominates, it is the feeling for beauty. And they produced absurd and ridiculous and frightful things. Now they have gone farther still, but that, that is due to the wars — with every war there descends upon earth a world in decomposition which produces a sort of chaos. And some, of course, find all this very beautiful and admire it very much.

I understand what they [modern artists] want to do, I understand it very well, but I cannot say that I find they do it well. All I can say is that they are trying.

But it is perhaps (with all its horror, from a certain point of view), it is perhaps better than what was produced in that age of extreme and practical philistinism: the Victorian age or in France the Second Empire. So, one starts from a point where there was a harmony and describes a curve, and with this curve one goes completely out of this harmony and may enter into a total darkness: and then one climbs up, and when one finds oneself in line with the old realisation of art, one becomes aware of the truth there was in this realisation, but with the necessity of expressing something more complete and more conscious. But in describing the circle one forgets that art is the expression of forms and one tries to express ideas and feelings with a minimum of forms. That gives what we have, what you may see. But if one goes a little farther still, this idea and these feelings they wish to express and express very clumsily — if one returns to the same point of the spiral (only a little higher), one will discover that it is the embryo of a new art which will be an art of beauty and will express not only material life but will also try to express its soul.

Anyway, we have not yet come to that, but let us hope we shall reach there soon.

28 October 1953

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It is said that a synthesis of western and eastern art could be made?

Yes. One can make a synthesis of everything if one rises sufficiently high.

What will come out of it?

If it is necessary, it will be done. But fundamentally, these are things in the course of making. For, the advantage of modern times and specially of this hideous commercialism is that everything is now mixed up; that things from the East go to the West, and things from the West to the East, and they influence each other. For the moment this creates a confusion, a sort of pot-pourri. But a new expression will come out of it — it is not so far from its realisation. People cannot intermix, as men today are intermixing, without its producing a reciprocal effect. For instance, with their mania of conquest, the nations of the West which conquered all sorts of countries in

the world, have undergone a very strong influence of the conquered countries. In the old days, when Rome conquered Greece it came under the influence of Greece much more than if it had not conquered it. And the Americans — all that they make now is full of Japanese things, and perhaps they are not even aware of it. But since they occupied Japan, I see that the magazines received from America are full of Japanese things. And even in certain details of objects received from America, one now feels the influence of Japan. That happens automatically. It is quite strange, there always comes about a sort of equilibrium, and he who made the material conquest is conquered by the spirit of the vanquished. It is reciprocal. He made the material conquest, he possesses materially, but it is the spirit of the conquered one who possesses the conqueror.

So, through mixing... The ways of Nature are slow, obscure and complicated. She takes a very long time to do a thing which could probably be done much more rapidly, easily and without wastage by means of the spirit. At present there is a terrible wastage in the world. But the thing is done. She has her own way of mixing people.

Is it intentional?

Not the way men understand “intentional”. But it is certainly the expression of an intention and a goal towards which one is going. Only, all depends on the amount of consciousness. For a man this seems a confusion, for he can see only details, and it appears to be a terrible loss of time, because for him the idea of time is limited to the duration of his person. But Nature has eternity before her. And it is all the same to her to waste, for she is like someone who had a huge cauldron; she throws things in and makes a mixture, and if that does not succeed she throws all this out, for she knows that by taking back the same things she will make another mixture. And that is how it is. Nothing is lost, for it comes into use again all the time. Forms are broken and the substance is taken back, and it goes on constantly like that. It is made, it is unmade, it is turned inside out — what harm can it do her to try a hundred thousand times if it so pleases her! For there is nothing that is wasted, except her work. But her work is her pleasure. Without work she would not exist.

It is a pleasure for her, not for men!

No, certainly, I quite agree. I find it a little too cruel an amusement.

28 October 1953

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Almost all man's works of art — literary, poetic, artistic — are based on the violence of contrasts in life. When one tries to pull them out of their daily dramas, they really feel that it is not artistic. If they wanted to write a book or compose a play where there would be no contrasts, where there would be no shadows in the picture, it would probably be something seemingly very dull, very monotonous, lifeless, for what man calls "life" is the drama of life, the anxiety of life, the violence of contrasts. And perhaps if there were no death, they would be terribly tired of living.

30 January 1957

Music

From what plane does music generally come?

There are different levels. There is a whole category of music that comes from the higher vital, which is very catching, somewhat (to put it roughly) vulgar, it is something that twists your nerves. This music is not necessarily unpleasant, but generally it seizes you there in the nervous centres. So there is one type of music which has a vital origin. There is music which has a psychic origin — it is altogether different. And then there is music which has a spiritual origin: it is very bright and it carries you away, captures you entirely. But if you want to execute this music correctly you must be able to make it come through the vital passage. Your music coming from above may become externally quite flat if you do not possess that intensity of vital vibration which gives it its splendour and strength. I knew people who had truly a very high inspiration and it became quite flat, because the vital did not stir. I must admit that by their spiritual practices they had put to sleep their vital completely — it was

literally asleep, it did not act at all — and the music came straight into the physical, and if one were connected with the origin of that music, one could see that it was something wonderful, but externally it had no force, it was a little melody, very poor, very thin; there was none of the strength of harmony. When you can bring the vital into play, then all the strength of vibration is there. If you draw into it this higher origin, it becomes the music of a genius.

For music it is very special; it is difficult, it needs an intermediary. And it is like that for all other things, for literature also, for poetry, for painting, for everything one does. The true value of one's creation depends on the origin of one's inspiration, on the level, the height where one finds it. But the value of the execution depends on the vital strength which expresses it. To complete the genius both must be there. This is very rare. Generally it is the one or the other, more often the vital. And then there are those other kinds of music we have — the music of the *café-concert*, of the cinema — it has an extraordinary skill, and at the same time an exceptional platitude, an extraordinary vulgarity. But as it has an extraordinary skill, it seizes you in the solar plexus and it is this music that you remember; it grasps you at once and holds you and it is very difficult to free yourself from it, for it is well-made music, music very well made. It is made vitally with vital vibrations, but what is behind is frightful.

But imagine this same vital power of expression, with the inspiration coming from far above — the highest inspiration possible, when all the heavens open before us — then that becomes wonderful. There are certain passages of César Franck, certain passages of Beethoven, certain passages of Bach, there are pieces by others also which have this inspiration and power. But it is only a moment, it comes as a moment, it does not last. You cannot take the entire work of an artist as being on that level. Inspiration comes like a flash; sometimes it lasts sufficiently long, when the work is sustained; and when that is there, the *same effect* is produced, that is, if you are attentive and concentrated, suddenly that lifts you up, lifts up all your energies, it is as though someone opened out your head and you were flung into the air to tremendous heights and magnificent lights. It produces in a few seconds results that are obtained with so much difficulty through so many years of yoga. Only, in general, one may fall down afterwards, because the consciousness is not there as the basis; one has the experience

and afterwards does not even know what has happened. But if you are prepared, if you have indeed prepared your consciousness by yoga and then the thing happens, it is almost definitive.

What is the cause of the great difference between European and Indian music? Is it the origin or the expression?

It is both but in an inverse sense.

This very high inspiration comes only rarely in European music; rare also is a psychic origin, very rare. Either it comes from high above or it is vital. The expression is almost always, except in a few rare cases, a vital expression — interesting, powerful. Most often, the origin is purely vital. Sometimes it comes from the very heights, then it is wonderful. Sometimes it is psychic, particularly in what has been religious music, but this is not very frequent.

Indian music, when there are good musicians, has almost always a psychic origin; for example, the ragas have a psychic origin, they come from the psychic. The inspiration does not often come from above. But Indian music is very rarely embodied in a strong vital. It has rather an inner and intimate origin. I have heard a great deal of Indian music, a great deal; I have rarely heard Indian music having vital strength, very rarely; perhaps not more than four or five times. But very often I have heard Indian music having a psychic origin, it translates itself almost directly into the physical. And truly one must then concentrate, and as it is — how to put it? — very tenuous, very subtle, as there are none of those intense vital vibrations, one can easily glide within it and climb back to the psychic origin of the music. It has that effect upon you, it is a kind of ecstatic trance, as from an intoxication. It makes you enter a little into trance. Then if you listen well and let yourself go, you move on and glide, glide into a psychic consciousness. But if you remain only in the external consciousness, the music is so tenuous that there is no response from the vital, it leaves you altogether flat. Sometimes, there was a vital force, then it became quite good.... I myself like this music very much, this kind of theme developing into a play. The theme is essentially very musical: and then it is developed with variations, innumerable variations, and it is always the same theme which is developed in one way or another.

In Europe there were musicians who were truly musicians and they too had the thing: Bach had it, he used to do the same sort of thing, Mozart had it, his music was purely musical, he had no intention of expressing any other thing, it was music for music's sake. But this manner of taking a certain number of notes in a certain relation (they are like almost infinite variations), personally I find it wonderful to put you in repose, and you enter deep within yourself. And then, if you are ready, it gives you the psychic consciousness: something that makes you withdraw from the external consciousness, which makes you enter elsewhere, enter within.

In what form does music come to the great composers? That is, is it only the melody that comes or is it what we hear?

But that depends upon the musician. This is just what I was saying. For example, here in India, the science of harmony does not exist much, so the thing is translated by melody. As soon as the vital intervenes, there comes a kind of harmonic complexity in the music. That gives it a richness, a plenitude which it did not have.

But is it the melody that comes?

No, it is the music, and music is not necessarily melody. It is a relation of sounds which is not necessarily melodic. Melody is a part of this relation of sounds.

27 May 1953

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Suffering — how does it help artistic creation?

How does it help? That depends on people. Some people are very powerfully helped by it. I consider that man [the composer Hector Berlioz] one of the purest expressions of music. It is almost... I could say that he is an incarnation of music, of the spirit of music. Unfortunately his body was a little frail; that is, he did not have that solid base which yoga gives, for instance. So this shook him up too much, and made him too emotional, nervous, agitated, emotive. You see, it was a serious weakness. But from

the point of view of creation, I have always felt — and the other day it was very strong — that truly he was in contact with the spirit of music, you know, the very meaning of music, and that this entered into him with such a force that it shook him up: but truly, truly he was like an incarnation of music.

The notion that it was suffering that made him create is purely human; it is not true. What, on the contrary, is very remarkable is — to turn the thing around — that there was no physical pain which was not instantaneously translated into music in him; that is, the spirit of music was much stronger than human pain, and each blow which he received from life — and as he was indeed too sensitive to have the power of resisting, he was shaken — all the same, instantly, it was translated into music. It is something very rare.

People — all creators — usually require a little... how shall I put it?... time and quietness to be able to begin creating again, while with him it was spontaneous. The painful blow brought musical expression instantaneously. Truly for him his whole life began with music, finished with music. It was music and it was a... he had such a sincerity and such an exclusive intensity in his attachment to music that I feel that the spirit of music expressed itself through him. Perhaps what he has written is not the *most* beautiful music, because of that kind of weakness of what we call the “*ādhāra*” here. He was... his physical make-up was a little too weak. But from the point of view of music, it is very beautiful, very beautiful. (*Silence*) And even with his strength he had a very great simplicity. There is a kind of limpidity of line in what he has written, with a very great technical knowledge, of course. His power of orchestration was very, very remarkable. When one can orchestrate something for six hundred performers, it means a science as complicated as the most complicated mathematics. And in fact they come very close.

20 October 1954

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Is sound particular only to the physical world or is there sound in the other domains also?

There is sound there also.

In the same way as here?

There certainly is a sound in all the manifested worlds, and when one has the appropriate organs one hears it.

There are sounds which belong to the highest regions, and in fact, the sound we have here gives the feeling of a noise in comparison with that sound.

For example, there are regions harmonious and musical in which one hears something which is the origin of the music we have here — but the sounds of material, physical music seem absolutely barbaric in comparison with that music! When one has heard that, even the most perfect instrument is inadequate. All constructed instruments, among which the violin certainly has the purest sound, are very much inferior in their expression to the music of this world of harmonies.

The human voice when absolutely pure is of all instruments the one which expresses it best; but it is still... it has a sound which seems so harsh, so gross compared with that. When one has been in that region, one truly knows what music is. And it has so perfect a clarity that at the same time as the sound one has the full understanding of what is said. That is, one has the principle of the idea, without words, simply with the sound and all the inflexions of the... one can't call it sensations, nor feelings... what seems to be closest would be some kind of soul-states or states of consciousness. All these inflexions are clearly perceptible through the nuances of the sound. And certainly, those who were great musicians, geniuses from the point of view of music, must have been more or less consciously in contact with that. The physical world as we have it today is an absolutely gross world; it looks like a caricature.

26 October 1955

CHAPTER 16

Education

Parents and Their Children

Sweet Mother, is it possible for the mother and father to give birth to... to ask for the soul they want?

To ask? For that they must have an occult knowledge which they don't usually have. But anyway, what is possible is that instead of doing the thing like an animal driven by instinct or desire and most of the time, without even wanting it, they do it at will, with an aspiration, putting themselves in a state of aspiration and almost of prayer, so that the being they are going to form may be one fit to embody a soul which they *can* call down to incarnate in that form. I knew people — not many, this does not often happen, but still I knew some — who chose special circumstances, prepared themselves through special concentration and meditation and aspiration and sought to bring down, into the body they were going to form, an exceptional being.

In many countries of old — and even now in certain countries — the woman who was going to have a child was placed in special conditions of beauty, harmony, peace and well-being, in very harmonious physical conditions, so that the child could be formed in the best possible conditions. This is obviously what ought to be done, for it is within the reach of human possibilities. Human beings are developed enough for this not to be something quite exceptional. And yet it is quite exceptional, for very few people think of it, while there are *innumerable* people who have children without even wanting to.

That was what I wanted to say.

It is possible to call a soul, but one must be at least a little conscious oneself, and must want to do what one does in the best conditions. This is very rare, but it is possible.[...]

The formation of the body depends entirely on a man and a woman, but is the soul which manifests in the child, in the body which is being formed, compelled to manifest in this body?

You mean whether it can choose between different bodies?

Yes.

Well, it is very exceptional, after all, in the great mass of humanity, that a conscious soul incarnates voluntarily. It is something very unusual. I have already told you that when a soul is conscious, fully formed, and wants to incarnate, usually from its psychic plane it looks for a corresponding psychic light at a certain place upon earth. Besides, during its previous incarnation, before going away, before leaving the earth-atmosphere, usually as a result of the experience it had in the life that is coming to an end, the soul chooses more or less — not in all details but broadly — the conditions of its future life. But these are exceptional cases. Possibly we could speak of it for ourselves here, but for the majority, the vast majority of men, even those who are educated, it is out of the question. And what comes then is a psychic being in formation, more or less formed, and there are all the stages of formation from the spark which becomes a little light to the fully formed being, and this extends over thousands of years. This ascent of the soul to become a conscious being having its own will, capable of determining the choice of its own life, takes thousands of years.

So, you are thinking of a soul which would say, “No, I refuse this body, I am going to look for another”?... I don’t say it is impossible — everything is possible. It does happen, in fact, that children are still-born, which means that there was no soul to incarnate in them. But it may be for other reasons also; it may be for reasons of malformation only; one can’t say. I don’t say it is impossible, but generally, when a conscious and free soul chooses to take a body on earth again, even before its birth it works on this body. So it has no reason not to accept even the inconveniences which may result from the ignorance of the parents; for it has chosen the place for a reason which was not one of ignorance: it saw a light there — it might have been simply the light of a possibility, but there was a light and *that is why* it has come there. So, it is all very well to say, “Ah! no, I don’t like it”, but where would it go to choose another it likes?... That may happen, I

don't say it is impossible, but it cannot happen very often. For, when from the psychic plane the soul looks at the earth and chooses the place for its next birth, it chooses it with sufficient discernment not to be altogether grossly mistaken.

It has also happened that souls have incarnated and then left. There are many reasons why they go away. Children who die very young, after a few days or a few weeks — this may be for a similar reason. Most often it is said that the soul needed just a little experience to complete its formation, that it had it during these few weeks and then left. Everything is possible. And as many stories would be needed to tell the story of souls as are needed to tell the story of men. That is to say, they are innumerable and the instances are as different as possible from one another.

So, to decide arbitrarily: "It is like that, not like this; this is what happens and not that", this is childishness. *Everything* can happen. There are instances which occur more frequently than others, one can generalise, but one can never say, "This is not possible and it is always like this or always like that." That is not how things happen.

But anyway — anyway — even in the best cases, even when the soul has come consciously, even when it has consciously participated in the formation of the physical body, still so long as the body is formed in the usual animal way, it will have to struggle and correct all those things which come from this human animality.

Inevitably, parents have a particular formation, they are particularly healthy or unhealthy; even taking things at their best, they have a heap of atavisms, habits, formations in the subconscious and even in the unconscious, which come from their own birth, the environment they have lived in, their own life; and even if they are remarkable people, they have a large number of things which are quite opposed to the true psychic life — even the best of them, even the most conscious. And besides, there is all that is going to happen. Even if one takes a great deal of trouble over the education of one's children, they will come in contact with all sorts of people who will have an influence over them, especially when they are very young, and these influences enter the subconscious, one has to struggle against them later on. I say: even in the best cases, because of the way in which the body is formed at present, you have to face innumerable

difficulties which come more or less from the subconscious, but rise to the surface and against which you have to struggle before you can become completely free and develop normally.

27 June 1956

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Sweet Mother, what kind of love do parents have for their children ?

What kind? A human love, don't they? Like all human loves: frightfully mixed, with all sorts of things. The need of possession, a formidable egoism. At first, I must tell you that a wonderful picture has been painted... many books written, wonderful things said about a mother's love for her children. I assure you that except for the capacity of speaking about the subject in flowery phrases, the love of the higher animals like the... well, the mammals for their children is exactly of the same nature: the same devotion, the same self-forgetfulness, the same self-denial, the same care for education, the same patience, the same... I have seen absolutely marvellous things, and if they had been written down and applied to a woman instead of to a cat, superb novels would have been made, people would have said: "What a person! How marvellously devoted are these women in their maternal love!" Exactly the same thing. Only, cats could not use flowery language. That's all. They could not write books and make speeches, that is the only difference. But I have seen absolutely astonishing things. And that kind of self-giving and self-oblivion — as soon as there is the beginning of love, it comes. But men... I sincerely believe, from all that I have studied, that there is perhaps a greater purity in animals for they do not think, while human beings with their mental power, their capacity of reflecting, reasoning, analysing, studying, all that, oh! they spoil the most lovely movement. They begin to calculate, reason, doubt, organise.

Take, for instance, parents. At the risk of removing many illusions in your consciousness, I must tell you something about the source of a mother's love for her child. It is because this child is made of her very own substance, and for quite a long time, relatively long, the material link, the link of substance, between mother and child is *extremely* close — it is as though a bit of her flesh had been taken out and put apart at a distance —

and it is only much later that the tie between the two is completely cut. There is a kind of tie, of subtle sensation, such that the mother feels exactly what the child feels, as she would feel it in herself. That then is the material basis of the mother's attachment for the child. It is a basis of material identity, nothing else but that. Feeling comes much later (it may come earlier, that depends on people), but I am speaking of the majority: feeling comes only long afterwards, and it is conditioned. There are all kinds of things.... I could speak to you for hours on the subject. But still this must not be mixed up with love. It is a material identification which makes the mother feel intimately, feel quite concretely and tangibly what the child is feeling: if the child receives a shock, well, the mother feels it. This lasts at least for two months.

This is the basis. The rest comes from people's nature, their state of development, their consciousness, education and capacity for feeling. This is added to the first. And then there are all the collective suggestions which go to the making of novels — for people are wonderful at constructing novels. They write novels about everything. They have used their minds to build imaginations which circulate in the atmosphere and then are caught just like that. So some catch a certain type of these, others another kind, and then, as imagination is a force of propulsion, with it one begins to act, and then finally one lives a novel in his life, if he is in the least imaginative.... This has absolutely nothing to do with the true consciousness, with the psychic being, nothing at all, but people come to speak to you in a florid style and tell you stories — all that is in wandering imaginations. If one could see, that is, if *you* could see this mental atmosphere, that of the physical mind, which is circulating everywhere, making you move, making you feel, making you think, making you act, oh, good heavens! you would lose many of your illusions about your personality. But indeed it is like that. Whether one knows it or not, it is like that.

There are many souls upon earth, human beings.... Obviously, those who have a certain culture, a certain development, a certain individualisation gather together usually: instinctively they get together, form groups. And so one can find in space and time a number — not considerable but still sufficiently large — of cultured beings who are united, but one must not believe that this gives the exact proportion of the

culture and development of human beings. It is only like a sort of foam that has been brought up and is on the surface. But even among these latter, even among these beings who are already a selection, there is hardly one in a thousand who is a truly individual being, conscious of himself, united with his psychic being, governed by his inner law and, consequently, almost if not totally free from external influences; for, being conscious, when these influences come, he sees them: those that seem to him to harmonise with his inner development and normal growth he accepts; those which are opposed he refuses. And so, instead of being a chaos — or in any case a frightful mixture — they are organised beings, individual, conscious of themselves, walking through life knowing where they want to go and how they want to.

Of these, if you like, we may say that they are men. That is, they are what Nature may produce of the best as far as men go — they are still men. But this is the summit of man. They are ready to become something else. But unless one is *that*, one is to a great extent an animal still and a very slight beginning of a man. Only *that* can be called man. So there you are, you have only to look into yourselves and know... whether you are men or not.

I am saying this in the hope that you will become that.

14 April 1954

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Some children are wicked. Is it because their parents did not aspire for them?

It is perhaps a subconscious wickedness in the parents. It is said that people throw out their wickedness from themselves by giving it birth in their children. One has always a shadow in oneself. There are people who project this outside — that does not always free them from it, but still perhaps it comforts them! But it is the child who “profits” by it, don’t you see? It is quite evident that the state of consciousness in which the parents are at that moment is of capital importance. If they have very low and vulgar ideas, the children will reflect them quite certainly. And all these

children who are ill-formed, ill-bred, incomplete (specially from the point of view of intelligence: with holes, things missing), children who are only half-conscious and half-formed — this is always due to the fault of the state of consciousness in which the parents were when they conceived the child. Even as the state of consciousness of the last moments of life is of capital importance for the future of the one who is departing, so too the state of consciousness in which the parents are at the moment of conception gives a sort of stamp to the child, which it will reflect throughout its life. So, these are apparently such little things — the mood of the moment, the moment's aspiration or degradation, anything whatsoever, everything that takes place at a particular moment — it seems to be so small a thing, and it has so great a consequence: it brings into the world a child who is incomplete or wicked or finally a failure. And people are not aware of that.

Later, when the child behaves nastily, they scold it. But they should begin by scolding themselves, telling themselves: "In what a horrible state of consciousness must I have been when I brought that child into the world." For it is truly that.

30 December 1953

The Art of Living

Usually you are taught very few things — you are not taught even to sleep. People think that they have only to lie down in their bed and then they sleep. But this is not true! One must learn how to sleep as one must learn to eat, learn to do anything at all. And if one does not learn, well, one does it badly! Or one takes years and years to learn how to do it, and during all those years when it is badly done, all sorts of unpleasant things occur. And it is only after suffering much, making many mistakes, committing many stupidities, that, gradually, when one is old and has white hair, one begins to know how to do something. But if, when you were quite small, your parents or those who look after you, took the trouble to teach you how to do what you do, do it properly as it should be done, in the right way, then that would help you to avoid all — all these mistakes you make through the years. And not only do you make mistakes, but nobody tells you they

are mistakes! And so you are surprised that you fall ill, are tired, don't know how to do what you want to, and that you have never been taught. Some children are not taught anything, and so they need years and years and years to learn the simplest things, even the most elementary thing: to be clean.

It is true that most of the time parents do not teach this because they do not know it themselves! For they themselves did not have anyone to teach them. So they do not know... they have groped in the dark all their life to learn how to live. And so naturally they are not in a position to teach you how to live, for they do not know it themselves. If you are left to yourself, you understand, it needs years, years of experience to learn the simplest thing, and even then you must think about it. If you don't think about it, you will never learn.

To live in the right way is a very difficult art, and unless one begins to learn it when quite young and to make an effort, one never knows it very well. Simply the art of keeping one's body in good health, one's mind quiet and goodwill in one's heart — things which are indispensable in order to live decently — I don't say in comfort, I don't say remarkably, I only say decently. Well, I don't think there are many who take care to teach this to their children.

2 June 1954

Distinguishing Good and Evil

There is another quality which must be cultivated in a child from a very young age: that is the feeling of uneasiness, of a moral disbalance which it feels when it has done certain things, not because it has been told not to do them, not because it fears punishment, but spontaneously. For example, a child who hurts its comrade through mischief, if it is in its normal, natural state, will experience uneasiness, a grief deep in its being, because what it has done is contrary to its inner truth.

For in spite of all teachings, in spite of all that thought can think, there is something in the depths which has a feeling of a perfection, a greatness, a truth, and is painfully contradicted by all the movements opposing this truth. If a child has not been spoilt by its milieu, by deplorable examples

around it, that is, if it is in the normal state, spontaneously, without its being told anything, it will feel an uneasiness when it has done something against the truth of its being. And it is exactly upon this that later its effort for progress must be founded.

For, if you want to find one teaching, one doctrine upon which to base your progress, you will never find anything — or, to be more exact, you will find something else, for in accordance with the climate, the age, the civilisation, the teaching given is quite conflicting. When one person says, "This is good", another will say, "No, this is bad", and with the same logic, the same persuasive force. Consequently, it is not upon this that one can build. Religion has always tried to establish a dogma, and it will tell you that if you conform to the dogma you are in the truth and if you don't you are in the falsehood. But all this has never led to anything and has only created confusion.

There is only one true guide, that is the inner guide, who does not pass through the mental consciousness.

Naturally, if a child gets a disastrous education, it will try ever harder to extinguish within itself this little true thing, and sometimes it succeeds so well that it loses all contact with it, and also the power of distinguishing between good and evil. That is why I insist upon this, and I say that from their infancy children must be taught that there is an inner reality — within themselves, within the earth, within the universe — and that they, the earth and the universe exist only as a function of this truth, and that if it did not exist the child would not last, even the short time that it does, and that everything would dissolve even as it comes into being. And because this is the real basis of the universe, naturally it is this which will triumph; and all that opposes this cannot endure as long as this does, because it is That, the eternal thing which is at the base of the universe.

It is not a question, of course, of giving a child philosophical explanations, but he could very well be given the feeling of this kind of inner comfort, of satisfaction, and sometimes, of an intense joy when he obeys this little very silent thing within him which will prevent him from doing what is contrary to it. It is on an experience of this kind that teaching may be based. The child must be given the impression that nothing can endure if he does not have within himself this true satisfaction which alone

is permanent.

Can a child become conscious of this inner truth like an adult?

For a child this is very clear, for it is a perception without any complications of word or thought — there is that which puts him at ease and that which makes him uneasy (it is not necessarily joy or sorrow which come only when the thing is very intense). And all this is much clearer in the child than in an adult, for the latter has always a mind which works and clouds his perception of the truth.

To give a child theories is absolutely useless, for as soon as his mind awakes he will find a thousand reasons for contradicting your theories, and he will be right.

This little true thing in the child is the divine presence in the psychic — it is also there in plants and animals. In plants it is not conscious, in animals it begins to be conscious, and in children it is very conscious. I have known children who were much more conscious of their psychic being at the age of five than at fourteen, and at fourteen than at twenty-five; and above all, from the moment they go to school where they undergo that kind of intensive mental training which draws their attention to the intellectual part of their being, they lose almost always and almost completely this contact with their psychic being.

If only you were an experienced observer, if you could tell what goes on in a person, simply by looking into his eyes!... It is said the eyes are the mirror of the soul; that is a popular way of speaking but if the eyes do not express to you the psychic, it is because it is very far behind, veiled by many things. Look carefully, then, into the eyes of little children, and you will see a kind of light — some describe it as frank — but so true, so true, which looks at the world with wonder. Well, this sense of wonder, it is the wonder of the psychic which sees the truth but does not understand much about the world, for it is too far from it. Children have this but as they learn more, become more intelligent, more educated, this is effaced, and you see all sorts of things in their eyes: thoughts, desires, passions, wickedness — but this kind of little flame, so pure, is no longer there. And you may be sure it is the mind that has got in there, and the psychic has gone very far behind.

Even a child who does not have a sufficiently developed brain to understand, if you simply pass on to him a vibration of protection or affection or solicitude or consolation, you will see that he responds. But if you take a boy of fourteen, for example, who is at school, who has ordinary parents and has been ill-treated, his mind is very much in the forefront; there is something hard in him, the psychic being has gone behind. Such boys do not respond to the vibration. One would say they are made of wood or plaster.

If the inner truth, the divine presence in the psychic is so conscious in the child, it could no longer be said that a child is a little animal, could it?

Why not? In animals there is sometimes a very intense psychic truth. Naturally, I believe that the psychic being is a little more formed, a little more conscious in a child than in an animal. But I have experimented with animals, just to know; well, I assure you that in human beings I have rarely come across some of the virtues which I have seen in animals, very simple, unpretentious virtues. As in cats, for example: I have studied cats a lot; if one knows them well they are marvellous creatures. I have known mother-cats which have sacrificed themselves entirely for their babies — people speak of maternal love with such admiration, as though it were purely a human privilege, but I have seen this love manifested by mother-cats to a degree far surpassing ordinary humanity. I have seen a mother-cat which would never touch her food until her babies had taken all they needed. I have seen another cat which stayed eight days beside her kittens, without satisfying any of her needs because she was afraid to leave them alone; and a cat which repeated more than fifty times the same movement to teach her young one how to jump from a wall on to a window, and I may add, with a care, an intelligence, a skill which many uneducated women do not have. And why is it thus? — because there was no mental intervention. It was altogether spontaneous instinct. But what is instinct? — it is the presence of the Divine in the genus of the species, and that, that is the psychic of animals; a collective, not an individual psychic.

I have seen in animals all the reactions, emotional, affective, sentimental, all the feelings of which men are so proud. The only difference is that animals cannot speak of them and write about them, so

we consider them inferior beings because they cannot flood us with books on what they have felt.

When I was a child if I did something bad immediately I felt uneasy and I would decide never to do that again. Then my parents also used to tell me never again to do it. Why? because I had myself decided not to do it any more?

A child should never be scolded. I am accused of speaking ill of parents! but I have seen them at work, you see, and I know that ninety per cent of parents snub a child who comes spontaneously to confess a mistake: "You are very naughty. Go away, I am busy" — instead of listening to the child with patience and explaining to him where his fault lies, how he ought to have acted. And the child, who had come with good intentions, goes away quite hurt, with the feeling: "Why am I treated thus?" Then the child sees his parents are not perfect — which is obviously true of them today — he sees that they are wrong and says to himself: "Why does he scold me, he is like me!"

8 January 1951

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Children are not as "concretised", materialised in their physical consciousness as older people — as one grows up, it is as though one is coagulated and becomes more and more gross in one's consciousness unless through a willed action one develops otherwise. For instance, the majority of children find it very difficult to distinguish their imagination, their dreams, what they see inside themselves from outer things. The world is not as limited as when one is older and more precise. And they are extremely sensitive within; they are much closer to their psychic being than when they are grown up, and much more sensitive to the forces which, later, will become invisible to them — but at this moment are not. It is not unusual for children to have some sort of fits of fear or even of joy in their sleep, from dreams. Children are afraid of all sorts of things which for older people don't exist any more. Their vision is not solely material. They have a kind of perception, more or less exact and precise, of the play of the forces behind. So, being in that state they are influenced by forces

which otherwise have no hold over people who are shut up in themselves and more gross. And these forces — the forces of destruction, for example, or forces of cruelty, forces of wickedness, of ill-will — all, all these things are in the atmosphere. When one is more conscious and more well-formed within, one can see them as outside oneself and deny them any expression. But when one is very young and lives in a half-dream, these things can exercise much influence and make children do things which in their normal state they would not do. I believe it is due to that above all.

There is also the phenomenon of unconsciousness. Very often a child does harm without even being aware that it is doing harm; they are unconscious, they are shut up in their movement, and they are not aware of the effect of what they do. That happens very often.

That means that if a child is rightly educated, and if one appeals to his best feelings and explains to him that to do things in such and such a way is harmful to others (and one can make this very tangible for them with a little demonstration), they stop doing harm, very often.

It is above all a question of education. These half-conscious movements of cruelty — it is very rare for parents not to have them; well, that is enough to set its impression upon a child's consciousness. There are some — but that is a very small number — who have an adverse formation inside them. These are irretrievably wicked children. But they are very rare.

30 December 1953

Learning to Know Oneself

Essentially there is but one single true reason for living: it is to know oneself. We are here to learn — to learn what we are, why we are here, and what we have to do. And if we don't know that, our life is altogether empty — for ourselves and for others.

And so, generally, it is better to begin early, for there is much to learn. If one wants to learn about life as it is, the world as it is, and then really know the why and the how of life, one can begin when very young, from the time one is very, very tiny — before the age of five. And then, when

one is a hundred, he will still be able to learn. So it is interesting. And all the time one can have surprises, always learn something one didn't know, meet with an experience one did not have before, find something one was ignorant of. It is surely very interesting. And the more one knows, the more aware does one become that one has everything to learn. Truly, I could say that only fools believe they know.

3 February 1954

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I think it was just today or perhaps yesterday, I was pleading for the right of everyone to remain in ignorance if it pleases him — I am not speaking of ignorance from the spiritual point, of view, the world of Ignorance in which we live, I am not speaking of that. I am speaking of ignorance according to the classical ideas of education. Well, I say that if there are people who don't want to learn and don't like to learn, they have the right not to learn.

The only thing it is our duty to tell them is this, "Now, you are of an age when your brain is in course of preparation. It is being formed. Each new thing you study makes one more little convolution in your brain. The more you study, the more you think, the more you reflect, the more you work, the more complex and complete does your brain become in its tiny convolutions. And as you are young, it is best done at this time. That is why it is common human practice to choose youth as the period of learning, for it is infinitely easier." And it is obvious that until the child becomes at least a little conscious of itself, it must be subjected to a certain rule, for it has not yet the capacity of choosing for itself.

That age is very variable; it depends on people, depends on each individual. But still, it is understood that in the seven-year period between the age of seven and fourteen, one begins to reach the age of reason. If one is helped, one can become a reasoning being between seven and fourteen.

Before seven there are geniuses — there are always geniuses, everywhere — but as a general rule the child is not conscious of itself and doesn't know why or how to do things. That is the time to cultivate its attention, teach it to concentrate on what it does, give it a small basis

sufficient for it not to be entirely like a little animal, but to belong to the human race through an elementary intellectual development.

After that, there is a period of seven years during which it must be taught to choose — to choose what it wants to be. If it chooses to have a rich, complex, well-developed brain, powerful in its functioning, well, it must be taught to work; for it is by work, by reflection, study, analysis and so on that the brain is formed. At fourteen you are ready — or ought to be ready — to know what you want to be.

And so I say: if at about that age some children declare categorically, “Intellectual growth does not interest me at all, I don’t want to learn, I want to remain ignorant in the ordinary way of ignorance”, I don’t see by what right one could impose studies on them nor why it should be necessary to standardise them.

There are those who are at the bottom and others who are at another level. There are people who may have very remarkable capacities and yet have no taste for intellectual growth. One may warn them that if they don’t work, don’t study, when they are grown up, they will perhaps feel embarrassed in front of others. But if that does not matter to them and they want to live a non-intellectual life, I believe one has no right to compel them. That is my constant quarrel with the teachers of the [Ashram] school! They come and tell me: “If they don’t work, when they are grown up they will be stupid and ignorant.” I say: “But if it pleases them to be stupid and ignorant, what right have you to interfere?”

One can’t make knowledge and intelligence compulsory. That’s all.

Now, if you believe that by abstaining from all effort and all study, you will become geniuses, and supramental geniuses at that, don’t have any illusions, it won’t happen to you. For even if you touch a higher light, through an inner aspiration or by a divine grace, you will have nothing in there, in your brain, to be able to express it. So it will remain quite nebulous and won’t in any way change your outer life. But if it pleases you to be like this, nobody has the right to compel you to be otherwise. You must wait till you are sufficiently conscious to be able to choose.

Of course, there are people who at fourteen are yet like children of five. But these — there’s little hope for them. Especially those who have lived here.

Here's something then which already changes your outlook on education completely.

Essentially, the *only thing* you should do assiduously is to teach them to know themselves and choose their own destiny, the path they will follow; to teach them to look at themselves, understand themselves *and* to will what they want to be. That is infinitely more important than teaching them what happened on earth in former times, or even how the earth is built, or even... indeed, all sorts of things which are quite a necessary grounding if you want to live the ordinary life in the world, for if you don't know them, anyone will immediately put you down intellectually: "Oh, he is an idiot, he knows nothing."

But still, at any age, if you are studious and have the will to do it, you can also take up books and work; you don't need to go to school for that. There are enough books in the world to teach you things. There are even many more books than necessary.[...]

But what is very important is to know what you want. And for this a minimum of freedom is necessary. You must not be under a compulsion or an obligation. You must be able to do things whole-heartedly. If you are lazy, well, you will know what it means to be lazy.... You know, in life idlers are obliged to work ten times more than others, for what they do they do badly, so they are obliged to do it again. But these are things one must learn by experience. They can't be instilled into you.

The mind, if not controlled, is something wavering and imprecise. If one doesn't have the habit of concentrating it upon something, it goes on wandering all the time. It goes on without a stop anywhere and wanders into a *world* of vagueness. And then, when one wants to fix one's attention, it hurts! There is a little effort there, like this: "Oh! how tiring it is, it hurts!" So one does not do it. And one lives in a kind of cloud. And your head is like a cloud; it's like that, most brains are like clouds: there is no precision, no exactitude, no clarity, it is hazy — vague and hazy. You have impressions rather than a knowledge of things. You live in an approximation, and you can keep within you all sorts of contradictory ideas made up mostly of impressions, sensations, feelings, emotions — all sorts of things like that which have very little to do with thought and... which are just vague ramblings.

But if you want to succeed in having a precise, concrete, clear, definite thought on a certain subject, you must make an effort, gather yourself together, hold yourself firm, concentrate. And the first time you do it, it literally hurts, it is tiring! But if you don't make a habit of it, all your life you will be living in a state of irresolution. And when it comes to practical things, when you are faced with — for, in spite of everything, one is always faced with — a number of problems to solve, of a very practical kind, well, instead of being able to take up the elements of the problem, to put them all face to face, look at the question from every side, and rising above and seeing the solution, instead of that you will be tossed about in the swirls of something grey and uncertain, and it will be like so many spiders running around in your head — but you won't succeed in catching the thing.

I am speaking of the simplest of problems, you know; I am not speaking of deciding the fate of the world or humanity, or even of a country — nothing of the kind. I am speaking of the problems of your daily life, of every day. They become something quite woolly.

Well, it is to avoid this that you are told, when your brain is in course of being formed, "Instead of letting it be shaped by such habits and qualities, try to give it a little exactitude, precision, capacity of concentration, of choosing, deciding, putting things in order, try to use your reason."

Of course, it is well understood that reason is not the supreme capacity of man and must be surpassed, but it is quite obvious that if you don't have it, you will live an altogether incoherent life, you won't even know how to behave rationally. The least thing will upset you completely and you won't even know why, and still less how to remedy it. While someone who has established within himself a state of active, clear reasoning, can face attacks of all kinds, emotional attacks or any trials whatever; for life is entirely made up of these things — unpleasantness, vexations — which are small but proportionate to the one who feels them, and so naturally felt by him as very big because they are proportionate to him. Well, reason can stand back a little, look at all that, smile and say, "Oh! no, one must not make a fuss over such a small thing."

If you do not have reason, you will be like a cork on a stormy sea. I

don't know if the cork suffers from its condition, but it does not seem to me a very happy one.

There, then.

Now, after having said all this — and it's not just once I have told you this but several times I think, and I am ready to tell it to you again as many times as you like — after having said this, I believe in leaving you entirely free to choose whether you want to be the cork on the stormy sea or whether you want to have a clear, precise perception and a sufficient knowledge of things to be able to walk to — well, simply to where you want to go.

For there is a clarity that's indispensable in order to be able even to follow the path one has chosen.

I am not at all keen on your becoming scholars, far from it! For then one falls into the other extreme: one fills one's head with so many things that there is no longer any room for the higher light; but there is a minimum that is indispensable for not... well, for not being the cork.

Mother, some say that our general inadequacy in studies comes from the fact that too much stress is laid on games, physical education. Is this true?

Who said that? People who don't like physical education? Stiff old teachers who can't do exercises any longer? These? — I am not asking for names!

Well, I don't think so.

You remember the first article Sri Aurobindo wrote in the *Bulletin*?²⁰ He answers these people quite categorically.

I don't think it is that. I am quite sure it is not that, I believe, rather — and I put all the blame on myself — that you have been given a fantastic freedom, my children; oh! I don't think there is any other place in the world where children are so free. And, indeed, it is very difficult to know how to make use of a freedom like that.

However, it was worthwhile trying the experiment. You don't

²⁰ An article on the value of physical education.

appreciate it because you don't know how it is when it is not like that; it seems quite natural to you. But it is very difficult to know how to organise one's own freedom oneself. Still, if you were to succeed in doing that, in giving yourself your own discipline — and for higher reasons, not in order to pass exams, to make a career, please your teachers, win many prizes, or all the ordinary reasons children have: in order not to be scolded, not to be punished, for all that; we leave out all those reasons — if you manage to impose a discipline upon yourself — each one his own, there is no need to follow someone else's — a discipline simply because you want to progress and draw the best out of yourself, then... Oh! you will be far superior to those who follow the ordinary school disciplines. That is what I wanted to try. Mind you, I don't say I have failed; I still have great hope that you will know how to profit by this unique opportunity. But all the same, there is something you must find out; it is the *necessity* of an inner discipline. Without discipline you won't be able to get anywhere, without discipline you can't even live the normal life of a normal man. But instead of having the conventional discipline of ordinary societies or ordinary institutions, I would have liked and I still want you to have the discipline you set yourselves, for the love of perfection, your own perfection, the perfection of your being.

But without that... Note that if one didn't discipline the body, one would not even be able to stand on two legs, one would continue like a child on all fours. You could do nothing. You are obliged to discipline yourself; you could not live in society, you could not live at all, except all alone in the forest; and even then, I don't quite know. It is absolutely indispensable, I have told you this I don't know how often. And because I have a very marked aversion for conventional disciplines, social and others, it does not mean that you must abstain from all discipline. I would like everyone to find his own, in the sincerity of his inner aspiration and the will to realise himself.

And so, the aim of all those who know, whether they are teachers, instructors or any others, the very purpose of those who know, is to inform you, to help you. When you are in a situation which seems difficult to you, you put your problem and, from their personal experience, they can tell you, "No, it is like this or it is like that, and you must do this, you must try that." So, instead of forcing you to absorb theories, principles and so-called

laws, and a more or less abstract knowledge, they would be there to give you information about things, from the most material to the most spiritual, each one within his own province and according to his capacity.

It is quite obvious that if you are thrown into the world without the least technical knowledge, you may do the most dangerous things. Take a child who knows nothing, the first thing he will do if he has any matches, for instance, is to bum himself. So, in that field, from the purely material point of view, it is good that there are people who know and who can inform you; for otherwise, if each one had to learn from his own experience, he would spend several lives learning the most indispensable things. That is the usefulness, the *true* usefulness of teachers and instructors. They have learnt more or less by practice or through a special study, and they can teach you those things it is indispensable to know. That makes you save time, a lot of time. But that is their only usefulness: to be able to answer questions. And, in fact, you should have a brain which is lively enough to ask questions. I don't know, but you never have anything to ask me or it is so seldom.

13 June 1956

A Child's Dreams

When one is very young and as I say "well-born", that is, born with a conscious psychic being within, there is always, in the dreams of the child, a kind of aspiration, which for its child's consciousness is a sort of ambition, for something which would be beauty without ugliness, justice without injustice, goodness without limits, and a conscious, constant success, a perpetual miracle. One dreams of miracles when one is young, one wants all wickedness to disappear, everything to be always luminous, beautiful, happy, one likes stories which end happily. This is what one should rely on. When the body feels its miseries, its limitations, one must establish this dream in it — of a strength which would have no limit, a beauty which would have no ugliness, and of marvellous capacities: one dreams of being able to rise into the air, of being wherever it is necessary to be, of setting things right when they go wrong, of healing the sick; indeed, one has all sorts of dreams when one is very young.... Usually parents or teachers pass their time throwing cold water on it, telling you,

"Oh! it's a dream, it is not a reality." They should do the very opposite! Children should be taught, "Yes, this is what you must try to realise and not only is it possible but it is *certain* if you come in contact with the part in you which is capable of doing this thing. This is what should guide your life, organise it, make you develop in the direction of the *true reality* which the ordinary world calls illusion."

This is what it should be, instead of making children ordinary, with that dull, vulgar common sense which becomes an inveterate habit and, when something is going well, immediately brings up in the being the idea: "Oh, that won't last!", when somebody is kind, the impression, "Oh, he will change!", when one is capable of doing something, "Oh, tomorrow I won't be able to do it so well." This is like an acid, a destructive acid in the being, which takes away hope, certitude, confidence in future possibilities.

When a child is full of enthusiasm, never throw cold water on it, never tell him, "You know, life is not like that!" You should always encourage him, tell him, "Yes, at present things are not always like that, they *seem* ugly, but behind this there is a beauty that is trying to realise itself. This is what you should love and draw towards you, this is what you should make the object of your dreams, of your ambitions."

And if you do this when you are very small, you have much less difficulty than if later on you have to undo, undo all the bad effects of a bad education, undo that kind of dull and vulgar common sense which means that you expect nothing good from life, which makes it insipid, boring, and contradicts all the hopes, all the so-called illusions of beauty. On the contrary, you must tell a child — or yourself if you are no longer quite a baby — "Everything in me that seems unreal, impossible, illusory, *that* is what is true, *that* is what I must cultivate." When you have these aspirations: "Oh, not to be always limited by some incapacity, all the time held back by some bad will!", you must cultivate within you this certitude that *that* is what is essentially true and *that* is what must be realised.

Then faith awakens in the cells of the body. And you will see that you find a response in your body itself. The body itself will feel that if its inner will helps, fortifies, directs, leads, well, all its limitations will gradually disappear.

And so, when the first experience comes, which sometimes begins

when one is very young, the first contact with the inner joy, the inner beauty, the inner light, the first contact with *that*, which suddenly makes you feel, "Oh! that is what I want," you must cultivate it, never forget it, hold it constantly before you, tell yourself, "I have felt it once, so I can feel it again. This has been real for me, even for the space of a second, and that is what I am going to revive in myself".... And encourage the body to seek it — to seek it, *with the confidence* that it carries that possibility within itself and that if it calls for it, it will come back, it will be realised again.

This is what should be done when one is young. This is what should be done every time one has the opportunity to recollect oneself, commune with oneself, seek oneself.

[...] When one is normal, that is to say, unspoilt by bad teaching and bad example, when one is born and lives in a healthy and relatively balanced and normal environment, the body, spontaneously, without any need for one to intervene mentally or even vitally, has the certitude that even if something goes wrong it will be cured. The body carries within itself the certitude of cure, the certitude that the illness or disorder is sure to disappear. It is only through the false education from the environment that gradually the body is taught that there are incurable diseases, irreparable accidents, and that it can grow old, and all these stories which destroy its faith and trust. But normally, the body of a normal child — the body, I am not speaking of the thought — the body itself feels when something goes wrong that it will certainly be all right again. And if it is not like that, this means that it has already been perverted. It seems *normal* for it to be in good health, it seems quite abnormal to it if something goes wrong and it falls ill; and in its instinct, its spontaneous instinct, it is sure that everything will be all right. It is only the perversion of thought which destroys this: as one grows up the thought becomes more and more distorted, there is the whole collective suggestion, and so, little by little, the body loses its trust in itself, and naturally, losing its self-confidence, it also loses the spontaneous capacity of restoring its equilibrium when this has been disturbed.

But if when very young, from your earliest childhood, you have been taught all sorts of disappointing, depressing things — things that cause decomposition, I could say, disintegration — then this poor body does its best but it has been perverted, put out of order, and no longer has the sense

of its inner strength, its inner force, its power to react.

If one takes care not to pervert it, the body carries within itself the certitude of victory. It is only the wrong use we make of thought and its influence on the body which robs it of this certitude of victory. So, the first thing to do is to cultivate this certitude instead of destroying it; and when it is there, no effort is needed to aspire, but simply a flowering, an unfolding of that inner certitude of victory.

The body carries within itself the sense of its divinity. There. This is what you must try to find again in yourself if you have lost it.

When a child tells you a beautiful dream in which he had many powers and all things were very beautiful, be very careful never to tell him, "Oh! life is not like that", for you are doing something wrong. You must on the contrary tell him, "*Life ought to be* like that, and *it will be* like that!"

31 July 1957

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There are children who... continue their dreams. Every evening when they go to bed they return to the same place and continue their dream.

When I was a child I used to do that.

You are no longer a child, that's a pity!

Because I had no preoccupations then.

Well, become a child once more and you will know how to do it again.

Nothing is more interesting. It is a most pleasant way of passing the nights. You begin a story, then, when it is time to wake up, you put a full stop to the last sentence and come back into your body. And then the following night you start off again, re-open the page and resume your story during the whole time you are out; and then you arrange things well — they must be well arranged, it must be very beautiful. And when it is time to come back, you put a full stop once again and tell those things, "Stay very quiet till I return!" And you come back into your body. And you continue this every evening and write a book of wonderful fairy-tales —

provided you remember them when you wake up.

But this depends on being in a quiet state during the day, doesn't it?

No, it depends on the candour of the child.

And on the trust he has in what happens to him, on the absence of the mind's critical sense, and a simplicity of heart, and a youthful and active energy — it depends on all that — on a kind of inner vital generosity: one must not be too egoistic, one must not be too miserly, nor too practical, too utilitarian — indeed there are all sorts of things one should not be... like children. And then, one must have a lively power of imagination, for — I seem to be telling you stupid things, but it is quite true — there is a world in which you are the supreme maker of forms: that is your own particular vital world. You are the supreme fashioner and you can make a marvel of your world if you know how to use it. If you have an artistic or poetic consciousness, if you love harmony, beauty, you will build there something marvellous which will tend to spring up into the material manifestation.

When I was small I used to call this “telling stories to oneself”. It is not at all a telling with words, in one's head: it is a going away to this place which is fresh and pure, and... building up a wonderful story there. And if you know how to tell yourself a story in this way, and if it is truly beautiful, truly harmonious, truly powerful and well co-ordinated, this story will be realised in your life — perhaps not exactly in the form in which you created it, but as a more or less changed physical expression of what you made.

That may take years, perhaps, but your story will tend to organise your life.

But there are very few people who know how to tell a beautiful story; and then they always mix horrors in it, which they regret later.

If one could create a magnificent story without any horror in it, nothing but beauty, it would have a *considerable* influence on everyone's life. And this is what people don't know.

If one knew how to use this power, this creative power in the world of vital forms, if one knew how to use this while yet a child, a very small

child... for it is then that one fashions his material destiny. But usually people around you, sometimes even your own little friends, but mostly parents and teachers, dabble in it and spoil everything for you, so well that very seldom does the thing succeed completely.

But otherwise, if it were done like that, with the spontaneous candour of a child, you could organise a wonderful life for yourself — I am speaking of the physical world.

The dreams of childhood are the realities of mature age.

18 April 1956

CHAPTER 17

Yoga and Meditation

Why Yoga?

Mother, here it is said: “He who chooses the Infinite has been chosen by the Infinite.” (Sri Aurobindo)

It is a magnificent sentence!

And it is absolutely true. There is in *Thoughts and Glimpses* also a sentence like this where I think he [Sri Aurobindo] uses the word “God” instead of the Infinite. But the idea is the same — that it is God who has chosen you, the Divine who has chosen you. And that is why you run after Him!

And this is what gives — that’s what he says, doesn’t he? — this is what gives that kind of confidence, of certitude, precisely, that one is predestined; and if one is predestined, even if there are mountains of difficulties, what can that matter since one is sure to succeed! This gives you an indomitable courage to face all difficulties and a patience that stands all trials: you are sure to succeed.

And it’s a fact — in fact, it is like that: the moment you thought about it, well, you thought about it because someone thought about you; you chose because you were chosen. And once you have been chosen, you are sure of the thing. Therefore, doubts, hesitations, depressions, uncertainties, all this is quite simply a waste of time and energy; it is of no use at all.

From the moment one has felt just once within himself: “Ah! *this* is the truth for me”, it is finished; it is finished, it is settled. Even if you spend years cutting your way through the virgin forest, it’s of no importance — it is finished, it is settled.

That is why I told you one day, “After all, you all are here because you have wanted it somewhere; and if you wanted it somewhere, it means that the Divine wanted it thus in you.”

So there are some who follow a very straight path and arrive very quickly; there are others who love labyrinths, it takes longer. But the end is there, the goal is there. I know by experience that there isn't one being who, were it only once in his life, has had a great urge towards... it doesn't matter how he calls it — let us say the Divine for facility of speech, who is not sure to arrive; even if he turns his back on Him at a certain time, it's of no importance — he is sure to arrive. He will have to struggle more or less, will have more or less difficulty, but he is sure to succeed one day. It's a soul that has been chosen, it has become conscious because its hour has come — once the hour has come, well, the result will follow more or less quickly. You can do this in a few months; you can do it in some years; you can do it in some lives — but you will do it.

And what is remarkable is that this freedom of choice is left to you and that, if you decide within yourself that you will do it in this lifetime, you will do it. And I am not speaking here of a permanent and continuous decision because then you can arrive in twelve months. No, I mean: if you have suddenly been seized by this "I want this", even once, in a flash, the seal is put, there, like that.

19 October 1955

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Sweet Mother, "The Supreme has laid his luminous hand upon a chosen human vessel of his miraculous Light and Power and Ananda."
(Sri Aurobindo)

Does the Supreme choose the being who will be his instrument, or does the being choose to become his instrument?

You can take it as you like.

One can't tell who began! But the two usually take place at the same time.

If you want an order of priority, it is evident that the Divine exists before the individual, so it must be the Divine who has chosen first! But that is a choice prior to terrestrial life. In the order of the ordinary human

consciousness it may be one or the other or both at the same time. In fact, it is likely that the Divine is the first to notice that this or that being is ready! But he who is ready generally does not know it to begin with, so he has the impression that it is he who has decided and is choosing. But this is more of an impression than a reality.

And once you are chosen, it is ineluctable, you can't escape even if you try.

18 January 1956

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The fact of being born with a psychic being and upon earth which is a spiritual symbol proves that we have each one of us a great responsibility, doesn't it?

Surely. One has a big responsibility, it is to fulfil a special mission that one is born upon earth. Only, naturally, the psychic being must have reached a certain degree of development; otherwise it could be said that it is the whole earth which has the responsibility. The more conscious and individualised one becomes, the more should one have the sense of responsibility. But this is what happens at a given moment; one begins to think that one is here not without reason, without purpose. One realises suddenly that one is here because there is something to be done and this something is not anything egoistic. This seems to me the most logical way of entering upon the path — all of a sudden to realise, "Since I am here, it means that I have a mission to fulfil. Since I have been endowed with a consciousness, it is that I have something to do with that consciousness — what is it?"

Generally, it seems to me that this is the first question one should put to oneself: "Why am I here?"

I have seen this in children, even in children of five or six: "Why am I here, why do I live?" And then to search, with whatever consciousness is available, with a very little bit of consciousness: why am I here, for what reason?

This seems to me the normal starting-point.

24 March 1951

Well, to find out what one truly is, to find out why one is on earth, what is the purpose of physical existence, of this presence on earth, of this formation, this existence... the vast majority of people live without asking themselves this even once! Only a small elite ask themselves this question with interest, and fewer still start working to get the answer. For, unless one is fortunate enough to come across someone who knows it, it is not such an easy thing to find. Suppose, for instance, that there had never come to your hands a book of Sri Aurobindo or of any of the writers or philosophers or sages who have dedicated their lives to this quest; if you were in the ordinary world, as millions of people are in the ordinary world, who have never heard of anything, except at times — and not always nowadays, even quite rarely — of some gods and a certain form of religion which is more a habit than a faith and, which, besides, rarely tells you why you are on earth... then, one doesn't even think of thinking about it. One lives from day to day the events of each day. When one is very young, one thinks of playing, eating, and a little later of learning, and after that one thinks of all the circumstances of life. But to put this problem to oneself, to confront this problem and ask oneself: "But after all, *why* am I here?" How many do that? There are people to whom this idea comes only when they are facing a catastrophe. When they see someone whom they love die or when they find themselves in particularly painful and difficult circumstances, they turn back upon themselves, if they are sufficiently intelligent, and ask themselves: "But really, what is this tragedy we are living, and what's the use of it and what is its purpose?"

And only at that moment does one begin the search to know.

And it is only when one has found, you see, found what he [Sri Aurobindo] says, found that one has a divine Self and that consequently one must seek to know this divine Self.... This comes much later, and yet, in spite of everything, from the very moment of birth in a physical body, there is in the being, in its depths, this psychic presence which pushes the whole being towards this fulfilment. But who knows it and recognises it, this psychic being? That too comes only in special circumstances, and unfortunately, most of the time these have to be painful circumstances, otherwise one goes on living unthinkingly. And in the depths of one's

being is this psychic being which seeks, seeks, seeks to awaken the consciousness and re-establish the union. One knows nothing about it.

16 January 1957

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Even a fleeting idea in a child, at a certain moment in its childhood when the psychic being is most in front, if it succeeds in penetrating through the outer consciousness and giving the child just an impression of something beautiful which must be realised, it creates a little nucleus and upon this you build your action. There is a vast mass of humanity to whom one would never say, "You must realise the Divine" or "Do yoga to find the Divine." If you observe well you will see that it is a tiny minority to whom this can be said. It means that this minority of beings is "prepared" to do yoga, it is that. It is that there has been a beginning of realisation — a beginning is enough. With others it is perhaps an old thing, an awakening which may come from past lives. But we are speaking of those who are less ready; they are those who have had at a certain moment a flash which has passed through their whole being and created a response, but that suffices. This does not happen to many people. Those ready to do yoga are not many if you compare them with the unconscious human mass. But one thing is certain, the fact that you are all here proves that at the least you have had that — there are those who are very far on the path (sometimes they have no idea about it), but at the least all of you have had that, that kind of spontaneous integral contact which is like an electric shock, a lightning-flash which goes through you and wakes you up to something: there is something to be realised. It is possible that the experience is not translated into words, only into a flame. That is enough. And it is around this nucleus that one organises oneself, slowly, slowly, progressively. And once it is there it never disappears. It is only if you have made a pact with the adverse forces and make a considerable effort to break the contact and not notice its existence, that you may believe it has disappeared. And yet a single flash suffices for it to come back.

If you have had this just once, you may tell yourself that in this life or another you are sure to realise.

26 March 1951

Sweet Mother, how can we find the Divine who is hidden in us?

This we have explained many, many times. But the first thing is to want it, and know precisely that this comes first, before all other things, that this is the important thing. That is the first condition; all the rest may come later, this is the *essential* condition. You see, if once in a while, from time to time, when you have nothing to do and all goes well and you are unoccupied, suddenly you tell yourself, "Ah, I would like so much to find the Divine!" — well, this — it may take a hundred thousand years, in this way.

But if it is the important thing, the only thing that matters, and if everything else comes afterwards, and you want nothing *but this*, then — this is the first condition. You must first establish this, later we may speak of what follows. First this, that all the rest does not count, that only *this* counts, that one is ready to give up everything to have this, that it is the only thing of importance in life. Then one puts oneself in the condition of being able to take a step forward.

29 September 1954

Anyway, happily nobody has said that he desired yoga to obtain power. There are countries and people who know vaguely that there is something called yoga, and they begin it with the idea that they will become superior to others, will get a greater power than others and consequently will be able to dominate others — this is the worst reason, the most selfish, that which brings the most harmful consequences. Others who are greatly troubled, who have a very difficult life, who have worries, sorrows, many cares, say, "Oh, I shall find something that will give me peace, tranquillity, and I shall be able to get a little rest." And they rush into yoga thinking they are going to be quite happy and satisfied. Unfortunately, it is not altogether like that. When you begin the yoga for reasons of this kind, you are sure to meet great difficulties on the way. And then there is this great virtue in men's eyes: philanthropy, love of humanity; so many people say,

"I am going to do yoga to be able to serve humanity, make the unhappy happy, organise the world in the happiest way for everybody." I say this is not sufficient — I do not say that this is bad in itself, although I have heard an old occultist say wittily: "It won't be so very soon that there will be no more misery in the world, because there are too many people who are happy to live on this misery." It was a witticism but it is not altogether wrong. If there were no misery to soothe, the philanthropist would no longer have any reason for his existence — he is so satisfied with himself, he has so strong an impression that he is not selfish! I knew such people who would be very unhappy if there were no more misery upon earth! What would they do if there were no longer any misery to relieve, what would be their activity and what their glorification? How would they be able to show people "I am not selfish!", and that they are generous, full of kindness?

3 February 1951

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What is one to do to prepare oneself for the Yoga?

To be conscious, first of all. We are conscious of only an insignificant portion of our being; for the most part we are unconscious. It is this unconsciousness that keeps us down to our unregenerate nature and prevents change and transformation in it. It is through unconsciousness that the undivine forces enter into us and make us their slaves. You are to be conscious of yourself, you must awake to your nature and movements, you must know why and how you do things or feel or think them; you must understand your motives and impulses, the forces, hidden and apparent, that move you; in fact, you must, as it were, take to pieces the entire machinery of your being. Once you are conscious, it means that you can distinguish and sift things, you can see which are the forces that pull you down and which help you on. And when you know the right from the wrong, the true from the false, the divine from the undivine, you are to act strictly up to your knowledge; that is to say, resolutely reject one and accept the other. The duality will present itself at every step and at every step you will have to make your choice. You will have to be patient and

persistent and vigilant — “sleepless”, as the adepts say; you must always refuse to give any chance whatever to the undivine against the divine.

7 April 1929

What are the dangers of Yoga? Is it especially dangerous to the people of the West? Someone has said that Yoga may be suitable for the East, but it has the effect of unbalancing the Western mind.

Yoga is not more dangerous to the people of the West than to those of the East. Everything depends upon the spirit with which you approach it. Yoga does become dangerous if you want it for your own sake, to serve a personal end. It is not dangerous, on the contrary, it is safety and security itself, if you go to it with a sense of its sacredness, always remembering that the aim is to find the Divine.

Dangers and difficulties come in when people take up Yoga not for the sake of the Divine, but because they want to acquire power and under the guise of Yoga seek to satisfy some ambition. If you cannot get rid of ambition, do not touch the thing. It is fire that burns.

There are two paths of Yoga, one of *tapasyā* (discipline), and the other of surrender. The path of *tapasyā* is arduous. Here you rely solely upon yourself, you proceed by your own strength. You ascend and achieve according to the measure of your force. There is always the danger of falling down. And once you fall, you lie broken in the abyss and there is hardly a remedy. The other path, the path of surrender, is safe and sure. It is here, however, that the Western people find their difficulty. They have been taught to fear and avoid all that threatens their personal independence. They have imbibed with their mothers' milk the sense of individuality. And surrender means giving up all that. In other words, you may follow, as Ramakrishna says, either the path of the baby monkey or that of the baby cat. The baby monkey holds to its mother in order to be carried about and it must hold firm, otherwise if it loses its grip, it falls. On the other hand, the baby cat does not hold to its mother, but is held by the mother and has no fear nor responsibility; it has nothing to do but to let the mother hold it and cry *ma ma*.

If you take up this path of surrender fully and sincerely, there is no

more danger or serious difficulty. The question is to be sincere. If you are not sincere, do not begin Yoga. If you were dealing in human affairs, then you could resort to deception; but in dealing with the Divine there is no possibility of deception anywhere. You can go on the Path safely when you are candid and open to the core and when your only end is to realise and attain the Divine and to be moved by the Divine.

There is another danger; it is in connection with the sex impulses. Yoga in its process of purification will lay bare and throw up all hidden impulses and desires in you. And you must learn not to hide things nor leave them aside, you have to face them and conquer and remould them. The first effect of Yoga, however, is to take away the mental control, and the hungers that lie dormant are suddenly set free, they rush up and invade the being. So long as this mental control has not been replaced by the Divine control, there is a period of transition when your sincerity and surrender will be put to the test. The strength of such impulses as those of sex lies usually in the fact that people take too much notice of them; they protest too vehemently and endeavour to control them by coercion, hold them within and sit upon them. But the more you think of a thing and say, "I don't want it, I don't want it", the more you are bound to it. What you should do is to keep the thing away from you, to dissociate from it, take as little notice of it as possible and, even if you happen to think of it, remain indifferent and unconcerned.

The impulses and desires that come up by the pressure of Yoga should be faced in a spirit of detachment and serenity, as something foreign to yourself or belonging to the outside world. They should be offered to the Divine, so that the Divine may take them up and transmute them.

If you have once opened yourself to the Divine, if the power of the Divine has once come down into you and yet you try to keep to the old forces, you prepare troubles and difficulties and dangers for yourself. You must be vigilant and see that you do not use the Divine as a cloak for the satisfaction of your desires. There are many self-appointed Masters, who do nothing but that. And then when you are off the straight path and when you have a little knowledge and not much power, it happens that you are seized by beings or entities of a certain type, you become blind instruments in their hands and are devoured by them in the end. Wherever there is pretence, there is danger; you cannot deceive God. Do you come to God

saying, "I want union with you" and in your heart meaning "I want powers and enjoyments"? Beware! You are heading straight towards the brink of the precipice. And yet it is so easy to avoid all catastrophe. Become like a child, give yourself up to the Mother, let her carry you, and there is no more danger for you.

This does not mean that you have not to face other kinds of difficulties or that you have not to fight and conquer any obstacles at all. Surrender does not ensure a smooth and unruffled and continuous progression. The reason is that your being is not yet one, nor your surrender absolute and complete. Only a part of you surrenders; and today it is one part and the next day it is another. The whole purpose of the Yoga is to gather all the divergent parts together and forge them into an undivided unity. Till then you cannot hope to be without difficulties — difficulties, for example, like doubt or depression or hesitation. The whole world is full of the poison. You take it in with every breath. If you exchange a few words with an undesirable man or even if such a man merely passes by you, you may catch the contagion from him. It is sufficient for you to come near a place where there is plague in order to be infected with its poison; you need not know at all that it is there. You can lose in a few minutes what it has taken you months to gain. So long as you belong to humanity and so long as you lead the ordinary life, it does not matter much if you mix with the people of the world; but if you want the divine life, you will have to be exceedingly careful about your company and your environment.

14 April 1929

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When can one say that one has truly entered the spiritual path?

The first sign (it is not the same for everybody) but in a chronological order, I believe, is that everything else appears to you absolutely without importance. Your entire life, all your activities, all your movements continue, if circumstances so arrange things, but they all seem to you utterly unimportant, this is no longer the meaning of your existence. I believe this is the first sign.

There may be another; for example, the feeling that everything is different, of living differently, of a light in the mind which was not there before, of a peace in the heart which was not there before. That does make a change; but the positive change usually comes later, very rarely does it come at first except in a flash at the time of conversion when one has decided to take up the spiritual life. Sometimes, it begins like a great illumination, a deep joy enters into you; but generally, afterwards this goes into the background, for there are too many imperfections still persisting in you.... It is not disgust, it is not contempt, but everything appears to you so uninteresting that it is truly not worth the trouble of attending to it. For instance, when you are in the midst of certain physical conditions, pleasant or unpleasant (the two extremes meet), you say to yourself, "It was so important to me, all that? But it has no importance at all!" You have the impression that you have truly turned over to the other side.

12 February 1951

Yoga and Life

It has been noticed that most people who live alone in the forest become friendly with all the animals and plants around them: but it is not at all the fact of being all alone that gives you the power of entering into an inner contemplation and living in communion with the Supreme Truth. Perhaps it is easier, when by force of circumstance you have nothing else to do, but I am not convinced of it. One can always invent occupations and it seems to me, according to my experience of life, that if one succeeds in subduing one's nature in the midst of difficulties, if one endeavours to be all alone within oneself with the eternal Presence, while keeping the same surroundings which the Grace has given us, the realisation which one obtains then is infinitely more true, more profound, more lasting.

To run away from difficulties in order to conquer them is not a solution. It is very attractive. In those who seek the spiritual life, there is something which says, "Oh! to sit down under a tree, all alone, to remain in meditation, not to have the temptation to speak or act, how fine it must be!" It is because there is a very strong formation in this direction, but it is very illusory.

The best meditations are those that one has all of a sudden, because they take possession of you as an imperative necessity. You have no choice but to concentrate, to meditate, to look beyond the appearances. And it is not necessarily in the solitude of the forest that it seizes you, it happens when something in you is ready, when the time has come, when the true need is there, when the Grace is with you.

It seems to me that humanity has made some progress and the true victory must be won in life itself.

You must know how to live alone with the Eternal and Infinite in the midst of all circumstances. You must know how to be free, with the Supreme as your companion, in the midst of all occupations. That is indeed the true victory.

14 July 1958

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Some people start on the way and then, after some time, they find it heavy-going, tiring, difficult, and also that they themselves, their legs, don't walk well, their feet begin to ache, etc. You see, they say, "Oh, it is very hard to go forward." So instead of saying, "I have started, I shall go through", which is the only thing to do, they stand there, stop there, lamenting and saying, "Oh, I shall never be able to succeed", and then they leave the path. So, obviously, if they leave the path, they will never succeed. This is to lose one's faith.

To keep one's faith is to say, "Good, I have difficulties but I am going on." Despair — that's what cuts off your legs, stops you, leaves you like this: "It is over, I can't go on any longer." It is indeed finished, and that's something which should not be allowed.

When you have started, you must go to the very end. Sometimes, you see, to people who come to me with enthusiasm I say, "Think a little, it is not an easy path, you will need time, you will need patience. You will need much endurance, much perseverance and courage and an untiring goodwill. Look and see if you are capable of having all this, and then start. But once you have started, it is finished, there is no going back any more; you must go to the very end."

Sometimes I tell them, I tell them that I give them a few days or a few months. There are some to whom I have given a few years for reflection. I told them, "Look well, be quite sure." But once they come and say, "Now I have decided, I want to start", it is good. Now, one must go on to the very end, whatever the cost; even if it is very difficult, one has to go to the very end.

When one draws back from the path, one draws back for the present life or...

In this, you see, there are many different cases, and they depend on the nature of the drawing back. If it is a small set-back or a small halt, you can start again. But it is ten times more difficult than before.

Why?

Why? Because it is so. Because you have accumulated obstacles in yourself by your cowardice and weakness. All those difficulties which you must conquer are like spiritual tests which you have to pass. And if you fail in your test, well, the next one will be much more difficult. This is the general occult law. One can't escape it. If you are faced with making an effort and making progress, if you fail... And note that in the present conditions you are not warned beforehand, which makes the test much more difficult to pass. In former days, the days of old, the candidates were told, "Now, prepare yourself. You are going to undergo terrible trials: you will be enclosed in a coffin, you will have to face terrible dangers. But these are tests to find out if you have the necessary qualities." A man forewarned, you understand, is as good as ten, as we say. Once they were warned that it was a trial, they did not take it seriously and it was much easier.

But that's no longer the practice. This is no longer done. It is life itself, the circumstances of each day which are the trials through which you have to pass. Some people instinctively feel that they are facing a decision that's to be taken, a special effort that's to be made, and they make this effort within themselves and cross the step. These acquire a much greater strength to cross the next step. When one has gained a small victory over his lower being, the next time he has a much greater strength to take the

next step. On the contrary, if one is blind, ignorant, stupid or ill-willed and, instead of saying “yes” to the trial that faces him, he revolts or refuses it, then, you see, this is expressed by: “One has not passed his test, one has failed in his test.” But the next time, one is compelled not only to make an effort to conquer this, but to make a still greater effort to redress the wrong one has done to himself. So it is much more difficult.

But these things happen to everyone on the path, all the time, perhaps even daily. There are small things, there are things a little bigger. The small ones one can turn, you see, by chance the right way. For the big ones one must first have a kind of instinct. One must pay attention and do the right thing in the right way. But there are other things still. When one is at a critical moment of his development, and it is absolutely necessary to cross the step in order to go forward — at that moment, there are always two possibilities: that of crossing the step, and then one immediately makes a terrific progress; or else to become slack, and then this indeed is more than a halt, even more than a set-back, it can be a very serious fall into a chasm. There are abysses from which one does not come up again; and so, in this case it means a life lost.

But if one has within, besides the part that has given way and fallen, if somewhere one has a very ardent flame, if one is ready for anything, all possible suffering, all possible effort, all possible sacrifices to redress what one has done, in order to climb back from the bottom of the abyss, to find the path again, one can do it. This flame has the power to call the Grace. And with the Grace there is nothing impossible. But it must be a real flame, something very powerful, because when one is at the bottom of the hole it is not easy to come out of it. Between the first kind, which is simply a little halt on the way and which makes the next step just a little more difficult, and the last one I am speaking about, there are many degrees; and so one can't say that if one leaves the path it is for a lifetime. That would be only an extreme case.

But if one leaves the path, it is even very difficult to find it again. What is strange is that in leaving it one loses it. There are legends of this kind in all countries: of people who have left the path and then later searched for it and never found it again. It was as if it had vanished. They lost it and this truly is a very sad thing.

But when you are on the path, I said this — I was just saying it — when you are on the path, do not ever leave it. Wait a little, you can hesitate as long as you want before taking it; but the minute you set your foot on it, it is finished, don't leave it. Because this has consequences which can even extend to several lives. It is something very serious. That is why, besides, I never push anyone to take the path.

You are quite a number of children here; I have never asked anyone — only those who came to me and told me, "I want it." And to these also, unless I am absolutely sure of them because it is written in their destiny that they have come for that, I always say, "Think about it, think, be quite sure that this is what you want and nothing else." And when they have reflected and decided, it is finished. One should no longer move away, one should go straight to the end. I mean, one should not leave the path any more. One should go forward at all costs and try not to stop too often on the way, because it is easier to continue even if it is hard, you see, than to begin all over again when one has stopped. A much greater effort is needed to get going again than to continue on the way.

And you see, logically I should not say it, but I have already warned all who are here, I have told them, "Don't ever take lightly all the circumstances of each day, all the tiny little things of life, all the small events, you know; never take all this lightly." Never react with your lower being. Each time you are told to do something or not to do it — you are not told this very often, but each time you are told, before reacting think a little, try to find in yourself the part which reacts. Do not react just like that with what is most commonplace in you. Enter within yourself, try to find the best in yourself and with this you must react. *It is very important, it is very important.*

There are people who mark time for years because they haven't done this. There are others who seem to fly, so fast do they go, because they pay attention to this. And those who don't do that throw the blame always on the Divine. They accuse the Grace. They tell her, "It is You who deceived me, it is You who put me into difficulty, it is You who made me stumble, it is You who are a monster", not exactly in these words, but their thought is like this. And so, naturally, they make their case worse because they push away even the help they could have had in their difficulty. There we are.

I could tell you many more things, but it will come gradually. In any case, if you can keep within yourself a confidence, a candid trust which does not argue, and the sense of... yes, it is truly a kind of trust that what is done for you, in spite of all appearances, is always the best thing to lead you in the quickest way possible out of all your difficulties and towards the goal... if you can keep that strong in you, well, your path will become tremendously easier.

You will tell me that it is very difficult to keep it, but children keep it very well. They must have truly come upon particularly detestable parents to lose it; but if their parents are simply good enough, they keep this very well. Well, it is this attitude; if you can tell yourself, "Good, perhaps the divine Grace deserves our confidence", simply this, nothing else, you will avoid many difficulties, many. In fact this avoids many difficulties even in ordinary life, and many worries.

22 December 1954

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Sweet Mother, why is it said that "those who have the greatest power for Yoga ... have too, very often ... the greatest imperfections"?

Why is it like that? (*Silence*) Because one must have a very strong, very powerful nature, with great inner strength in order to have a great capacity for yoga; and very strong natures have also very strong difficulties.

People who are neutral, dull, unimportant, usually go their own little way without being disturbed very much. But they cannot do anything very much, their road is very small and very short; they reach the end very quickly. They can't do much. But people who have a strong nature have also strong difficulties. For it is absolutely impossible in this world to be without difficulties. So long as the world remains what it is and one participates in the world, one necessarily participates in its difficulties.

It is only by a very persistent effort that one can succeed in overcoming his difficulties; and yet it seems impossible to cut oneself off completely from one's solidarity with the rest of the world. Therefore a perfect purity, a perfect perfection seem impossible so long as the world has not reached

at least a certain degree of perfection. Even the ascetic, the solitary, who goes and sits in a cave or under a tree or in the jungle, cannot completely free himself from solidarity with the rest of the world. The air he breathes is full of all the vibrations of the world, the food he eats, whatever it may be, even if it is reduced to the minimum, contains the vibrations of the world; and so, it is enough for him to exist to be in solidarity with the difficulties of the world.

That is why, in fact, the way is so long. Even without having any other consideration than that of what one is absorbing constantly into himself when breathing or eating, all these things one must constantly transform as one goes on absorbing them. It is a continuous alchemy in which one absorbs a particular kind of vibration containing all the possible disorders and must transmute this into something which is ready to receive the light from above. And this work is perpetual, and perpetually renewed. So it is impossible to live in this world, in the world as it is, and become perfect without the world itself making a great progress.[...]

Mother, does an individual's life depend on the experience his psychic being wants to have?

Very much!

I was speaking about just this with someone today, and I said this, that if one can become fully conscious of his psychic being, at the same time one understands, necessarily, the reason of his present existence and the experience this psychic being wants to have; and instead of having it somewhat half consciously and more than half unconsciously, one can shorten this experience and so help his psychic being to cover in a limited number of years the experiences it would perhaps take several lifetimes to go through. That is to say, the help is reciprocal. The psychic, when it has an influence on the outer life, brings to it light, order and quietude and the joy of the divine contact. But also the physical being, the body-consciousness, if it is identified with the psychic consciousness, and through that learns what kind of experience the psychic being wants to have, it can help it to have these experiences in a very brief time, and not only save time but save many lives for the psychic being. It is a mutual help.

In brief, this is what yoga means. Yoga helps you to become fully conscious of your destiny, that is, your mission in the universe, and not only at the present moment but what it was in the past and what it will be in the future. And because of this knowledge you can gather by a concentration of the consciousness all these experiences in a very short time and gain lives, do in a few years what could take a fairly considerable number of lives to achieve. The psychic being goes progressively through all these experiences towards its full maturity and complete independence, its liberation — in the sense that it no longer needs any new life. If it wants to come back to the physical world, it returns, because it has something to do there and it chooses freely to return. But till then, till this liberation, it is compelled to return to have all the experiences it needs. Well, if it happens that once the physical being is developed and conscious enough and has enough goodwill to be able to become fully aware of the psychic being, it can then and there create all the circumstances, the outer experiences necessary for the psychic being to attain its maturity in this very life.

29 December 1954

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One must never make rules.

Every minute one must endeavour to apply the highest truth one can perceive. It is much more difficult, but it's the only solution.

Whatever you may do, don't make rules beforehand, because once you have made a rule you follow it more or less blindly, and then you are sure, ninety-nine-and-a-half times out of a hundred, to be mistaken.

There is only one way of acting truly, it is to try at each moment, each second, in each movement to express only the highest truth one can perceive, and at the same time know that this perception has to be progressive and that what seems to you the most true now will no longer be so tomorrow, and that a higher truth will have to be expressed more and more through you. This leaves no room any longer for sleeping in a comfortable tamas; one must be always awake — I am not speaking of physical sleep — one must be always awake, always conscious and always full of an enlightened receptivity and of goodwill. To want always the best,

always the best, always the best, and never tell oneself, "Oh! it is tiring! Let me rest, let me relax! Ah, I am going to stop making an effort"; then one is sure to fall into a hole immediately and make a big stupid blunder!

The rest must not be one which goes down into the unconsciousness and tamas. The rest must be an ascent into the Light, into perfect Peace, total Silence, a rest which rises up out of the darkness. Then it is true rest, a rest which is an ascent.

31 August 1955

Difficulties and Progress

The nature of your difficulty indicates the nature of the victory you will gain, the victory you will exemplify in Yoga. Thus, if there is persistent selfishness, it points to a realisation of universality as your most prominent achievement in the future. And, when selfishness is there, you have also the power to reverse this very difficulty into its opposite, a victory of utter wideness.

When you have something to realise, you will have in you just the characteristic which is the contradiction of that something. Face to face with the defect, the difficulty, you say, "Oh, I am like that! How awful it is!" But you ought to see the truth of the situation. Say to yourself, "My difficulty shows me clearly what I have ultimately to represent. To reach the absolute negation of it, the quality at the other pole — this is my mission."

Even in ordinary life, we have sometimes the experience of contraries. He who is very timid and has no courage in front of circumstances proves capable of bearing the most!

To one who has the aspiration for the Divine, the difficulty which is always before him is the door by which he will attain God in his own individual manner: it is his particular path towards the Divine Realisation.

There is also the fact that if somebody has a hundred difficulties it means he will have a tremendous realisation — provided, of course, there are in him patience and endurance and he keeps the aspiring flame of Agni burning against those defects.

And remember: the Grace of the Divine is generally proportioned to your difficulties.

1930-1931

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Not to be depressed means... ?

Not to be depressed — it is extremely important. Depression is a sign of weakness, of a bad will somewhere, and bad will in the sense of a refusal to receive help, and a kind of weakness that's content to be weak. One becomes slack. The bad will is obvious, because there's a part of your being which tells you at that moment, "Depression is bad." You know that you shouldn't get depressed; well, the reply of that part which is depressed is almost, "Shut up! I want my depression." Try, you will see, you can try. It is always like that. Eh, it is not true? And then later one says again, "Afterwards, afterwards I shall see... for the moment I want it, and besides I have my reasons." There you are. It is a kind of revolt, a weak revolt, the revolt of something weak in the being.

Here he [Sri Aurobindo] speaks of "the change of which this depression is a stage..."

Yes. When one comes out of the depression and one's bad will, well, then one realises that there was an attack and that some progress had to be made, and that in spite of everything something within has made progress, that one has taken a step forward. Usually, hardly consciously, it is something which needs to progress but doesn't want to, and so takes this way; like a child who sulks, becomes low-spirited, sad, unhappy, misunderstood, abandoned, helpless; and then, refusing to collaborate, and as I just said, indulging in his depression, to show that he is not happy. It is specially in order to show that one is not satisfied that one becomes depressed. One can show it to Nature, one can show it (that depends on the case, you see), one can show it to the Divine, one can show it to the people around one, but it is always a kind of way of expressing one's dissatisfaction. "I am not happy about what you demand", but this means, "I am not happy. And I shall make you too see it, that I am not happy."

There you are.

But when it is over, and when for some reason or other one has made the necessary effort to come out of it, and has come out, one usually realises that something in the being has changed, because, in spite of all bad will, most often the progress was accomplished — not very swiftly, not very brilliantly, not for one's greater glory, surely, but still the progress was made. Something has changed.

12 January 1955

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Generally, all progress made on one side is set off by an attack of the adverse forces on the other. So, the more you advance, the more vigilant must you become. And the most essential quality is perseverance, endurance, and a... what shall I call it? — a kind of inner good humour which helps you not to get discouraged, not to become sad, and to face all difficulties with a smile. There is an English word which expresses this very well — cheerfulness. If you can keep this within you, you fight much better, resist much better, in the light, these bad influences which try to hinder you from progressing.

That is the work. It is vast and complex. And one must never forget anything.

18 January 1956

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Sweet Mother, when we make an effort to do better but don't see any progress, we feel discouraged. What is the best thing to do?

Not to be discouraged! Despondency leads nowhere.

To begin with, the first thing to tell yourself is that you are almost entirely incapable of knowing whether you are making progress or not, for very often what seems to us to be a state of stagnation is a long — sometimes long, but in any case not endless — preparation for a leap

forward. We sometimes seem to be marking time for weeks or months, and then suddenly something that was being prepared makes its appearance, and we see that there is quite a considerable change and *on several points* at a time.

As with everything in yoga, the effort for progress must be made for the love of the effort for progress. The joy of effort, the aspiration for progress must be enough in themselves, quite independent of the result. Everything one does in yoga must be done for the joy of doing it, and not in view of the result one wants to obtain.... Indeed, in life, always, in all things, the result does not belong to us. And if we want to keep the right attitude, we must act, feel, think, strive spontaneously, for *that* is what we must do, and not in view of the result to be obtained.

As soon as we think of the result we begin to bargain and that takes away all sincerity from the effort. You make an effort to progress because you feel within you the need, the *imperative* need to make an effort and progress; and this effort is the gift you offer to the Divine Consciousness in you, the Divine Consciousness in the universe, it is your way of expressing your gratitude, offering your self; and whether this results in progress or not is of no importance. You will progress when it is decided that the time has come to progress and not because you desire it.

If you wish to progress, if you make an effort to control yourself for instance, to overcome certain defects, weaknesses, imperfections, and if you expect to get a more or less immediate result from your effort, your effort loses all sincerity, it becomes a bargaining. You say, "See! I am going to make an effort, but that's because I want this in exchange for my effort." You are no longer spontaneous, no longer natural.

So there are two things to remember. First, we are incapable of judging *what* the result ought to be. If we put our trust in the Divine, if we say... if we say, "Well now, I am going to give everything, everything, all I can give, effort, concentration, and *He* will judge what has to be given in exchange or even whether anything should be given in exchange, and I do not know what the result should be." Before we transform anything in ourselves, are we quite sure of the direction, the way, the form that this transformation should take? — Not at all. So, it is only our imagination and usually we greatly limit the result to be obtained and make it

altogether petty, mean, superficial, relative. We do not know what the result can truly be, what it ought to be. We know it later. When it comes, when the change takes place, then if we look back, we say, "Ah! that's it, that is what I was moving towards" — but we know it only later. Before that we only have vague imaginations which are quite superficial and childish in comparison with the true progress, the true transformation.

So we say, first point: we have an aspiration but we don't really know the true result we ought to obtain. Only the Divine can know that.

And secondly, if we tell the Divine, "I am giving you my effort, but, you know, in exchange I must make progress, otherwise I won't give you anything at all!" — that is bargaining. That's all.

(Silence)

A spontaneous act, done because one cannot do otherwise, and done as an offering of goodwill, is the only one which truly has any value.

23 April 1958

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Are illnesses tests in the Yoga?

Tests? Not at all.

You are given an illness purposely to make you progress? Surely it is not like that. That is, you may turn the thing round and say that there are people whose aspiration is so constant, whose goodwill so total that whatever happens to them they take as a trial on the path to make progress. I knew people who, whenever they fell ill, took that as a proof of the Divine Grace to help them to progress. They told themselves: it is a good sign, I am going to find out the cause of my illness and I shall make the necessary progress. I knew a few of this kind and they moved on magnificently. There are others, on the contrary, who, far from making use of the thing, let themselves fall flat on the ground. So much the worse for them. But the true attitude when one is ill, is to say: "There is something that is not all right; I am going to see what it is." You must never think that the Divine has purposely sent an illness, for that would truly be a very

22 July 1953

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So we get started on the path. But the road is very long. Many things happen on the way. Suddenly one thinks one has overcome an obstacle; I say "thinks", because though one has overcome it, it is not totally overcome. I am going to take a very obvious instance, of a very simple observation. Someone has found that his vital is uncontrollable and uncontrolled, that it gets furious for nothing and about nothing. He starts working to teach it not to get carried away, not to flare up, to remain calm and bear the shocks of life without reacting violently. If one does this cheerfully, it goes quite quickly (note this well, it is very important: when you have to deal with your vital take care to keep your good humour, otherwise you will get into trouble). One keeps one's good humour, that is, when one sees the fury rise, one begins to laugh. Instead of being depressed and saying, "Ah! in spite of all my effort it is beginning all over again", one begins to laugh and says, "Well, well! one hasn't yet seen the end of it. Look now, aren't you ridiculous, you know quite well that you are being ridiculous! Is it worthwhile getting angry?" One gives it this lesson good- humouredly. And really, after a while it doesn't get angry again, it is quiet — and one relaxes one's attention. One thinks the difficulty has been overcome, one thinks a result has at last been reached: "My vital does not trouble me any longer, it does not get angry now, everything is going fine." And the next day, one loses one's temper. It is then one must be careful, it is then one must not say, "Here we are, it's no use, I shall never achieve anything, all my efforts are futile; all this is an illusion, it is impossible." On the contrary, one must say, "I wasn't vigilant enough." One must wait long, very long, before one can say, "Ah! it is done and finished." Sometimes one must wait for years, many years.[...]

You must arm yourself with an endless patience and endurance. You do a thing once, ten times, a hundred times, a thousand times if necessary, but you do it till it gets done. And not done only here and there, but everywhere and everywhere at the same time. This is the great problem one sets oneself. That is why, to those who come to tell me very light-

heartedly, “I want to do yoga”, I reply, “Think it over, one may do the yoga for a number of years without noticing the least result. But if you want to do it, you must persist and persist with such a will that you should be ready to do it for ten lifetimes, a hundred lifetimes if necessary, in order to succeed.” I do not say it will be like that, but the *attitude* must be like that. Nothing must discourage you; for there are all the difficulties of ignorance of the different states of being, to which are added the endless malice and the unbounded cunning of the hostile forces in the world.... They are there, do you know why? They have been tolerated, do you know why? — simply to see how long one can last out and how great is the sincerity in one’s action. For everything depends upon your sincerity. If you are truly sincere in your will, nothing will stop you, you will go right to the end. and if it is necessary for you to live a thousand years to do it, you will live a thousand years to do it.

26 March 1951

Experiences and Visions

Usually people mean by “experience” either altogether extravagant phenomena, levitation and things like that, or else sensational visions: being able to see the future or seeing at a distance or maybe ordinary things like being able to tell where a lost object can be found or all kinds of little tricks like that. This is what people call “experiences”.

Well, usually people who have these faculties are not well educated, but for some reason they are born with a gift, as some are born musicians, others painters, and others scientists. These are born clairvoyants, and so it may be, when they are in need they use this faculty to earn their living, and they spoil it completely. If they happen to be in comfortable circumstances and do not need to earn their living, then they become famous among their friends. In any case, this is always an opportunity for a certain kind of commercialism. There are very few who can have these gifts without using them either to make a name for themselves or to earn money. But these gifts are not of a very high level. One can have them without having a very spiritual life. They do not depend at all on an inner spiritual height. One should not mistake them for signs of progress.

Besides, one thing is certain: those who do not have these faculties and want to acquire them, [...] then this indeed means a *formidable* work. And that is why some people attach a very great value to these things. But they have some value only when they are under one's control, done at will and the result of an inner discipline. In this case, yes, because this proves that you have entered into contact with a certain region where it is difficult to enter consciously, at will, and permanently. It is very difficult, it requires much development. And then, for you to be sure of what you have seen... because I haven't told you that with these people who make a profession of their clairvoyance, it becomes... I said "commercialism", but it is worse than that, you know, it is a fraud! When they do not see anything, they invent. When they make a profession of it, and people come to ask them something about the future, and they can see nothing at all, they are obliged to invent something, otherwise they would lose their reputation and their clientele. So this becomes a deception, you see, a falsehood, fraud or falsification.

But when one wants to have a pure, correct information, to be in contact with the truth of things, and see in advance — not according to one's petty mental construction, but how things are decreed, in the place where they are decreed and the time when they are decreed — then that requires a *very great* mental purity, a *very great* vital equilibrium, an absence of desire, of preference. One must never want anything to be of one kind or another, for this falsifies your vision immediately.

All who have visions usually deform them, *all*, almost *without exception*. I don't think there is one in a million who doesn't deform his vision, because the minute it touches the brain it touches the domain of preferences, desires, attachments, and this indeed is enough to give a colouring, a special look to what you have seen. Even if you have seen correctly, you translate it wrongly in your consciousness. This truly asks for a great perfection. But you can have perfection without the gift of vision. And the perfection can be as great without the gift as with it. If it interests you specially, you can make an effort to obtain it. But only if it interests you specially. If you lay great store by knowing certain things, you can undertake a discipline; you may undertake a discipline also in order to change the functioning of your senses. I think I have already explained to you how one can hear at a distance, see at a distance, even

physically; but this means considerable effort, which perhaps is not always in proportion to the result, because these are side issues, not the central, the most important thing. These are side issues which may be interesting, but in itself this is not the spiritual life; one may have a spiritual life without this. Now, the two together can give you perhaps a greater capacity. But for this too you must tell yourself, "If I ought to have it — if I take the true attitude of surrender to the Divine and of complete consecration — if I ought to have it I shall have it. As, if I ought to have the gift of speech. I shall have it." And in fact, if one is truly surrendered, in the true way and totally, at every minute one is what he ought to be and does what he ought to do and knows what he ought to know. This... but naturally, for this one should have overcome the petty limitations of the ego, and this does not happen overnight. But it can happen.

6 October 1954

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One can never have the same experience twice because one is never the same person twice. Between the first experience and the second, even if one hour has passed, you are no longer the same man and you can never reproduce identically the same thing. If you take care to become more conscious, more sincere, more concentrated, the experience you have will be different, but it may be deeper and more clear. But if you cling to something you have had and want to reproduce the same thing, you will have nothing at all, because you can't have the same thing and you are in a state in which you refuse to have a new experience, for you are attached to the past one. And usually when one has had an experience which was a revelation, something altogether important, one doesn't want to leave it, one is afraid of not having it any longer, and so, in this movement of clinging on to something, one prevents oneself from progressing and puts oneself in conditions in which one can't have the next experience.

Well, this has to be understood, because it is an absolute fact: one can never have the same experience twice. There may be similar experiences, very close, and particularly some which appear similar, but these experiences... if one is absolutely sincere, impartial and like a blank page, he will perceive that there is a difference, sometimes an essential one,

between the two, though in appearance they seem very close. But the more ready you are to leave behind all that you have experienced, in order to be able to go towards something better and higher, the faster you will go; the more you drag the heavy weight of all the past which you don't want to get rid of, the slower is your advance.

All the past should always be simply like a stepping-stone or a ladder, something to lead you farther; it should not have any other use except to push you forward. And if you can feel this and always turn your back on what is past and look at what you want to do, then you go much faster, you don't waste time on the way. What makes you lose time is always this clinging to what has been, to what is, what seemed to you beautiful and good in what is past. This must only help you, you must not reject it, but it must help you to go forward, it must simply be something on which you lean to take a step forward.

Now, at a particular time, a set of circumstances, inner and outer, has caused one to be receptive to a certain vibration; for example, as you say, while looking at the stars or contemplating a landscape or reading a page or hearing a lecture, one has suddenly an inner revelation, an experience, something that strikes him and gives him the impression of being open to something new. But if you want to hold on to this tightly like that, you will lose everything, because one can't keep the past, one must always go forward, advance, advance. This illumination must prepare you so that you can organise your whole being on this new level, in order to be able suddenly, one day, to leap up again to a higher step.

There is a horizontal advance between abrupt ascents. It is the moment of the abrupt ascent which gives you an impression of something like a revelation, a great inner joy. But once you have climbed the step, if you want to climb it once more you would have to go down again. You must go on preparing yourself at this level in order to climb another higher step. These things which suddenly give you a great joy are always ascents. But these ascents are prepared by a slow work of horizontal progress, that is, one must become more and more conscious, establish more and more perfectly what one is, draw from it all the inner, psychological consequences, and in action also. It is a long utilisation of an abrupt leap and, as I say, there are two kinds of progress. But the horizontal progress is indispensable.

You must not stop, you must not cling in this way to your vertical progress and not want to move because it has brought you a revelation. You must know how to leave it in order to prepare for another.

2 February 1955

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"One must always be greater titan one's experience." (The Mother)

What I meant is this:

Whatever may be the nature, the strength and wonder of an experience, you must not be dominated by it to such an extent that it governs your entire being and you lose your balance and your contact with a reasonable and calm attitude. That is to say, when you enter in some way into contact with a force or consciousness which surpasses yours, instead of being entirely dominated by this consciousness or force, you must always be able to remind yourself that it is only *one* experience among thousands and thousands of others, and that, consequently, its nature is not absolute, it is relative. No matter how beautiful it may be, you can and ought to have better ones: however exceptional it may be, there are others still more marvellous: and however high it may be, you can always rise still higher in future. So, instead of losing one's head one places the experience in the chain of development and keeps a healthy physical balance so as not to lose the sense of relativity with ordinary life. In this way, there is no risk.

The means?... One who knows how to do this will always find it very easy, but for one who doesn't know it is perhaps a little... a little troublesome.

There is a means.

It is never to lose the idea of the total self-giving to the Grace which is the expression of the Supreme. When one gives oneself, when one surrenders, entrusts oneself entirely to That which is above, beyond all creation, and when, instead of seeking any personal advantage from the experience, one makes an offering of it to the divine Grace and knows that it is from This that the experience comes and that it is to This that the result of the experience must be given back, then one is quite safe.

In other words: no ambition, no vanity, no pride. A sincere self-giving, a sincere humility, and one is sheltered from all danger. There you are, this is what I call being greater than one's experience.

22 August 1956

The Right Attitude

Is it possible to disregard reason?... It is possible only when you have passed beyond mental activity. It is possible only when you have achieved a surrender, a total giving of yourself. It is possible only when you no longer have any desires. So long as you have desires, have an ego and a will of your own, you cannot give up reason, because, as I said just a moment ago, you would become quite unbalanced and perhaps insane. Therefore reason must be the master until one has gone beyond the state in which it is useful. And as I said, as long as there is an ego and as long as there are desires, and so long as there are impulses and so long as there are passions and preferences, and so long as there are attractions and repulsions, etc., as long as all these things are there, reason is *altogether* useful.

I shall also add that there is another quite indispensable condition in order not to have recourse to reason any more; that is to open no door, no part of the being to the suggestions of the adverse forces. For if you are not completely liberated from the habit of responding to adverse suggestions, if you give up your reason, you also give up reason itself, that is, common sense. And you begin to act in an incoherent way which may finally become quite unbalanced. Well, to be free from suggestions and adverse influences, you must be exclusively under the influence of the Divine.

Now you see the problem; it is a little difficult. This means that unless you are in the presence of a completely illumined and transformed being, it is always better to advise people to act according to their reason. It is perhaps a limitation — it is in fact a great limitation — but it is also a control and it prevents you from becoming one of those half-idiots who are far too numerous in the world.

Reason is a very respectable person. Like all respectable people it has its limitations and prejudices, but that does not prevent it from being very

useful. And it keeps *you* from making a fool of yourself. You would do many things if you did not have reason, things which would lead you straight to your ruin and could have extremely unfortunate consequences, for your best means of discernment until you have attained higher levels is reason. When one no longer listens to reason, one can be led into all sorts of absurdities. Naturally, it is neither the ideal nor the summit, it is only a kind of control and a guide for leading a good life, it keeps you from extravagances, excesses, inordinate passions and above all from those impulsive actions which may lead you to the abyss. There you are.

One must be very sure of oneself, quite free from the ego and perfectly surrendered to the divine Will to be able to do safely without reason.

28 November 1956

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Is it really the best that always happens?... It is clear that all that has happened had to happen: it could not be otherwise — by the universal determinism it had to happen. But we can say so only after it has happened, not before. For the problem of the very best that can happen is an individual problem, whether the individual be a nation or a single human being; and all depends upon the personal attitude. If, in the presence of circumstances that are about to take place, you can take the highest attitude possible — that is, if you put your consciousness in contact with the highest consciousness within reach, you can be absolutely sure that in that case it is the best that can happen to you. But as soon as you fall from this consciousness into a lower state, then it is evidently not the best that can happen, for the simple reason that you are not in your very best consciousness. I even go so far as to affirm that in the zone of immediate influence of each one, the right attitude not only has the power to turn every circumstance to advantage but can change the very circumstance itself. For instance, when a man comes to kill you, if you remain in the ordinary consciousness and get frightened out of your wits, he will most probably succeed in doing what he came for; if you rise a little higher and though full of fear call for the divine help, he may just miss you, doing you a slight injury; if, however, you have the right attitude and the full consciousness of the divine presence everywhere around you,

he will not be able to lift even a finger against you.

This truth is just the key to the whole problem of transformation. Always keep in touch with the divine presence, try to bring it down — and the very best will always take place. Of course the world will not change at once, but it will go forward as rapidly as it possibly can. Do not forget that this is so only if you keep on the straight road of Yoga, and not if you deviate and lose your way and wander about capriciously or helplessly as though in a virgin forest.

If each of you did your utmost, then there would be the right collaboration and the result would be so much the quicker. I have had innumerable examples of the power of right attitude. I have seen crowds saved from catastrophes by one single person keeping the right attitude. But it must be an attitude that does not remain somewhere very high and leaves the body to its usual reactions. If you remain high up like that, saying, "Let God's will be done", you may get killed all the same. For your body may be quite undivine, shivering with fear: the thing is to hold the true consciousness in the body itself and not have the least fear and be full of the divine peace. Then indeed there is no danger. Not only can attacks of men be warded off, but beasts also and even the elements can be affected. I can give you a little example. You remember the night of the great cyclone, when there was a tremendous noise and splash of rain all about the place. I thought I would go to Sri Aurobindo's room and help him shut the windows. I just opened his door and found him sitting quietly at his desk, writing. There was such a solid peace in the room that nobody would have dreamed that a cyclone was raging outside. All the windows were wide open, not a drop of rain was coming inside.

1930-1931

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Most of you live on the surface of your being, exposed to the touch of external influences. You live almost projected, as it were, outside your own body, and when you meet some unpleasant being similarly projected you get upset. The whole trouble arises out of your not being accustomed to stepping back. You must always step back into yourself — learn to go

deep within — step back and you will be safe. Do not lend yourself to the superficial forces which move in the outside world. Even if you are in a hurry to do something, step back for a while and you will discover to your surprise how much sooner and with what greater success your work can be done. If someone is angry with you, do not be caught in his vibrations but simply step back and his anger, finding no support or response, will vanish. Always keep your peace, resist all temptation to lose it. Never decide anything without stepping back, never speak a word without stepping back, never throw yourself into action without stepping back. All that belongs to the ordinary world is impermanent and fugitive, so there is nothing in it worth getting upset about. What is lasting, eternal, immortal and infinite — that indeed is worth having, worth conquering, worth possessing. It is Divine Light, Divine Love, Divine Life — it is also Supreme Peace, Perfect Joy and All-Mastery upon earth with the Complete Manifestation as the crowning. When you get the sense of the relativity of things, then whatever happens you can step back and look; you can remain quiet and call on the Divine Force and wait for an answer. Then you will know exactly what to do. Remember, therefore, that you cannot receive the answer before you are very peaceful. Practise that inner peace, make at least a small beginning and go on in your practice until it becomes a habit with you.

1930-1931

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You must believe that if you take the right attitude, it is the best that will happen to you; but if you are afraid when something unpleasant happens to you, then you can do nothing. You must have this confidence within you, whatever the difficulty, whatever the obstacle. Most of the time, when something unpleasant happens, you say, "Is it going to increase? What other accident is yet going to happen!" and so on. You must tell yourself, "These things are not mine; they belong to the subconscious world; to be sure I have nothing to do with them and if they come again to seize me, I am going to give a fight." Naturally you will answer that this is easy to say but difficult to do. But if truly you take this attitude of confidence, there is no difficulty that you will not be able to conquer. Anxiety makes the

difficulty greater.

Evidently there is one difficulty: in your conscious being something does not want the difficulty, wishes sincerely to overcome it, but there are numberless movements in other parts of your consciousness of which you are not conscious. You say, "I want to be cured of that"; unfortunately it is not sufficient to say "I want", there are other parts of the consciousness which hide themselves so that you may not be busy with them, and when your attention is turned away these parts try to assert themselves. That is why I say and shall always repeat, Be perfectly sincere; do not try to deceive yourself, do not say, "I have done all that I could." If you do not succeed, it means that you do not do all that you can. For, if you truly do all that you can, you will surely succeed. If you have any defect which you want to get rid of and which still persists, and you say, "I have done all that I could", you may be sure that you have not done all that you should have. If you had, you would have triumphed, for the difficulties that come to you are exactly in proportion to your strength — nothing can happen to you which does not belong to your consciousness, and all that belongs to your consciousness you are able to master. Even the things and suggestions that come from outside can touch you only in proportion to the consent of your consciousness, and you are made to be the master of your consciousness.

If you say, "I have done all that I could and in spite of everything the thing continues, so I give up", you may be already sure that you have not done what you could. When an error persists "in spite of everything" it means that something hidden in your being springs up suddenly like a Jack-in-the-box and takes the helm of your life. Hence, there is only one thing to do, it is to go hunting for all the little dark corners which lie hidden in you and, if you put just a tiny spark of goodwill on this darkness, it will yield, will vanish, and what appeared to you impossible will become not only possible, practicable, but *it will have been done*. You can in this way in one minute get rid of a difficulty which would have harassed you for years. I absolutely assure you of it. That depends only on one thing: that you truly, sincerely, want to get rid of it. And it is the same for everything, from physical illnesses up to the highest mental difficulties. One part of the consciousness says, "I don't want it", but behind there hides a heap of things which say nothing, do not show themselves, and which just want that things continue as they are — generally out of

ignorance; they do not believe that it is necessary to be cured, they believe that everything is for the best in the best of worlds. As the lady with whom I had those conversations²¹ used to say, “The trouble begins as soon as you want to change.”

5 February 1951

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If you look at yourself carefully, you will see that one always carries in oneself the opposite of the virtue one has to realise (I use “virtue” in its widest and highest sense). You have a special aim, a special mission, a special realisation which is your very own, each one individually, and you carry in yourself all the obstacles necessary to make your realisation perfect. Always you will see that within you the shadow and the light are equal: you have an ability, you have also the negation of this ability. But if you discover a very black hole, a thick shadow, be sure there is somewhere in you a great light. It is up to you to know how to use the one to realise the other.

This is a fact very little spoken about, but one of capital importance. And if you observe carefully you will see that it is always thus with everyone. This leads us to statements which are paradoxical but absolutely true; for instance, that the greatest thief can be the most honest man (this is not to encourage you to steal, of course!) and the greatest liar can be the most truthful person. So, do not despair if you find in yourself the greatest weakness, for perhaps it is the sign of the greatest divine strength. Do not say, “I am like that, I can’t be otherwise.” It is not true. You are “like that” because, precisely, you ought to be the opposite. And all your difficulties are there just that you may learn to transform them into the truth they are hiding.

Once you have understood this, many worries come to an end and you are very happy, very happy. If one finds one has very black holes, one says, “This shows I can rise very high”, if the abyss is very deep, “I can climb very high.” It is the same from the universal point of view: to use the Hindu terminology so familiar to you, it is the greatest Asuras who are the

²¹ The conversations of 1929.

greatest beings of Light. And the day these Asuras are converted, they will be the supreme beings of the creation. This is not to encourage you to be asuric, you know, but it is like that — this will widen your minds a little and help you to free yourself from those ideas of opposing good and evil, for if you abide in that category, there is no hope.

If the world was not essentially the opposite of what it has become, there would be no hope. For the hole is so black and so deep, and the unconsciousness so complete, that if this were not the sign of the total consciousness, well, there would be nothing more to do but pack up one's kit and go away. Men like Shankara, who did not see much further than the end of their nose, said that the world was not worth the trouble of living in, for it was impossible, that it was better to treat it as an illusion and go away, there was nothing to be done with it. I tell you, on the contrary, that it is because the world is very bad, very dark, very ugly, very unconscious, full of misery and suffering, that it can become the supreme Beauty, the supreme Light, the supreme Consciousness and supreme Felicity.

17 February 1951

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Mother, there are mistakes... one knows they are mistakes, but still it is as though one were pushed into making them. Then?

Pushed by what? Ah, this is exactly what happens! It is the lower nature, the instincts of the subconscious which govern you and make you do things you should not do. And so it is a choice between your will and accepting submission. There is always a moment when one can decide. It goes to the point where as I said there is even a moment when one can decide to be ill or not to be ill. It even goes so far that a moment comes when one can decide to die or not to die. But for that one must have an *extremely* awakened consciousness because this speck is infinitesimal in time and like the hundredth part of a second, and because before it one can do nothing and after it one can do nothing; but at that moment one can. And if one is absolutely awake, one can, at that moment, take the decision.

But for ordinary things, as for example, giving way before an impulse

or refusing it, it is not a space, not even the space of a second; one has plenty of time before him, one certainly has several minutes. And it is a choice between weak submission and a controlling will. And if the will is clear, if it is based on truth, if truly it obeys the truth and is clear, it always has the power to refuse the wrong movement. It is an excuse you give yourself when you say, "I could not." It is not true. It is that truly you have not wanted it in the right way. For there is always the choice between saying "yes" and saying "no". But one chooses to be weak and later gives oneself this excuse, saying, "It is not my fault; it was stronger than I." It is your fault if the thing was stronger than you. Because you are not these impulses, you are a conscious soul and an intelligent will, and your duty is to see that *this* is what governs you and not the impulses from below.

29 September 1954

The Ego

Mother, here Sri Aurobindo has spoken of "the formation of ego-individuality". Ego-individuality means...?

There are individual egos and collective egos. For example, the national ego is a collective ego. A group may have a collective ego. The human race has a collective ego. It is bigger or smaller. The individual ego is the ego of a particular person; it is the smallest kind of ego. Oh, there is of course a vital ego, a mental ego and a physical ego but these are minor individual egos. But this means the ego of a particular person.

One has many egos inside oneself. One becomes aware of them when one begins to destroy them: when one has destroyed an ego, that which was most troublesome, usually it creates a kind of inner cyclone. When one comes out of the storm, one feels, "Ah, now it is over, everything is done, I have destroyed the enemy inside me, all is finished." But after a while, one notices that there is another, and another still, and yet again another, and that in fact one is made of a heap of little egos which are absolutely a nuisance and which must be overcome one after another.

Ego means what?

I think it is the ego that makes each one a separate being, in all possible ways. It is the ego which gives the sense of being a person separate from others. It is certainly the ego which gives you the sense of the "I", "I am", "I want", "I do", "I exist", even the very famous "I think therefore I am" which is... I am sorry but I think it is a stupidity — but still it is a celebrated stupidity — well, this too is the ego. What gives you the impression that you are Manoj is the ego, and that you are altogether different from this one and that one; and what prevents your body from melting away like that, dissolving in a common mass of physical vibrations, is the ego; what gives you a definite form, a definite character, a separate consciousness, the sense that you exist in yourself, independently of all others, indeed, something like that; if one does not reflect, spontaneously one has the sense that even if the world disappeared, one would be there, one would remain what one is. This of course is the super-ego.

Certainly, if one were to lose one's ego too soon, from the vital and mental point of view one would again become an amorphous mass. The ego is surely the instrument for individualisation; that is, until one is an individualised being, constituted in himself, the ego is an absolutely necessary factor. If one had the power of abolishing the ego ahead of time, one would lose one's individuality. But once the individuality has been formed, the ego becomes not only useless but harmful. And only then comes the time when it must be abolished. But naturally, as it has taken so much trouble to build you, it does not give up its work so easily, and it asks for the reward of its efforts, that is, to enjoy the individuality.

12 January 1955

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Egoism is a relatively easy thing to correct, because everyone knows what it is. It is easy to discover, easy to correct, if one truly wants to do it and is bent on it.

But the ego is much more difficult to seize, because, in fact, to realise what the ego is one must already be out of it, otherwise one cannot find it out. You are wholly moulded from it, from head to foot, from the

outermost to the innermost, from the physical to the spiritual, you are steeped in ego. It is mixed with everything and you are not aware of what it is. You must have already conquered it, come out of it, freed yourself from it, at least partially, at least in some little corner of your being somewhere, in order to realise what the ego is.

The ego is what helps us to individualise ourselves and what prevents us from becoming divine. It is like that. Put that together and you will find the ego. Without the ego, as the world is organised, there would be no individual, and with the ego the world cannot become divine.

It would be logical to conclude, "Well, let us first of all become conscious individuals and then we shall send away the ego and become divine." Only, when we have become conscious individuals, we have grown so accustomed to living with our ego that we are no longer able to discern it and much labour is needed to become aware of its presence.

On the other hand, everyone knows what egoism is. When you want to pull everything towards you and other people do not interest you, that is called egoism: when you put yourself at the centre of the universe and all things exist only in relation to you, that is egoism. But it is very obvious, one must be blind not to see that one is egoistic. Everybody is a little egoistic, more or less, and at least a certain proportion of egoism is normally acceptable; but even in ordinary life, when one is a little too egoistic, well, one receives knocks on the nose, because, since everyone is egoistic, no one much likes egoism in others.

It is taken for granted, it is part of public morality. Yes, one must be a little bit egoistic, not too much, so it is not conspicuous! On the other hand, nobody speaks of the ego, because nobody knows it. It is such an intimate companion that one does not even recognise its existence; and yet so long as it is there one will never have the divine consciousness.

The ego is what makes one conscious of being separate from others. If there were no ego, you would not perceive that you are a person separate from others. You would have the impression that you are a small part of a whole, a very small part of a very great whole.

On the other hand, every one of you is most certainly quite conscious of being a separate person. Well, it is the ego that gives you this impression. As long as you are conscious in this way, it means that you

have an ego.

When you begin to be aware that everything is yourself, and that this is only a very small point in the midst of thousands and thousands of other points of the same person that you are everywhere, when you feel that you are yourself in everything and that there is no separation, then you know that you are on the way towards having no more ego.

There even comes a time when it is impossible to conceive oneself and say, "It is not I", for even to express it in this way, to say that the All is you, that you are the All or that you are the Divine or that the Divine is you, proves that something still remains.

There is a moment — this happens in a flash and can hardly stay — when it is the All that thinks, it is the All that knows, it is the All that feds, it is the All that lives. There is not even... not even the impression that... you have reached that point.

Then it is all right. But until then, there is still a little remnant of ego somewhere; usually it is the part which looks on, the witness that looks on.

So do not assert that you have no more ego. It is not accurate. Say you are on the way towards having no more ego, that is the only correct thing to say.

2 May 1958

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There is a spiritual ego even as there is a physical, vital and mental ego. There is a spiritual ego. There are people who have made a great effort to overcome all their egoism and all their limitations, and attained a spiritual consciousness; and there, they have all the vanity and the sense of their importance and contempt for those who are not in the same condition as they. Indeed, all that is ridiculous and bad in the ego, they find there once again. There are many, many like that. They have overcome what was there in the physical or vital consciousness but the very effort they have made to master themselves and this victory they have gained give them the sense of their extreme importance. So they become puffed up and assert their authority.

This happens so frequently that it is not even noticed.

I didn't understand this: "The so-called forces of Nature are but the exterior activities of beings out of proportion with man by their size and the powers at their disposal." (The Mother)

Didn't understand?... For instance, take the wind which blows; now scientists will tell you: "These are manifestations of forces of Nature, and it is the result of such and such a phenomenon", they will speak about heat and cold, high and low, etc., and they will tell you: "That's the cause of the wind's blowing, these are currents of air produced in the atmosphere." But it is not this. There are entities behind, only they are so huge that their form eludes us. It would be like your asking an ant to describe the form of a man — it couldn't, could it? It sees at the most the tiny end of the little toe and it takes a walk on the foot — it is a great journey, and it would not know what a man's form would be like. Well, it is almost the same thing. These forces which bring about wind, rain, earthquakes, etc. are manifestations of — call them gestures, if you like — of movements of certain beings so formidably huge that we hardly see the end of their foot and don't realise their size.

Still, the spiritual ego is better than the ordinary ego, isn't it?

It is much more dangerous than the ordinary one! For one is not aware that it is the ego. Outwardly, when one is egoistic, not only does one know it oneself but others make you realise it still more, and circumstances prove it to you every moment. But there, as unfortunately you meet people who respect you highly, you are not even aware that you are terribly egoistic.

Very dangerous. Spiritual vanity is much more serious than physical vanity.

9 December 1953

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The most important, the most difficult thing is to renounce one's ego, for to somebody who is not ready, to renounce his ego is like dying and dying much more than a physical death, for to him the death of the ego is like a

dissolution of the being — this is not correct but it begins by giving this sort of impression. To be immortal one must renounce all limitations and the ego is the greatest of limitations; hence if “I” am not immortal, what is the good of that?

3 February 1951

Organise Your Being

Sweet Mother, here it is written: “It is part of the foundation of Yoga to become conscious of the great complexity of our nature, see the different forces that move it and get over it a control of directing knowledge.” (Sri Aurobindo) Are these forces different for each person?

Yes. The composition is completely different, otherwise everybody would be the same. There are not two beings with an identical combination; between the different parts of the being and the composition of these parts the proportion is different in each individual. There are people, primitive men, people like the yet undeveloped races or the degenerated ones whose combinations are fairly simple.[...] And there are people absolutely at the top of the human ladder, the elite of humanity; their combinations become so complicated that a very special discernment is needed to find the relations between all these things.

There are beings who carry in themselves thousands of different personalities, and then each one has its own rhythm and alternation, and there is a kind of combination; sometimes there are inner conflicts, and there is a play of activities which are rhythmic and with alternations of certain parts which come to the front and then go back and again come to the front. But when one takes all that, it makes such complicated combinations that some people truly find it difficult to understand what is going on in themselves; and yet these are the ones most capable of a complete, coordinated, conscious, organised action; but their organisation is infinitely more complicated than that of primitive or undeveloped men who have two or three impulses and four or five ideas, and who can arrange all this very easily in themselves and seem to be very coordinated

and logical because there is not very much to organise.

But there are people truly like a multitude, and so that gives them a plasticity, a fluidity of action and an extraordinary complexity of perception, and these people are capable of understanding a considerable number of things, as though they had at their disposal a veritable army which they move according to circumstance and need; and all this is inside them. So when these people, with the help of yoga, the discipline of yoga, succeed in centralising all these beings around the central light of the divine Presence, they become powerful entities, precisely because of their complexity. So long as this is not organised they often give the impression of an incoherence, they are almost incomprehensible, one can't manage to understand why they are like that, they are so complex. But when they have organised all these beings, that is, put each one in its place around the divine centre, then truly they are terrific, for they have the capacity of understanding almost everything and doing almost everything because of the multitude of entities they contain, of which they are constituted. And the nearer one is to the summit of the ladder, the more it is like that, and consequently the more difficult it is to organise one's being; because when you have about a dozen elements, you can quickly compass and organise them, but when you have thousands of them, it is difficult.

22 June 1955

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Is the vital distorted from the very birth?

If your birth has not been accidental, you could very well think there was no distortion, but what you are at your birth is most of the time almost absolutely what your mother and father have made you, and also, through them, what your grandparents have made you. There are certain vital traditions in families and, besides, there is the state of consciousness in which you were formed, conceived — the moment at which you were conceived — and that, not once in a million times does that state conform to true aspiration; and it is only a true aspiration which could make your vital pure of all mixture, make the vital element attracted for the formation of the being a pure element, free from all contagion; I mean that if a

psychic being enters there, it can gather elements favourable to its growth. In the world as it is, things are so mixed up, have been so mixed up in every way, that it is almost impossible to have elements of the vital sufficiently pure not to suffer the contagion of all other contaminated beings.

I think I have already spoken about that, I have said what kind of aspiration ought to be there in the parents before the birth; but as I said, this does not happen even once in a hundred thousand instances. The willed conception of a child is extremely rare; mostly it is an accident. Among innumerable parents it is quite a small minority that even simply bothers about what a child could be; they do not even know that what the child will be depends on what they are. It is a very small elite which knows this. Most of the time things go as they can; anything at all happens and people don't even realise what is happening. So, in these conditions how do you expect to be born with a vital being sufficiently pure to be of help to you?

One is born with a slough to clean before one begins to live. And once you have made a good start on the way to the inner transformation and you go down to the subconscious root of the being — that exactly which comes from parents, from atavism — well, you do see what it is! and all, almost all difficulties are there, there are very few things added to existence after the first years of life. This happens at any odd moment; if you keep bad company or read bad books, the poison may enter you; but there are all the imprints deep-rooted in the subconscious, the dirty habits you have and against which you struggle. For instance, there are people who can't open their mouth without telling a lie, and they don't always do this deliberately (that is the worst of it), or people who can't come in touch with others without quarrelling, all sorts of stupidities — they are there in the subconscious, deeply rooted. Now, when you have a goodwill, externally you do your best to avoid all that, to correct it if possible; you work, you fight, then become aware that this thing always keeps coming up, it comes up from some part which escapes your control. But if you enter this subconscious, if you let your consciousness infiltrate it, and look carefully, gradually you will discover all the sources, all the origins of all your difficulties; then you will begin to understand what your fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers were, and if at a certain moment

you are unable to control yourself, you will understand, "I am like that because they were like that."

If you have within you a psychic being sufficiently awake to watch over you, to prepare your path, it can draw towards you things which help you, draw people, books, circumstances, all sorts of little coincidences which come to you as though brought by some benevolent will and give you an indication, a help, a support to take decisions and turn you in the right direction. But once you have taken this decision, once you have decided to find the truth of your being, once you start sincerely on the road, then everything seems to conspire to help you to advance, and if you observe carefully you see gradually the source of your difficulties: "Ah! wait a minute, this failing was in my father; oh! this habit was my mother's; oh! my grandmother was like this, my grandfather was like that" or it could well be the nurse who took care of you when you were small, or brothers and sisters who played with you, the little friends you met, and you will find that all this was there, in this person or that or the other. But if you continue to be sincere, you find you can cross all this quite calmly, and after a time you cut all the moorings with which you were born, break the chains and go freely on the path.

If you really want to transform your character, it is that you must do. It has always been said that it is impossible to change one's nature; in all books of philosophy, even of yoga, you are told the same story: "You cannot change your character, you are born like that, you are like that." This is absolutely false, I guarantee it is false; but there is something very difficult to do to change your character, because it is not your character which must be changed, it is the character of your antecedents. In them you will not change it (because they have no such intention), but it is in you that it must be changed. It is what they have given you, all the little gifts made to you at your birth — nice gifts — it is this which must be changed. But if you succeed in getting hold of the thread of these things, the true thread, since you have worked upon this with perseverance and sincerity, one fine morning you will be free; all this will fall off from you and you will be able to get a start in life without any burden. Then you will be a new man, living a new life, almost with a new nature. And if you look back you will say, "It is not possible, I was never like that!"

29 March 1951

First one must become a conscious, well-knit, *individualised* being, who exists in himself, by himself, independently of all his surroundings, who can hear anything, read anything, see anything without changing. He receives from outside only what he wants to receive; he automatically refuses all that is not in conformity with his plan and nothing can leave an imprint on him unless he agrees to receive the imprint. Then one begins to become an individuality! When one is an individuality, one can make an offering of it.

For, unless one possesses something, one cannot give it. First, one must be, and then afterwards one can give oneself.

So long as one does not exist, one can give nothing. And for the separative ego to disappear, as you say, one must be able to give oneself entirely, totally without reservation. And to be able to give oneself, one must first exist. And to exist one must be individualised.

If your body were not made in the rigid form it is — for it is terribly rigid, isn't it? — well, if all that were not so fixed, if you had no skin, here, like this, solid, if externally you were the reflection of what you are in the vital and mental fields, it would be worse than being a jelly-fish! Everything would fuse into everything else, like this.... Oh, what a mess it would be! That is why it was at first necessary to give a very rigid form. Afterwards we complain about it. We say, "The physical is fixed, it is a nuisance; it lacks plasticity, it lacks suppleness, it hasn't that fluidity which can enable us to merge into the Divine." But this was absolutely necessary, for without this... if you simply went out of your body (most of you can't do it because the vital being is hardly more individualised than the physical), if you came out of your body and went into the vital world, you would see that all things there intermingle, they are mixed, they divide; all kinds of vibrations, currents of forces come and go, struggle, try to destroy one another, take possession of each other, absorb each other, throw each other out... and so it goes on! But it is very difficult to find a real personality in all this. These are forces, movements, desires, vibrations.

There are individualities, there are personalities! But these are powers. People who are individualised in that world are either heroes or devils!

And now, in the mind... (*Silence*) If only you become conscious of your physical mind in itself... Some people have called it a public square, because everything comes there, goes across, passes, comes back.... All ideas go there, they enter at one place, leave by another, some are here, some there, and it is a public square, not very well organised, for usually ideas meet and knock into one another, there are accidents of all kinds. But then one becomes aware: "What can I call my mind?" or "What is my mind?"

One needs years of very attentive, very careful, very reasonable, very coherent work, organisation, selection, construction, in order to succeed simply in forming, oh, simply this little thing, *one's own way of thinking!*

One believes he has his own way of thinking. Not at all. It depends totally upon the people one speaks with or the books he has read or on the mood he is in. It depends also on whether you have a good or bad digestion, it depends on whether you are shut up in a room without proper ventilation or whether you are in the open air; it depends on whether you have a beautiful landscape before you; it depends on whether there is sunshine or rain! You are not aware of it, but you think all kinds of things, completely different according to a heap of things which have nothing to do with you!

And for this to become a coordinated, coherent, logical thought, a long thorough work is necessary. And then, the best of the business is that when you have succeeded in making a beautiful, well-formed, very strong, very powerful mental construction, the first thing you will be told is, "You must break this so that you can unite with the Divine!" But so long as you haven't made it, you cannot unite with the Divine because you have nothing to give to the Divine except a mass of things which are not yourself! *One must first exist in order to be able to give oneself* I am repeating what I said a while ago.

Truly, in the present state of the world, the only thing one can give the Divine is one's body. But that's what one doesn't give Him. Yes, one can try to consecrate one's work! But still, here there are so many elements which are not true![...]

All this... it is not in order to swamp you that I tell you all this. It is only in order to tell you that before speaking of merging one's ego in the

Divine, one must first know a little what one is. The ego is there. Its necessity is that you become conscious, independent beings, individualised — I mean in the sense of independent — that you may not be the public square where everything goes criss-cross! That you may exist in yourselves. That is why there is an ego. It is like that; that is why also there is a skin, like that... though truly, even physical forces pass through the skin. There is a vibration which goes a certain distance. But still, it's the skin that prevents us from blending into one another. But everything else must be like that too.

(*After a silence*) And then, later, one offers all this to the Divine. Years of work are needed. You must not only... (*silence*) ... become conscious of yourself, conscious in all details, but you must organise what you call "yourself" around the psychic centre, the divine centre of your being, so that it would make a single, coherent, fully conscious being. And as this divine centre is itself already consecrated (*Mother makes a gesture of offering*) entirely to the Divine, if everything is organised harmoniously around it, everything is consecrated to the Divine. And so, when the Divine thinks it proper, when the time has come, when the work of individualisation is complete, then the Divine gives you permission to let your ego merge in Him, to live henceforward only for the Divine.

But it is the Divine who takes this decision. You must first have done all this work, become a conscious being, solely and exclusively centred around the Divine and governed by Him. And after all that, there is still an ego; because it is the ego which serves to make you an individual. But once this work is perfect, fully accomplished, then, at that moment, you may tell the Divine, "Here I am, I am ready. Do you want me?" And the Divine usually says, "Yes." All is over, everything is accomplished. And you become a real instrument for the Divine's work. But first the instrument must be constructed.

28 July 1954

Purity, Aspiration, Humility

So many people doubt the effectiveness of the Protection, the safety of the Path, because others go astray. And in their egoism they tremble with fear instead of telling themselves what I have just been reading to you this evening [about the need for purification], what is the cause of all catastrophes, small or great, which threaten those who follow the path of yoga without having taken the necessary care to be sufficiently pure and sincere.

No protection, no Grace can save those who refuse the indispensable purification.

And I would add this: that fear is an impurity, one of the greatest impurities, one of those which come most directly from the anti-divine forces which want to destroy the divine action on earth; and the first duty of those who really want to do yoga is to eliminate from their consciousness, with all the might, all the sincerity, all the endurance of which they are capable, even the shadow of a fear. To walk on the path, one must be dauntless, and never indulge in that petty, small, feeble, nasty shrinking back upon oneself, which is fear.

An indomitable courage, a perfect sincerity and a sincere self-giving, so that one does not calculate or bargain, does not give with the idea of receiving, does not trust with the idea of being protected, does not have a faith which asks for proofs — it is this that is indispensable in order to walk on the path, and it is this alone which can truly shelter you from all danger.

15 August 1956

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How to enter the [inner] room ?

You take a key and open the door!

You must find the key.

Or you sit down in front of the door until you have found the word, the idea or the force which opens it — as in the *Arabian Nights* tales.

It is not a joke, it is very serious. You must sit down in front of the door and then concentrate until you have found the key or the word or the power to open it.

If one doesn't try, it doesn't open by itself. Perhaps after thousands of years, but you want to do it immediately — so? To do it immediately, you must sit down *obstinately* before the door until you have found the means. It may be a key, it may be a word, it may be a force, it may be anything at all, and you remain there before the door until it opens.

And you do not think of anything else.

Only of the door.

Is there no key-hole through which the light can escape?

A key-hole! What do you mean? A chink through which the light can escape?... Perhaps it is escaping, but perhaps no one sees it either!

It is escaping.

But then that's another problem: you must open your eyes. You must learn to open your eyes, to look.

Very small babies do not see, even very small animals do not see, tiny baby kittens do not see. It takes them several hours or several days — they don't see.

You must learn to see.

16 May 1956

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Sweet Mother, Sri Aurobindo writes: "A psychic fire within must be lit into which all is thrown with the Divine Name upon it." Isn't the psychic fire always lit?

It is not always lit.

Then how to light it?

By aspiration.

By the will for progress, by the urge towards perfection.

Above all, it is the will for progress and self-purification which lights the fire. The will for progress. Those who have a strong will, when they turn it towards spiritual progress and purification, automatically light the fire within themselves.

And each defect one wants to cure or each progress one wants to make — if all that is thrown into the fire, it burns with a new intensity. And this is not an image, it is a fact in the subtle physical. One can feel the warmth of the flame, one can see in the subtle physical the fight of the flame. And when there is something in the nature which prevents one from advancing and one throws it into this fire, it begins to burn and the flame becomes more intense.

8 August 1956

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There is one thing that has always been said, but always misunderstood, it is the necessity of humility. It is taken in the wrong way, wrongly understood and wrongly used. Be humble, if you can be so in the right way; above all, do not be so in the wrong way, for that leads you nowhere. But there is one thing: if you can pull out from yourself this weed called vanity, then indeed you will have done something. But if you knew how difficult it is! You cannot do a thing well, cannot have a fine idea, cannot have a right movement, cannot make a little progress without getting puffed up inside (even without being aware of it), with a self-satisfaction full of vanity. And you are obliged then to hammer it hard to break it. And still broken bits remain and these begin to germinate. One must work the whole of one's life and never forget to work in order to uproot this weed that springs up again and again and again so insidiously that you believe it is gone and you feel very modest and say. "It is not I who have done it, I feel it is the Divine, I am nothing if He is not there", and then the next minute, you are so satisfied with yourself simply for having thought that!

What is the right and the wrong way of being humble?

It is very simple, when people are told “be humble”, they think immediately of “being humble before other men” and that humility is wrong. True humility is humility before the Divine, that is, a precise, exact, *living* sense that one is nothing, one can do nothing, understand nothing without the Divine, that even if one is exceptionally intelligent and capable, this is nothing in comparison with the divine Consciousness, and this sense one must always keep, because then one always has the true attitude of receptivity — a humble receptivity that does not put personal pretensions in opposition to the Divine.

13 May 1953

The Creative Word

Sweet Mother, there's a flower you have named “The Creative Word”.

Yes.

What does that mean ?

It is the word which creates.

There are all kinds of old traditions, old Hindu traditions, old Chaldean traditions in which the Divine, in the form of the Creator, that is, in His aspect as Creator, pronounces a word which has the power to create. So it is this... And it is the origin of the mantra. The mantra is the spoken word which has a creative power. An invocation is made and there is an answer to the invocation; or one makes a prayer and the prayer is granted. This is the Word, the Word which, in its sound... it is not only the idea, it is in the sound that there's a power of creation. It is the origin, you see, of the mantra.

In Indian mythology the creator God is Brahma, and I think that it was precisely his power which has been symbolised by this flower, “The Creative Word”. And when one is in contact with it, the words spoken have a power of evocation or creation or formation or transformation; the words... sound always has a power; it has much more power than men

think. It may be a good power and it may be a bad power. It creates vibrations which have an undeniable effect. It is not so much the idea as the sound; the idea too has its own power, but in its own domain — whereas the sound has a power in the material world.

I think I have explained this to you once; I told you, for example, that words spoken casually, usually without any reflection and without attaching any importance to them, can be used to do something very good. I think I spoke to you about "Bonjour". "Good Day", didn't I? When people meet and say "Bonjour", they do so mechanically and without thinking. But if you put a will into it, an aspiration to indeed wish someone a good day, well, there is a way of saying "Good Day" which is very effective, much more effective than if simply meeting someone you thought: "Ah! I hope he has a good day", without saying anything. If with this hope in your thought you say to him in a certain way, "Good Day", you make it more concrete and more effective.

It's the same thing, by the way, with curses, or when one gets angry and says bad things to people. This can do them as much harm — more harm sometimes — than if you were to give them a slap. With very sensitive people it can put their stomach out of order or give them palpitation, because you put into it an evil force which has a power of destruction.

It is not at all ineffective to speak. Naturally it depends a great deal on each one's inner power. People who have no strength and no consciousness can't do very much — unless they employ material means. But to the extent that you are strong, especially when you have a powerful vital, you must have a great control on what you say, otherwise you can do much harm. Without wanting to, without knowing it; through ignorance.

26 October 1955

Asceticism

Mother, for self-mastery are not the ascetic methods useful sometimes?

No! You cure nothing. You only give yourself the illusion that you have progressed, but you cure nothing. The proof is that if you stop your ascetic

methods, the thing is even stronger than before; it comes back with a vengeance. It depends upon what you call ascetic methods. If it is not to indulge in satisfying all your desires, this indeed is not asceticism, it is common sense. It is something else. Ascetic methods are things like repeated fasting, compelling yourself to endure the cold... in fact, to torture your body a little. This indeed gives you only a spiritual pride, nothing more. It masters nothing at all. It is infinitely easier. People do it because it is very easy, it is simple. Just because the pride is quite satisfied and the vanity can get puffed up, it becomes very easy. One makes a great demonstration of his ascetic virtues, and so considers himself an extremely important personage, and that helps him to endure many things.

It is much more difficult to master one's impulses quietly, composedly, and to prevent them from showing themselves — much more! — without taking ascetic measures. It is much more difficult not to be attached to the things you possess than to possess nothing. This is something that has been known for centuries. It requires a much greater quality not to be attached to the things one possesses than to be without any possessions or to reduce one's possessions to a strict minimum. It is much more difficult. It is a much higher degree of moral worth. Simply this attitude: when a thing comes to you, to take it, use it; when for one reason or another it goes away, to let it go and not regret it. Not to refuse it when it comes, to know how to adapt yourself and not to regret it when it goes.

Even if defects come?

It is not a question of defects, I am speaking of material things. Defects are not things which come, they are things one carries in oneself. I am speaking of material things. I am speaking of asceticism, you understand.

Asceticism is an altogether material discipline. Defects — don't think they come from outside; one has enough of them inside one without needing to borrow them from elsewhere. And in fact, if one did not carry them in oneself, one could not become aware of them in others. It is because the seed of all this is in oneself that one is in contact with them. And when we say that great waves of passion pass through people, and that they are not generated in them but pass through them, it is perfectly true. But if there was someone absolutely immune from all possibility of

passion, they could pass by for centuries, he wouldn't even feel them. He could see them, see them passing, as one sees a storm passing in the sky, but he would feel nothing at all. When the vibrations inside oneself answer the vibrations from outside, it means that they are there; otherwise no vibration can enter.

There are examples like this. For instance, a crowd is seized by panic. Well, it is always possible that there are one or two persons who resist the panic, who are not touched, are outside it: they can save the situation. This has happened many a time. The reason why a movement, a vibration, a forceful movement is contagious is because the ground for contagion is there.

15 December 1954

Meditation

The number of hours spent in meditation is no proof of spiritual progress. It is a proof of your progress when you no longer have to make an effort to meditate. Then you have rather to make an effort to stop meditating: it becomes difficult to stop meditation, difficult to stop thinking of the Divine, difficult to come down to the ordinary consciousness. Then you are sure of progress, then you have made real progress when concentration in the Divine is the necessity of your life, when you cannot do without it, when it continues naturally from morning to night whatever you may be engaged in doing. Whether you sit down to meditation or go about and do things and work, what is required of you is consciousness; that is the one need, — to be constantly conscious of the Divine.

But is not sitting down to meditation an indispensable discipline, and does it not give a more intense and concentrated union with the Divine?

That may be. But a discipline in itself is not what we are seeking. What we are seeking is to be concentrated on the Divine in all that we do, at all times, in all our acts and in every movement. There are some here who have been told to meditate; but also there are others who have not been asked to do any meditation at all. But it must not be thought that they are

not progressing. They too follow a discipline, but it is of another nature. To work, to act with devotion and an inner consecration is also a spiritual discipline. The final aim is to be in constant union with the Divine, not only in meditation but in all circumstances and in all the active life.

There are some who, when they are sitting in meditation, get into a state which they think very fine and delightful. They sit self-complacent in it and forget the world; but if they are disturbed, they come out of it angry and restless, because their meditation was interrupted. This is not a sign of spiritual progress or discipline. There are some people who act and seem to feel as if their meditation were a debt they have to pay to the Divine; they are like men who go to church once a week and think they have paid what they owe to God.

If you need to make an effort to go into meditation, you are still very far from being able to live the spiritual life. When it takes an effort to come out of it, then indeed your meditation can be an indication that you are in the spiritual life.

21 April 1929

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What is the difference between meditation and concentration?

Meditation is a purely mental activity, it interests only the mental being. One can concentrate while meditating but this is a mental concentration; one can get a silence but it is a purely mental silence, and the other parts of the being are kept immobile and inactive so as not to disturb the meditation. You may pass twenty hours of the day in meditation and for the remaining four hours you will be an altogether ordinary man because only the mind has been occupied — the rest of the being, the vital and the physical, is kept under pressure so that it may not disturb. In meditation nothing is directly done for the other parts of the being.

Certainly this indirect action can have an effect, but... I have known in my life people whose capacity for meditation was remarkable but who, when not in meditation, were quite ordinary men, even at times ill-natured people, who would become furious if their meditation was disturbed. For

they had learnt to master only their mind, not the rest of their being.

Concentration is a more active state. You may concentrate mentally, you may concentrate vitally, psychically, physically, and you may concentrate integrally. Concentration or the capacity to gather oneself at one point is more difficult than meditation. You may gather together one portion of your being or consciousness or you may gather together the whole of your consciousness or even fragments of it; that is, the concentration may be partial, total or integral, and in each case the result will be different.

25 December 1950

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Some imagine that the sign of spiritual life is the capacity to sit in a corner and meditate! That is a very, very common idea. I do not want to be severe, but most people who make much of their capacity for meditation — I do not think they meditate even for one minute out of one hour. Those who meditate truly never speak about it; for them it is quite a natural thing. When it has become a natural thing, without any glory about it, you may begin to tell yourself that you are making progress. Those who talk about it and think that this gives them a superiority over other human beings, you may be sure, are most of the time in a state of complete inertia.

It is very difficult to meditate. There are all kinds of meditations.... You may take an idea and follow it to arrive at a given result — this is an active meditation; people who want to solve a problem or to write, meditate in this way without knowing that they are meditating. Others sit down and try to concentrate on something without following an idea — simply to concentrate on a point in order to intensify one's power of concentration; and this brings about what usually happens when you concentrate upon a point: if you succeed in gathering your capacity for concentration sufficiently upon a point whether mental, vital or physical, at a given moment you pass through and enter into another consciousness. Others still try to drive out from their head all movements, ideas, reflexes, reactions and to arrive at a truly silent tranquillity. This is extremely difficult; there are people who have tried for twenty-five years and not

succeeded, for it is somewhat like taking a bull by the horns.

There is another kind of meditation which consists in being as quiet as one can be but without trying to stop all thoughts, for there are thoughts which are purely mechanical and if you try to stop these you will need years, and into the bargain you will not be sure of the result; instead of that you gather together all your consciousness and remain as quiet and peaceful as possible, you detach yourself from external things as though they do not interest you at all, and all of a sudden, you brighten the flame of aspiration and throw into it everything that comes to you so that the flame may rise higher and higher, higher and higher; you identify yourself with it and you go up to the extreme point of your consciousness and aspiration, thinking of nothing else — simply, an aspiration which mounts, mounts, mounts, without thinking a minute of the result, of what may happen and specially of what may not, and above all without desiring that something may come — simply, the joy of an aspiration which mounts and mounts and mounts, intensifying itself more and more in a constant concentration. And there I may assure you that what happens is the best that can happen. That is, it is the maximum of your possibilities which is realised when you do this. These possibilities may be very different according to individuals. But then all these worries about trying to be silent, going behind appearances, calling a force which answers, waiting for an answer to your questions, all that vanishes like an unreal vapour. And if you succeed in living consciously in this flame, in this column of mounting aspiration, you will see that even if you do not have an immediate result, after a time something will happen.

12 February 1951

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If while doing what you have to do — whatever it may be, whatever work it is — if you do it and while doing it are careful not to forget the Divine, to offer to Him what you do and try so to give yourself to Him that He may change all your reactions — instead of their being selfish, petty, stupid and ignorant, making them luminous, generous — then in that way you will make progress. Not only will you have made some progress but you will have helped in the general progress. I have never seen people who have

left everything in order to go and sit down in a more or less empty contemplation (for it is more or less empty); I have never seen such people making any progress, or in any case their progress is very trifling. I have seen persons who had no pretensions of doing yoga, who were simply filled with enthusiasm by the idea of terrestrial transformation and of the descent of the Divine into the world and who did their little bit of work with that enthusiasm in the heart, giving themselves wholly, without reserve, without any selfish idea of a personal salvation; these I have seen making magnificent progress, truly magnificent. And sometimes they are wonderful. I have seen sannyasis, I have seen people who live in monasteries, I have seen people who professed to be yogis, well, I would not exchange one of the others for a dozen such people (I mean, from the standpoint of terrestrial transformation and world progress, that is to say, from the standpoint of what we want to do, to try that this world may no longer be what it is and may become truly the instrument of the divine Will, with the divine Consciousness). It is not by running away from the world that you will change it. It is by working there, modestly, humbly but with a fire in the heart, something that burns like an offering. *Voilà.*

So meditation is of no use?

No, and to the extent it is necessary, it will come spontaneously. All of a sudden, you will be seized by something that makes you still, makes you concentrate in the vision of an idea or of a psychological state. That captures you. You must not resist. Then you make the needed progress. At such a moment you see, you understand something; and then the next minute you start your work again with that something gained in you, but without any pretension. What I most fear are those who believe themselves very exceptional because they sit down and meditate. Of all things this is the most dangerous, because they become so vain and so full of self-satisfaction that they close up in this way all avenues of progress....

13 May 1953

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“The practice of this Yoga demands a constant inward remembrance of the one central liberating knowledge.... In all is the one Self the one Divine is all; all are in the Divine, all are the Divine and there is nothing else in the universe, — this thought or this faith is the whole background until it becomes the whole substance of the consciousness of the worker. A memory, a self- dynamising meditation of this kind, must and does in its end turn into profound and uninterrupted vision and a vivid and all-embracing consciousness of that which we so powerfully remember or on which we so constantly meditate.” (Sri Aurobindo)

Sweet Mother, what does Sri Aurobindo mean by “a self-dynamising meditation” ?

It is a meditation that has the power of transforming your being. It is a meditation which makes you progress, as opposed to static meditation which is immobile and relatively inert, and which changes nothing in your consciousness or in your way of being. A dynamic meditation is a meditation of transformation.

Generally, people don't have a dynamic meditation. When they enter into meditation — or at least what they call meditation — they enter into a kind of immobility where nothing stirs, and they come out of it exactly as they went in, without any change either in their being or in their consciousness. And the more motionless it is, the happier they are. They could meditate in this way for eternities, it would never change anything either in the universe or in themselves. That is why Sri Aurobindo speaks of a dynamic meditation which is exactly the very opposite. It is a transforming meditation.

How is it done? Is it done in a different way?

I think it is the aspiration that should be different, the attitude should be different. “Different way” — what do you mean by “way” — (*laughing*) the way of sitting?... Not that? The inner way?

Yes.

But for each one it is different.

I think the most important thing is to know why one meditates; this is what gives the quality of the meditation and makes it of one order or another.

You may meditate to open yourself to the divine Force, you may meditate to reject the ordinary consciousness, you may meditate to enter the depths of your being, you may meditate to learn how to give yourself integrally; you may meditate for all kinds of things. You may meditate to enter into peace and calm and silence — this is what people generally do, but without much success. But you may also meditate to receive the Force of transformation, to discover the points to be transformed, to trace out the line of progress. And then you may also meditate for very practical reasons: when you have a difficulty to clear up, a solution to find, when you want help in some action or other. You may meditate for that too.

I think everyone has his own mode of meditation. But if one wants the meditation to be dynamic, one must have an aspiration for progress and the meditation must be done to help and fulfil this aspiration for progress. Then it becomes dynamic.

14 March 1956

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I begin to meditate and pray ardently and fervently, my aspiration is intense and my prayer full of devotion; and then, after a certain length of time — sometimes short, sometimes long — the aspiration becomes mechanical and the prayer purely verbal. What should I do?

This is not an individual case, it is extremely common. I have already said this a number of times, but still it was in passing — that people who claim to meditate for hours every day and spend their whole day praying, to me it seems that three-fourths of the time it must be absolutely mechanical; that is to say, it loses all its sincerity. For human nature is not made for that and the human mind is not built that way.

In order to concentrate and meditate one must do an exercise which I could call the “mental muscle-building” of concentration.

One must really make an effort — as one makes a muscular effort, for

instance, to lift a weight — if you want the concentration to be sincere and not artificial.

The same thing for the urge of prayer: suddenly a flame is lit, you feel an enthusiastic *élan*, a great fervour, and express it in words which, to be true, must be spontaneous. This must come from the heart, directly, with ardour, without passing through the head. That is a prayer. If there are just words jostling in your head, it is no longer a prayer. Well, if you don't throw more fuel into the flame, after a time it dies out. If you do not give your muscles time to relax, if you don't slacken the movement, your muscles lose the capacity of taking strains. So it is quite natural, and even indispensable, for the intensity of the movement to cease after a certain time. Naturally, someone who is accustomed to lifting weights can do it much longer than one who has never done it before. It is the same thing; someone who is accustomed to concentration can concentrate much longer than one who is not in the habit. But for everybody there comes a time when one must let go, relax, in order to begin again. Therefore, whether immediately or after a few minutes or a few hours, if the movement becomes mechanical, it means that you have relaxed and that you need no longer pretend that you are meditating. It is better to do something useful.

If you cannot manage to do a little exercise, for instance, in order to neutralise the effect of the mental tension, you may read or try to note down what happened to you, you may express things. Then that produces a relaxation, the necessary relaxation. But the duration of the meditation is only relatively important; its length simply shows how far you are accustomed to this activity.

Of course, this may increase a great deal, but there is always a limit; and when the limit is reached one must stop, that's all. It is not an insincerity, it is an incapacity. What becomes insincere is if you pretend to meditate when you are no longer meditating or you say prayers like many people who go to the temple or to church, perform ceremonies and repeat their prayers as one repeats a more or less well-learnt lesson. Then it is no longer either prayer or meditation, it is simply a profession. It is not interesting.

18 July 1956

CHAPTER 18

The Integral Yoga

An Integral Transformation

In the integral Yoga, the integral life down even to the smallest detail has to be transformed, to be divinised. There is nothing here that is insignificant, nothing that is indifferent. You cannot say, "When I am meditating, reading philosophy or listening to these conversations I will be in this condition of an opening towards the Light and call for it, but when I go out to walk or see friends I can allow myself to forget all about it." To persist in this attitude means that you will remain untransformed and never have the true union; always you will be divided; you will have at best only glimpses of this greater life. For although certain experiences and realisations may come to you in meditation or in your inner consciousness, your body and your outer life will remain unchanged. An inner illumination that does not take any note of the body and the outer life, is of no great use, for it leaves the world as it is. This is what has continually happened till now. Even those who had a very great and powerful realisation withdrew from the world to live undisturbed in inner quiet and peace; the world was left to its ways, and misery and stupidity, Death and Ignorance continued, unaffected, their reign on this material plane of existence. For those who thus withdraw, it may be pleasant to escape from this turmoil, to run away from the difficulty and to find for themselves a happy condition elsewhere; but they leave the world and life uncorrected and untransformed; and their own outer consciousness too they leave unchanged and their bodies as unregenerate as ever. Coming back to the physical world, they are likely to be worse there than even ordinary people; for they have lost the mastery over material things, and their dealing with physical life is likely to be slovenly and helpless in its movements and at the mercy of every passing force.

An ideal of this kind may be good for those who want it, but it is not our Yoga. For we want the divine conquest of this world, the conquest of

all its movements and the realisation of the Divine here. But if we want the Divine to reign here we must give all we have and are and do here to the Divine. It will not do to think that anything is unimportant or that the external life and its necessities are no part of the Divine Life. If we do, we shall remain where we have always been and there will be no conquest of the external world; nothing abiding there will have been done.

28 April 1929

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We want an integral transformation, the transformation of the body and all its activities.

Formerly, when one spoke of transformation one meant solely the transformation of the inner consciousness. One tried to discover in oneself this deep consciousness and rejected the body and its activities like an encumbrance and a useless thing, in order to attend only to the inner movement. Sri Aurobindo declared that this was not enough; the Truth demanded that the material world should also participate in this transformation and become an expression of the deeper Truth. But when people heard this, many thought that it was possible to transform the body and its activities without bothering in the least about what was happening within — naturally this is not quite true. Before you can undertake this work of physical transformation, which of all things is the most difficult, your inner consciousness must be firmly established, solidly established in the Truth, so that this transformation may be the final expression of the Truth — “final” for the moment at least.

The starting-point of this transformation is receptivity, we have already spoken about it. That is the indispensable condition for obtaining the transformation. Then comes the change of consciousness. This change of consciousness and its preparation have often been compared with the formation of the chicken in the egg: till the very last second the egg remains the same, there is no change, and it is only when the chicken is completely formed, absolutely alive, that it itself makes with its little beak a hole in the shell and comes out. Something similar takes place at the moment of the change of consciousness. For a long time you have the

impression that nothing is happening, that your consciousness is the same as usual, and, if you have an intense aspiration, you even feel a resistance, as though you were knocking against a wall which does not yield. But when you are ready within, a last effort — the pecking in the shell of the being — and everything opens and you are projected into another consciousness.

I said that it was a revolution of the basic equilibrium, that is, a total reversal of consciousness comparable with what happens to light when it passes through a prism. Or it is as though you were turning a ball inside out, which cannot be done except in the fourth dimension. One comes out of the ordinary three-dimensional consciousness to enter the higher four-dimensional consciousness, and into an infinite number of dimensions. This is the indispensable starting-point. Unless your consciousness changes its dimension, it will remain just what it is with the superficial vision of things, and all the profundities will escape you.[...] After this inner opening and this identification with the Presence in the psychic centre, you see things from within outwards, and the outer existence becomes an expression, more or less deformed, of what you see within: you are aware of the inner existence of beings and their form; their outer existence is only a more or less deformed expression of this inner truth. And it is because of this that I say that the basic equilibrium is completely changed. Instead of being outside the world and seeing it as something outside you, you are inside the world and see outer forms expressing in a more or less clumsy fashion what is within, which for you is the Truth.

4 January 1951

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You are told: there is only one reality, and all that is, is only a multiple expression of a single reality. Therefore, all the divine manifestations, all the forms it has taken in the course of time, all the names which men have given it, are only manifestations, forms and names of one sole, unique Godhead.

As human beings are very limited, it is usually easier for them to follow one path rather than another. But that is just a tiny little beginning;

and if one wants to attain the heights, one must be able to find the Divine equally through all the paths, and understand that it is the sole and same Divine, whatever the different appearances may be.

This is what Sri Aurobindo tells you: that you cannot stop, you cannot be satisfied until you have felt *absolutely concretely* that there is only one *single* Divine, there is only one *single* Reality, and that, from whatever angle It is seen or whatever path is taken to attain It, it will always be one sole and same thing which you will meet. So one who is developed enough, vast enough to be able to follow what we call the Integral Yoga, must have the capacity to approach the Divine by all possible paths. If he doesn't want to follow them himself because it takes time... though there is a certain degree of development which enables one in a few days or a few hours to follow a path which would otherwise take a whole lifetime... still, if one has no taste for this kind of gymnastics, at least one should have an understanding open enough to be aware that all this is fundamentally one sole and identical thing. And whether you give it this name or that or no name at all, you understand, or several names, you are always speaking of the same thing which is the single Divine who is all things.

Don't you catch it?

It is only the mind and the limited human consciousness which make distinctions. And through these differences you get into a confusion. You distinguish only by differences, and differences mean just the illusory outer consciousness. As soon as you really enter within, you immediately have the sense of a total identity and all these divergences seem absolutely ridiculous to you.

23 November 1955

The Individual and the Collectivity

Does an individual mastery over desire suffice or is a general, collective mastery necessary?

Ah! there we are.... Is it possible to attain a total personal transformation without there being at least a correspondence in the collectivity?... This does not seem possible to me. There is such an interdependence between

the individual and the collectivity that, unless one does what the ascetics have preached, that is, escapes from the world, goes out of it completely, leaves it where it is and runs away selfishly leaving all the work to others, unless one does that... And even so I have my doubts. Is it possible to accomplish a total transformation of one's being so long as the collectivity has not reached at least a certain degree of transformation? I don't think so. Human nature remains what it is — one can attain a great change of consciousness, that yes, one can purify one's consciousness, but the total conquest, the material transformation depends definitely to a large extent, on a certain degree of progress in the collectivity. Buddha said with reason that as long as you have in you a vibration of desire, this vibration will spread in the world and all those who are ready to receive it will receive it. In the same way, if you have in you the least receptivity to a vibration of desire, you will be open to all the vibrations of desire which circulate constantly in the world. And that is why he concluded: Get out of this illusion, withdraw entirely and you will be free. I find this relatively very selfish, but after all, that was the only way he had foreseen.

There is another: to identify oneself so well with the divine Power as to be able to act constantly and consciously upon all vibrations circulating through the world. Then the undesirable vibrations no longer have any effect upon you, but you have an effect upon them, that is, instead of an undesirable vibration entering into you without being perceived and doing its work there, it is perceived and immediately on its arrival you act upon it to transform it, and it goes back into the world transformed, to do its beneficent work and prepare others for the same realisation. This is exactly what Sri Aurobindo proposes to do and, more clearly, what he asks you to do, what he intends us to do:

Instead of running away, to bring into oneself the power which can conquer.

Note that things are arranged in such a way that if the tiniest atom of ambition remained and one wanted this Power for one's personal satisfaction, one could never have it, that Power would never come. Its deformed limitations, of the kind seen in the vital and physical world, those yes, one may have them, and there are many people who have them, but the true Power, the Power Sri Aurobindo calls "supramental", unless one is absolutely free from all egoism under all its forms, one will never be

able to manifest. So there is no danger of its being misused. It will not manifest except through a being who has attained the perfection of a complete inner detachment. I have told you, this is what Sri Aurobindo expects us to do — you may tell me it is difficult, but I repeat that we are not here to do easy things, we are here to do difficult ones.

3 May 1951

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You said that to each individual is given a problem to solve. So each man upon earth has to live individually, for, in living collectively one has the difficulty of the collectivity also: it is not only one's own difficulty.

Yes, but man happens to be a social animal, and so, instinctively, he forms groups. But that also is why those who wished to go fast and did not feel themselves sufficiently strong retired into solitude. That is the reason, the justification of the ascetic who goes away into solitude, for he tries to cut himself off from the world. Only... there is an "only". One can do that physically to a certain extent, up to a point, cut oneself off from physical nature — not totally. It has been noticed, for instance, that ascetics who went away to sit under a tree in the forest, in a very short while became extraordinarily interested in all the animals living in the forest: it is the need of physical relationship with other living beings. It is possible that some do not need this, but it is a fairly general rule.

But solidarity does not stop there. There is a vital solidarity and a mental solidarity which you cannot prevent. There is, despite everything (though men are much more individualised than animals), there is a spirit of the species. There are collective suggestions which don't need to be expressed in words. There are atmospheres one cannot escape. It is certain (for this I know by experience), it is certain that there is a degree of individual perfection and transformation which cannot be realised without the whole of humanity having made a particular progress. And this happens by successive steps. There are things in Matter which cannot be transformed unless the whole of Matter has undergone transformation to a certain degree. One cannot isolate oneself completely. It is not possible.

One can do the work, one can choose: there are people who have chosen to go into solitude and try to realise in themselves the ideal they saw — usually they reached a certain point, then stopped there, they could not go further. It has been thus historically.

I was saying the other day: “There are perhaps people upon earth whom I don’t know who have realised extraordinary things” but exactly because they have isolated themselves from the earth, the earth does not know them. This is just to say that nothing is impossible. It seems doubtful, is all that I can say. But it is impossible, even if one isolates oneself physically, to do so vitally and mentally. There is the vast terrestrial atmosphere in which one is born, and there is a sort of spirit or genius of the human race; well, this genius must have reached a certain degree of perfection for anyone to be able to go farther. It is not that one has to wait till all have done it, no; but it is as though all had to reach a certain level for one to be able to take one’s spring and go farther.... Surely the individual will always be ahead of the mass, there’s no doubt about that, but there will always be a proportion and a relation.

7 October 1953

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“Often he (the sadhak) finds that even after he has won persistently his own personal battle, he has still to win it over and over again...” (Sri Aurobindo) [...] Then does this mean that others profit by his sadhana ?

You understand, it’s like that for everyone.

If there was only one, it could be like this: that he alone could do it for all; but if everybody does it... you understand...

You are fifty persons doing the Integral Yoga. If it is only one of the fifty who is doing it, then he does it for all the fifty. But if each one of the fifty is doing it, each doing it for all the fifty, he does it actually for one person alone, because all do it for all.

But the work is much longer?

One must widen oneself.

The work is more complicated, it is more complete, it asks for a greater power, a greater wideness, a greater patience, a greater tolerance, a greater endurance; all these things are necessary. But in fact, if each one does perfectly what he has to do, it is no longer only one single person who does the whole thing: not one single person who does it for all, but all now form only one person who does it for the whole group.

This ought to form a kind of sufficient unity among all those who are doing it, so that they no longer feel the distinction. This is indeed the ideal way of doing it: that they now form only one single body, one single personality, working at once each for himself and for the others without any distinction.

Truly speaking, it was the first question which came up when I met Sri Aurobindo. I think I have already told you this; I don't remember now, but I spoke about it recently. Should one do one's yoga and reach the goal and then later take up the work with others or should one immediately let all those who have the same aspiration come to him and go forward all together towards the goal?

Because of my earlier work and all that I had tried, I came to Sri Aurobindo with the question very precisely formulated. For the two possibilities were there: either to do an intensive individual sadhana by withdrawing from the world, that is, by no longer having any contact with others, or else to let the group [of disciples] be formed naturally and spontaneously, not preventing it from being formed, allowing it to form, and starting all together on the path.

Well, the decision was not at all a mental choice; it came spontaneously. The circumstances were such that there was no choice; that is, quite naturally, spontaneously, the group was formed in such a way that it became an imperious necessity. And so once we have started like that, it is finished, we have to go to the end like that.

At the beginning there were five, ten, not more. There were five or six for a long time. It became ten, twelve, about twenty; then thirty, thirty-five. That remained for quite a long while. And then suddenly, you know, it started; and then here we are! The last figure was more than eleven hundred. We are growing.

Now, among these there are many who do not do the sadhana, then the problem does not come up. But for all those who do it, it is like this, it is as Sri Aurobindo has described it here. And if one wants to do the thing in a solitary way, it is absolutely impossible to do it totally. For every physical being, however complete he may be, is only partial and limited; he represents only one law in the world; it can be a very complex law, but it is only one law; what is called in India, you know, the Dharma, one Truth, one Law.

Each individual being, even if he be of a completely higher kind, even if he is made for an absolutely special work, is only one individual being; that means, the totality of the transformation cannot take place through one single body. And that is why, spontaneously, the multiplication came about.

One can reach, alone and solitary, his own perfection. One can become in one's consciousness infinite and perfect. But when it is a question of a work, it is always limited.

I don't know if you understand me well. But personal realisation has no limits. One can become inwardly in himself perfect and infinite. But the outer realisation is necessarily limited, and if one wants to have a general action, at least a minimum number of physical beings is needed.

In a very old tradition it was said that twelve were enough; but in the complexities of modern life it doesn't seem possible. There must be a representative group. Which means that... you know nothing about it or you don't imagine it very well, but each one of you represents one of the difficulties which must be conquered for the transformation. And this makes many difficulties! (*Mother laughs*) I have written somewhere... I have said that, more than a difficulty, each one represents an impossibility to be solved. And it is the whole set of all these impossibilities which can be transformed into the Work, the Realisation. Each case is an impossibility to be solved, and it is when all these impossibilities are resolved that the Work will be accomplished.

But now I am more gentle. I take away "impossibility" and put "difficulty". Perhaps they are no longer impossibilities.

Only, from the beginning, and still more now that our group has grown so considerably, each time someone comes to tell me, "I come for my

yoga”, I say, “Oh, no! then don’t come. It is much more difficult here than anywhere else.” And the reason is what Sri Aurobindo has written here.

If someone comes to tell me, “I come to work, I come to make myself useful”, it is all right. But if someone comes and says, “I have many difficulties outside, I can’t manage to overcome these difficulties, I want to come here because it will help me”, I say, “No, no, it will be *much* more difficult here; your difficulties will increase *considerably*.” And that is what it means, because they are no longer isolated difficulties; they are collective difficulties.

So in addition to your own personal difficulty you have all the frictions, all the contacts, all the reactions, all the things which come from outside. As a test. Exactly on the weak point, the thing that’s most difficult to solve; it is there that you will hear from someone the phrase which was just the one you did not want to hear; someone will make towards you that gesture which was exactly the one which could shock you; you find yourself facing a circumstance, a movement, a fact, an object, anything at all —just the things which... “Ah, how I should have liked this not to happen!” And it’s that which will happen. And more and more. Because you do not do your yoga for yourself alone. You do the yoga for everybody — without wanting to — automatically.

So when people come and tell me, “I come here for peace, quietness, leisure, to do my yoga”, I say, “No, no, no! go away immediately somewhere else, you will be much more peaceful anywhere else than here.”

If someone comes and says, “Well, here I am, I feel that I should consecrate myself to the divine Work, I am ready to do any work at all that you give me”, then I say, “Good, that’s all right. If you have goodwill, endurance, and some capacity, it is all right. But to find the solitude necessary for your inner development it is better to go somewhere else, *anywhere else*, but not here.” There we are.

I said all this just today; I had the occasion to do so. And at the same time I said, “There is an exception to this rule: that’s the children.” Because here the children have the advantage of living from the time when they are still unconscious, in an atmosphere which helps them to find themselves. And this one doesn’t have outside. I am saying what I just said

to people who are... not necessarily old but still... formed, who are past the age not only of childhood but of their first youth.

21 December 1955

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Sri Aurobindo tells us that a true community — what he calls a gnostic or supramental community — can exist only on the basis of the inner realisation of each of its members, each one realising his real, concrete unity and identity with all the other members of the community, that is, each one should feel not like just one member united in some way with all the others, but all as one, within himself. For each one the others must be himself as much as his own body, and not mentally and artificially, but by a fact of consciousness, by an inner realisation.

(*Silence*)

That means that before hoping to realise this gnostic collectivity, each one should first become — or at least begin to become — a gnostic being. This is obvious; the individual work should go on ahead and the collective work should follow; but it so happens that spontaneously, without any arbitrary intervention of the will, the individual progress is controlled, so to speak, or held back by the collective state. Between the individual and the collectivity there is an interdependence from which one can't totally free oneself, granting that one tries. And even a person who tried in his yoga to liberate himself totally from the terrestrial and human state of consciousness, would be tied down, in his subconscious at least, to the state of the mass, which acts as a brake and actually *pulls* backwards. One can try to go much faster, try to drop all the weight of attachments and responsibilities, but despite everything, the realisation, even of one who is at the very summit and is the very first in the evolutionary march, is dependent on the realisation of the whole, dependent on the state of the terrestrial collectivity. And that indeed *pulls* one back, to such an extent that at times one must wait for centuries for the Earth to be ready, in order to be able to realise what is to be realised.

3 July 1957

The Spiritual Hierarchy

Mother, when one is identified with the Divine in the higher part of the being while neglecting the lower parts — neglecting life — doesn't the Divine, in the part where one is identified with Him, advise one to attend to the lower parts?

And if before even beginning, one has decided that this must not happen, perhaps one makes it impossible for oneself to receive the advice of the Divine!

For, truly speaking, each one finds only what he wants to find of the Divine. Sri Aurobindo has said this by turning it the other way round; he has said — I am not quoting the exact words, only the idea: what you expect from the Divine is what you find in the Divine; what you want from the Divine is what you meet in the Divine. He will have for you the aspect you expect or desire.

And His manifestation is always adapted to each one's receptivity and capacity. They may have a real, essential contact, but this contact is limited by their own capacity for receiving and approach.... It is only if you are able to go out of all limits that you can meet the total Divine as He totally is.

And this capacity for contact is perhaps what constitutes the true hierarchy of beings. For everyone carries within himself the Divine, and therefore everyone has the possibility of uniting with the Divine that possibility is the same in all. But according to each one's capacity — in fact, according to his position in the divine hierarchy his approach will be more or less partial or total.

It could be said — although these words deform things a lot — that the quality of the approach is the same in every being, but the quantity, the totality is very different.... It is very difficult to explain in words, but if one may say so, the *point* at which you are identified with the Divine is perfect in itself, that is to say, your identification is perfect in itself, at this point, but the number of points at which you are identified differs immensely.

And this is very marked in the difference between the paths followed to approach the Divine. Usually people set limits; they limit themselves by

excluding everything that is not exactly the path they have chosen, for this is much easier and they go much faster — relatively. But if instead of following *one* road, you go forward in a sort of movement which could be called spherical, where everything is included, which takes in all the possibilities of approach to the Divine, naturally the result is much more complete — and it is this that Sri Aurobindo calls the integral yoga — but the progress is much more difficult and much slower.

One who chooses the path of knowledge — and even in the path of knowledge a special method, for everyone has his own method — and follows it, eliminating from his consciousness and life all that's not it, advances much more rapidly, for he is in search of only one aspect and this is much more direct, immediate. And so he rejects, rejects, rejects all that is not this, and limits his being just to the path he travels. And the more you want your approach to be integral, naturally the more will it become difficult, complicated, long, laborious.

But he who follows only one path, when he reaches his goal, that is. when he is identified with the Divine, his identification is perfect in itself; that is to say, it is really an identification with the Divine — but it is partial. It is perfect; it is perfect and partial at the same time.

This is very difficult to explain, but it is a fact. He is really identified with the Divine and has found the Divine; he is identified with the Divine — but at one point. And so he who is able to identify himself in his totality with the Divine is necessarily, from the point of view of the universal realisation, on a much higher level of the hierarchy than one who could realise Him only at a single point.

And that is the true meaning of the spiritual hierarchy, this is why there is a whole spiritual hierarchical organisation, otherwise it would have no basis, for from the minute you touch the Divine, you touch Him perfectly: the point at which you touch Him is perfect in itself. And. from this point of view, all who are united with the Divine are equally perfect in their union — but not equally complete, if I may say so.[...]

(*Turning to the child*) In your consciousness there is still the idea that you unite with "Something" which knows more about it than you and will make you recognise your mistake. But that no longer exists after the identification! That is just the first contact, but not the identification.

In identification there is no longer any difference between the one who is identified and what he is identified with: it is the same thing. So long as there is a difference, it is not identification.

I say that by any path whatever and by eliminating all that is not of this path, it is possible for each one to be perfectly identified with the Divine, that is to say, to become the Divine — but at only one point, the point he has chosen. But this point is perfect in itself. I don't say it contains everything, I say it is perfect in itself, that is, the identification is perfect — but it is not total.

They have the full bliss?

Perfect bliss — perfect bliss, eternity, infinity, everything.

Then what's the difference?

The difference exists only in the manifestation. By this identification, whatever it may be, one automatically goes out of the manifestation, except at the point where one is identified. And if, in the path one has followed, the aim is to go out, as for instance with those who seek Nirvana, if it is a going out of the manifestation, well, one goes out of the manifestation, it's the end. And once one goes out of the manifestation, there is no longer any difference or any hierarchy, it is finished, one has gone out of the manifestation. That is it, you understand, everything depends on the goal one pursues. If one goes out of the manifestation, one goes out of the manifestation, then there is no longer a possibility of any hierarchy at all. But as soon as one enters the manifestation, there is a hierarchy. That is to say — if we take the realisation of the supramental world — everybody will not be on the same level and made in the same pattern, and with the same capacity and possibility. It's always this illusion, isn't it, of a sort of indefinite repetition of something which always resembles itself — it is not that. In the realisation, the manifestation, there is a hierarchy of capacity and action, and of manifestation. But if the aim is to go out of the manifestation, then quite naturally, at whatever point you go out, you go out.

It all depends on the ideal one puts before oneself. And while you go out because you have chosen to do so, to enter into Pralaya, there is all the

rest of the universe which continues.... But that's totally immaterial to you. As your aim was to get out of it, you get out of it. But that doesn't mean that the rest also go out! You are the only one to go out, or those who have followed the same aim and the same path as you.

(*Long silence*)

That is precisely the problem which faced Sri Aurobindo here and me in France: should one limit one's path and reach the goal first, and later take up all the rest and begin the work of integral transformation; or should one go step by step, not leaving anything aside, not eliminating anything on the path, taking in all the possibilities at the same time and progressing at all points at the same time? That is to say, should one retire from life and action until one reaches one's goal, becomes conscious of the Supermind and realises it in oneself; or should one embrace the entire creation and with this entire creation gradually go forward towards the Supermind?

(*Silence*)

One can understand that things get done by stages: you go forward, reach one stage, and so, as a consequence, take all the rest forward; and then at the same time, in a simultaneous movement, you reach another stage and again take others forward — and so on.

That gives the impression that you are not moving. But everything is on the move in this way.

1 February 1956

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One can understand *nothing* of the spiritual life if one does not understand the true hierarchy.

Nowadays it's not in fashion. It is something which human thought doesn't favour at all. But from the spiritual point of view, it is automatic, spontaneous and indisputable. And so, if the hierarchy is true, there is a place for everybody; and for each individual in his own place, his

individual truth is absolute. That is to say, each element which is truly in its place has a total and perfect relation with the Divine — in its place. And yet, on the whole, there is a hierarchy which too is quite absolute. But to understand spiritual life one must first understand that; and it isn't very easy.

Everyone can be a perfect expression of the Divine in himself, on condition that he knows his place and keeps to it.

And if they do not know the hierarchy, they cannot know this?

But they don't need to know that they form a hierarchy, it is not necessary to know it. It is only if one wants to physically organise a spiritual society — then one has to materialise the hierarchy. But generally, in the world as it is, there are so many gaps in this hierarchy that it seems a confusion.

The perfect hierarchy is a total hierarchy, and it is not concerned with time and space. But when you want to realise this physically it becomes very difficult. It's like weaving a piece of cloth with lots of holes everywhere; and the holes disturb the general harmony. Always people are missing, steps are missing, pieces are missing on the chess-board — all this is missing. So it looks like a confusion. But if everything were expressed and each thing in its place, it would be a perfect harmony and a perfect hierarchy.

There is somewhere — not in the material universe, but in the manifested universe — this perfect hierarchy; it exists. But it is not yet manifested upon earth.

Perhaps this will be one of the results of the supramental transformation: the world will be ready for a perfect, spontaneous, essentially true hierarchical manifestation — and without any kind of coercion — where everyone will become aware of his own perfection.

Mother, what does a spiritual hierarchy mean exactly? Because when we speak of hierarchy that implies something graded in a superior and inferior order, doesn't it?

Yes, and that's quite wrong. That is to say, materially it is like that. But this is not what I call a hierarchy.

Then what is a hierarchy?

It is the organisation of the functions and the manifestation in action of the particular nature of each person.

We have often tried to find comparisons, but they are worthless. For none of the things we know physically can answer to that condition. There is always the sense of superiority and inferiority as you say.... Some have compared a hierarchy to the various functions of the body, for example. But that always gives the impression that the head is at the top and the feet at the bottom, so it is a nuisance!

Each element is the whole Divine at the same time, then how can we speak of a hierarchy?

Each element has a direct and perfect relation with the Divine.

But can't they become the whole Divine?

Yes, all become the Divine; but not the totality of the Divine, for the Divine is everything. You can't take a piece of the Divine and say, "This is the Divine." And yet, in his spiritual consciousness each one has a perfect relation with the Divine, that is to say, each one is the Divine as perfectly as he can be. But to reconstruct the Divine, all the Divine is necessary. And it is precisely this that constitutes the very essence of hierarchy. But as each one is perfect in himself, there can be no feeling of inferiority or superiority.

I don't think the human mentality can understand that. I think it must be lived; once one has lived it, it is very simple, it appears luminously simple. But to understand it with the mind is not possible, it seems impossible. Above all because the mind, in order to understand anything at all, has to divide and contrast everything, otherwise it does not understand, it gets confused. By its very functioning, it becomes incapable of understanding.

18 January 1956

Realisation of the Psychic Being

Sweet Mother, where does our true spiritual life begin?

The true spiritual life begins when one is in communion with the Divine in the psychic, when one is conscious of the divine Presence in the psychic and in constant communion with the psychic. Then the spiritual life begins, not before. The *true* spiritual life.

When one is united with one's psychic being and conscious of the divine Presence, and receives the impulses for one's action from this divine Presence, and when the will has become a conscious collaborator with the divine Will — that is the starting-point.

Before that, one may be an aspirant to the spiritual life, but one doesn't have a spiritual life.

9 May 1956

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Unless your vision is *constantly* the vision of the Divine in all things, you have not only no right but no capacity to judge the state which others are in. And to pronounce a judgment on someone without having this vision spontaneously, effortlessly, is precisely an example of the mental presumptuousness of which Sri Aurobindo always spoke.... And it so happens that one who has the vision, the consciousness, who is capable of seeing the truth in all things, never feels the need to judge anything whatever. For he understands everything and knows everything. Therefore, once and for all, you must tell yourselves that the moment you begin to judge things, people, circumstances, you are in the most total human ignorance.

In short, one could put it like this: when one understands, one no longer judges and when one judges, it means that one doesn't know.

Judging people is one of the first things which must be totally swept away from the consciousness before you can take even a step on the supramental path, because that is not a material progress or a bodily

progress, it is only a very little progress of thought, mental progress. And unless you have swept your mind clean of all its ignorance, you cannot hope to take a step on the supramental path.[...]

All these ideas of good and evil, good and bad, higher, lower, all these notions belong to the ignorance of the human mind, and if one really wants to come into contact with the divine life, one must liberate oneself totally from this ignorance, one must rise to a region of consciousness where these things have *no* reality. The feeling of superiority and inferiority completely disappears, it is replaced by something else which is of a very different nature — a sort of capacity for filtering appearances, penetrating behind masks, shifting the point of view.

And these are not words, it is altogether true that *everything* changes its appearance, totally, that life and things are completely different from what they appear to be.

All this contact, this ordinary perception of the world loses its reality completely. This is what appears unreal, fantastic, illusory, non-existent. There is something — something very material, very concrete, very physical — which becomes the reality of the being, and which has nothing in common with the ordinary way of seeing. When one has this perception — the perception of the work of the divine force, of the movement being worked out behind the appearance, *in* the appearance, through the appearance — one begins to be ready to live something truer than the ordinary human falsehood. But not before.

There is no compromise, you see. It is not like a convalescence after an illness: you must change worlds. So long as your mind is real for you, your way of thinking something true for you, real, concrete, it proves that you are not there yet. You must first pass through to the other side. Afterwards you will be able to understand what I am telling you.

Pass through to the other side.

It is not true that one can understand little by little, it is not like that. This kind of progress is different. What is more true is that one is shut up in a shell, and inside it something is happening, like the chick in the egg. It is getting ready in there. It is in there. One doesn't see it. Something is happening in the shell, but outside one sees nothing. And it is only when all is ready that there comes the capacity to pierce the shell and to be born

into the light of day.

It is not that one becomes more and more perceptible or visible: one is shut in — shut in — and for sensitive people there is even that terrible sensation of being compressed, of trying to pass through and then coming up against a wall. And then one knocks and knocks and knocks, and one can't go through.

And so long as one is there, inside, one is in the falsehood. And only on the day when by the Divine Grace one can break the shell and come out into the Light, is one free.

This may happen suddenly, spontaneously, quite unexpectedly.

I don't think one can go through gradually. I don't think it is something which slowly wears and wears away until one can see through it. I haven't had an instance of this so far. There is rather a kind of accumulation of power inside, an intensification of the need, and an endurance in the effort which becomes free from all fear, all anxiety, all calculation; a need so imperative that one no longer cares for the consequences.

One is like an explosive that nothing can resist, and one bursts out from one's prison in a blaze of light.

After that one can no longer fall back again.

It is truly a new birth.

26 June 1957

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Many people who are here forget one thing. They want to begin at the end. They think that they are ready to express in their life what they call the supramental Force or Consciousness, and they want to infuse this in their actions, their movements, their daily life. But the trouble is that they don't at all know what the supramental Force or Consciousness is and that first of all it is necessary to take the reverse path, the way of interiorisation and of withdrawal from life, in order to find within oneself this Truth which has to be expressed.

For as long as one has not found it, there is nothing to express. And by

imagining that one is living an exceptional life, one lives only in the illusion of one's exceptional state. Therefore, at first not only must one find one's soul and the Divine who possesses it, but one must identify oneself with it. And then later, one may begin to come back to outward activities, and then transform them; because then one knows in what direction to turn them, into what to transform them.

One can't jump over this stage. One must first find one's soul, this is absolutely indispensable, and identify oneself with it. Later one can come to the transformation. Sri Aurobindo has written somewhere: "Our Yoga begins where the others end." Usually yoga leads precisely to this identification, this union with the Divine — that is why it is called "yoga". And when people reach this, well, they are at the end of their path and are satisfied. But Sri Aurobindo has written: we begin when they finish; you have found the Divine but instead of sitting down in contemplation and waiting for the Divine to take you out of your body which has become useless, on the contrary, with this consciousness you turn to the body and to life and begin the work of transformation — which is very hard labour. It's here that he compares it with cutting one's way through a virgin forest; because as nobody has done it before, one must make one's path where there was none. But to try to do this without having the indispensable directive of the union with the Divine within, within one's soul, is childishness. There.

I am speaking of yoga. I am not speaking of your life, of you all, you children here. That's different. You are here to develop yourselves. And when you are developed and have a precise thought of your own, a vision of your own, when you have enough knowledge to be able to choose freely what life you want to lead, then at that time you will take a decision.

But those who have already taken the decision, well for them it is first of all indispensable to find their soul and unite with their psychic being, and with the Divine who is within it. This is an absolutely indispensable beginning. One can't leap over that bridge, it is not possible. It can be done very quickly if you know how to use the help that's given to you; but it has to be done.

2 November 1955

Why does the divine force upset people?

Because it is too strong for them. It is as though you were in the midst of a big cyclone. It happens at times that the wind is so violent that you are not able to stand — you have to lie down and wait till it blows over. Now, the divine forces are a thousand times stronger than a cyclonic wind. If you do not have in you a very wide receptivity, an extremely solid basis of calmness, of equality of soul and inner peace, they come and carry you away like a gale and you cannot resist them. It is the same thing with light; some people get a pain in the eyes when they look at the sun and are obliged to put on dark glasses because sunlight is too strong for them. But this is merely sunlight. When you are able to look at the supramental light, it appears to you so brilliant that sunlight seems like a black stain in comparison. One must have strong eyes and a solid brain to bear that, one must be well prepared, established in something extremely calm and vast — it is as though one had such a strong basis of tranquillity that when the storm passes, when the light comes with a great intensity, one is able to remain immobile and receive what one can without being knocked over. But there is not one being in a million who can do it. Only those who have had a foretaste of inner experience can know what this means. But even if you enter consciously into the psychic, it is dazzling; and it is within your reach because it is your own psychic being, and yet it is so different from your external consciousness that the first time you enter it consciously, it seems to you truly dazzling, something infinitely more brilliant than the most brilliant sunlight.

The psychic is what may be called “the Divine within the reach of man”.

12 February 1951

A Reversal of Consciousness

There is one phenomenon which obviously seems indispensable if one wants the realisation to become stable.... Experiences come, touch the consciousness, sometimes bring great illuminations, then get blurred, retreat into the background and, outwardly, in your ordinary consciousness, you don't feel that there is a great change, a great difference. And this phenomenon may occur very often, may repeat itself for many years. Suddenly you get a sort of revelation, like an illumination, you are in the true consciousness and have the feeling of having got hold of the real thing. And then, slowly or suddenly, it seems to recede behind you, and you seek but do not find that there is any great change in you.... These things seem to come as heralds or as promises: "See, it will happen", or to tell you, "Well, have faith, it *will be* like that."

And this may recur very often. There is progress, obviously, but it is very slow and hardly apparent.

But then, suddenly — perhaps because one is sufficiently prepared, perhaps simply because the time has come, and it has been so decreed — suddenly, when such an experience occurs, its result in the part of the being where it takes place is a complete reversal of consciousness. It is a very clear, very concrete phenomenon. The best way of describing it is this: a complete reversal. And then the relation of the consciousness with the other parts of the being and with the outer world is as if completely changed. Absolutely like an overturning. And that reversal no longer comes back to the same old place, the consciousness no longer returns to its former position — Sri Aurobindo would say "status". Once this has happened in any part of the being, this part of the being is stabilised.

And until that happens, it comes and goes, comes and goes, one advances and then has the impression of marking time, and one advances again and then marks time again, and sometimes one feels as though one were going backwards, and it is interminable — and indeed it is interminable. It may last for years and years and years. But when this reversal of consciousness takes place, whether in the mind or a part of the mind, whether in the vital or a part of the vital, or even in the physical consciousness itself and in the body-consciousness, once this is

established, it is over; you no longer go back, you do not ever return to what you were before. And this is the true indication that you have taken a step forward definitively. And before this, there are only preparations.

Those who have experienced this reversal know what I am speaking about; but if one hasn't, one can't understand. One may have a kind of idea by analogy, people who have tried to describe yoga compare it with the reversal of a prism: when you put it at a certain angle, the light is white; when you turn it over, it is broken up. Well, this is exactly what happens, that is to say, you restore the white. In the ordinary consciousness there is decomposition and you restore the white. However, this is only an image. It is not really *that*, this is an analogy. But the phenomenon is extremely concrete. It is almost as though you were to put what is inside out, and what is outside in. And it isn't that either! But if you could turn a ball inside-out, or a balloon you can't, can you? — if you could put the inside out and the outside in, it would be something like what I mean.

And one can't say that one "experiences" this reversal — there is no "feeling", it is almost a mechanical fact — it is extraordinarily mechanical. (*Mother takes an object from the table beside her and turns it upside down.*) There would be some very interesting things to say about the difference between the moment of realisation, of *siddhi* like this reversal of consciousness for example — and all the work of development, the *tapasya*; to say how it comes about.... For the sadhana, *tapasya* is one thing and the *siddhi* another, quite a different thing. You may do *tapasya* for centuries, and you will always go as at a tangent — closer and closer to the realisation, nearer and nearer, but it is only when the *siddhi* is given to you... then, everything is changed, everything is reversed. And this is inexpressible, for as soon as it is put in words it escapes. But there is a difference — a real difference, essential, total — between aspiration, the mental tension, even the tension of the highest, most luminous mind, and realisation: something which has been decided above from all time, and is absolutely independent of all personal effort, of all gradation. Don't you see, it is not bit by bit that one reaches it, it is not by a small, constant, regular effort, it is not that: it is something that comes suddenly; it is established without one's knowing how or why, but all is changed.

And it will be like that for everybody, for the whole universe: it goes on and on, it moves forward very slowly, and then one moment, all of a

sudden, *it will be done*, finished — not finished: it's the beginning!

(*Silence*)

It is usually the first contact with the psychic being which brings this experience, but it is only partial, only that *part* of the consciousness — or of the activity in any part of the being — that part of the consciousness which is united with the psychic has the experience. And so, at the moment of that experience, the position of that part of the consciousness, in relation to the other parts and to the world, is completely reversed, it is different. And that is never undone. And if you have the wall or take care or are able to put into contact with this part all the problems of your life and all the activities of your being, all the elements of your consciousness, then they begin to be organised in such a way that your being becomes one unity — a single multiplicity, a multiple unity — complex, but organised and centralised around a fixed point, so well that the central will or central consciousness or central truth has the power to govern *all* the parts, for they are all in order, organised around this central Presence.

It seems to me impossible to escape from this necessity if one wants to be and is to be a conscious instrument of the divine Force. You may be moved, pushed into action and used as *unconscious* instruments by the divine Force, if you have a minimum of goodwill and sincerity. But to become a conscious instrument, capable of identification and conscious, willed movements, you must have this inner organisation; otherwise you will always be running into a chaos somewhere, a confusion somewhere or an obscurity, an unconsciousness somewhere. And naturally your action, even though guided exclusively by the Divine, will not have the perfection of expression it has when one has acquired a conscious organisation around this divine Centre.

It is an assiduous task, which may be done at any time and under any circumstances, for you carry within yourself all the elements of the problem. You don't need anything from outside, no outer aid to do this work. But it requires great perseverance, a sort of tenacity, for very often it happens that there are bad "creases" in the being, habits — which come from all sorts of causes, which may come from atavistic malformation or also from education or from the environment you have lived in or from

many other causes. And these bad creases you try to smooth out, but they wrinkle up again. And then you must begin the work over again, often, many, many, many a time, without getting discouraged, before the final result is obtained. But nothing and nobody can prevent you from doing it, nor any circumstance. For you carry, within yourself the problem and the solution.

(*Silence*)

[...] And what adds to the interest of the thing is that this kind of work, this harmonisation and organisation of the being around the divine Centre can only be done in a physical body and on earth. That is truly the essential and original reason for physical life. For, as soon as you are no longer in a physical body, you can no longer do it *at all*.

And what is still more remarkable is that only human beings can do it, for only human beings have at their centre the divine Presence in the psychic being. For example, this work of self-development and organisation and becoming aware of all the elements is not within the reach of the beings of the vital and mental planes, nor even of the beings who are usually called “gods”; and when they want to do it, when they really want to organise themselves and become completely conscious, they have to take a body.

And yet, human beings come into a physical body without knowing why, most of them go through life without knowing why, they leave their body without knowing why, and they have to begin the same thing all over again, indefinitely, until one day, someone comes along and tells them, “Be careful! you know, there is a purpose to this. You are here for this work, don’t miss your opportunity!”

And how many years are wasted.

6 June 1956

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In fact, so long as there is any doubt or hesitation, so long as one asks oneself the question of whether one has or hasn’t realised this eternal soul

in oneself, it proves that the *true* contact has not taken place. For, when the phenomenon occurs, it brings with it an inexpressible something, so new and so definitive, that doubt and questioning are no longer possible. It is truly, in the absolute sense of the phrase, a new birth.

You become a new person, and whatever may be the path or the difficulties of the path afterwards, that feeling never leaves you. It is not even something — like many other experiences — which withdraws, passes into the background, leaving you externally with a kind of vague memory to which it is difficult to cling, whose remembrance grows faint, blurred — it is not that. You *are* a new person and definitively that, whatever happens. And even all the incapacity of the mind, all the difficulties of the vital, all the inertia of the physical are unable to change this new state — a new state which makes a *decisive* break in the life of the consciousness. The being one was before and the being one is after, are no longer the same. The position one has in the universe and in relation to it, in life and in relation to it, in understanding and in relation to it, is no longer the same: it is a true reversal which can never be undone again. That is why when people tell me, “I would like to know whether I am in contact with my soul or not”, I say, “If you ask the question, that is enough to prove that you are not. You don’t need an answer, you are giving it to yourself.” When it is *that*, it is that, and then it is finished, it is no longer anything else.

And since we are speaking of that, I shall remind you of what Sri Aurobindo has said, repeated, written, affirmed and said over and over again, that his yoga, the integral yoga, can begin *only after* that experience, not before.

So, one must not cherish any illusions and fancy that one can begin to know what the supermind is and form any idea of it or assess it in any way, however minimal, before having had *that* experience.

Therefore, if you want to advance on the path, you must very modestly start on your way towards the new birth, first, and realise it before cherishing the illusion that you can have supramental experiences.

To console you I may tell you that by the very fact that you live on earth at this time — whether you are conscious of it or not, even whether you want it or not — you are absorbing with the air you breathe this new

supramental substance which is now spreading in the earth atmosphere. And it is preparing things in you which will manifest *very suddenly*, as soon as you have taken the decisive step.

(*Silence*)

Whether this will help you to take the decisive step or not is another question which remains to be studied, for the experiences which are occurring and will occur more and more frequently now, being of a radically new kind, we can't know beforehand what is going to happen: we must study, and after a thorough study we shall be able to say with certainty whether this supramental substance makes the work of new birth easier or not.... I shall tell you this a little later. For the moment it is better not to rely on these things and, very simply, to start on your way to be born into the spiritual life.

When this happens to you, almost all the questions you ask yourself or ask me will be solved.

And anyway, your attitude to life will be *so* different that you will understand what is meant when one speaks of living spiritually. And at that moment you will also understand a *great* thing, a very great thing: how to live without ego.

Until then, you cannot understand it. The whole of life is so dependent on the ego that it seems absolutely impossible to live and act except with or by the ego, but after this new birth you can look at the ego with a smile and say to it, "My friend, I don't need you any more."

This is also one of the results which brings you a very decisive sense of liberation.

4 June 1958

Aspiration

Do prayers and aspirations also take a form like thoughts?

Yes. At times they take even the form of the person who has the aspiration or makes the prayer — often. That depends. Aspirations sometimes take the form of that to which one aspires, but most often, and specially prayers, clearly take the form of the one who prays.

What is the difference between prayer and aspiration?

I have written this somewhere. There are several kinds of prayers.

There is the purely mechanical, material prayer, with words which have been learnt and are mechanically repeated. That does not signify anything much. And that has usually only one single result, that of quietening the person who prays, for if a prayer is repeated several times, the words end up by making you calm.

There is a prayer which is a spontaneous formula for expressing something precise which one wants to ask for: one prays for this thing or that, one prays for one thing or another; one can pray for somebody, for a circumstance, for oneself.

There is a point where aspiration and prayer meet, for there are prayers which are the spontaneous formulation of a lived experience: these spring up all ready from within the being, like something that's the expression of a profound experience, and which offers thanksgiving for that experience or asks its continuation or asks for its explanation also; and that indeed is quite close to aspiration. But aspiration is not necessarily formulated in words; or if it is formulated in words, it is almost a movement of invocation. You aspire for a certain state; for instance, you have found something in yourself that is not in keeping with your ideal, a movement of darkness and ignorance, perhaps even of ill-will, something that's not in harmony with what you want to realise; then that is not going to be formulated in words; that will be like a springing flame and like an offering made of a living experience, asking to grow larger, be magnified and ever more and more clear and precise. All that may be put into words

later, if one tries to remember and note down one's experience. But aspiration always springs up like a flame that rises high and carries in itself the thing one desires to be or what one desires to do or desires to have. I use the word "desire", but truly it is here that the word "aspire" should be used, for that does not have either the quality or the form of a desire.

It is truly like a great purifying flame of will, and it carries in its core the thing that asks to be realised.

For instance, if you have done something you regret having done, if that has unhappy consequences which disturb things, and several people are implicated, you do not know the reactions of the others, but you yourself wish that what has been done may take a turn for the best, and that if there is a mistake, it may be understood, and that no matter what the mistake, this may be for you an opportunity for a greater progress, a greater discipline, a new ascent towards the Divine, a door open on a future that you want to be more clear and true and intense; so all this is gathered here (*pointing to the heart*) like a force, and then it surges up and rises in a great movement of ascent, and at times without the shadow of a formulation, without words, without expression, but like a springing flame.

That indeed is true aspiration. That may happen a hundred, a thousand times daily if one is in that state in which one constantly wants to progress and be more true and more fully in harmony with what the Divine Will wants of us.

Prayer is a much more external thing, generally about a precise fact, and always formulated for it is the formula that makes the prayer. One may have an aspiration and transcribe it as a prayer, but aspiration goes beyond prayer in every way. It is much closer and much more as it were self-forgetful, living only in the thing one wants to be or do, and the offering of all that one wants to do to the Divine. You may pray in order to ask for something, you may also pray to thank the Divine for what He has given you, and that prayer is much greater: it may be called an act of thanksgiving. You may pray in gratitude for the aspect of kindness the Divine has shown to you, for what He has done for you, for what you see in Him, and the praise you want to offer Him. And all this may take the form of a prayer. It is decidedly the highest prayer, for it is not exclusively preoccupied with oneself, it is not an egoistic prayer.

Certainly, one may have an aspiration in all the domains, but the very centre of aspiration is in the psychic being, whilst one may pray in all the domains, and the prayer belongs to the domain in which one prays. One may make purely material, physical prayers, vital prayers, mental prayers, psychic prayers, spiritual prayers, and each one has its special character, its special value.

There is a kind of prayer at once spontaneous and unselfish which is like a great call, usually not for one's own self personally, but like something that may be called an intercession with the Divine. It is extremely powerful. I have had countless instances of things which have been realised almost instantaneously due to prayers of this kind. It implies a great faith, a great ardour, a great sincerity, and a great simplicity of heart also, something that does not calculate, does not plan, does not bargain, does not give with the idea of receiving in exchange. For, the majority of men give with one hand and hold out the other to get something in exchange; the largest number of prayers are of that sort. But there are others of the kind I have described, acts of thanksgiving, a kind of canticle, and these are very good.

There you are. I don't know if I have made myself clear, but this is how it is.

To be clearer, we may say that prayer is always formulated in words; but the words may have different values according to the state in which they are formulated. Prayer is a formulated thing and one may aspire. But it is difficult to pray without praying to someone. For instance, those who have a conception of the universe from which they have more or less driven out the idea of the Divine (there are many people of this kind; this idea troubles them — the idea that there is someone who knows all, can do everything and who is so formidably greater than they that there can be no comparison; that's a bit troublesome for their *amour-propre*, so they try to make a world without the Divine), these people evidently cannot pray, for to whom would they pray? Unless they pray to themselves, which is not the custom! But one can aspire for something without having any faith in the Divine. There are people who do not believe in the existence of a God, but who have faith in progress. They have the idea that the world is in constant progress and that this progress will go on indefinitely without stopping, towards an ever greater betterment. Well, these people can have

a very great aspiration for progress, and they don't even need any idea of a divine existence for that. Aspiration necessarily implies a faith but not necessarily faith in a divine being; whilst prayer cannot exist if it is not addressed to a divine being. And pray to what? One does not pray to something that has no personality! One prays to someone who can hear us. If there is nobody to hear us, how could one pray? Hence, if one prays, this means that, even when one doesn't acknowledge it, one has faith in somebody infinitely higher than us, infinitely more powerful, who can change our destiny and change us also, if one prays so as to be heard. That is the essential difference.

So the more intellectual people admit aspiration and say that prayer is something inferior. The mystics tell you that aspiration is all very well but if you want to be really heard and want the Divine to listen to you, you must pray, and pray with the simplicity of a child, a perfect candour, that is, a perfect trust: "I need this or that (whether it be a moral need or a physical or material need), well, I ask You for it, give it to me." Or else: "You have given me what I asked of You, You have made me realise concretely those experiences which were unknown to me and are now marvels I can attain at will; yes, I am infinitely grateful to You and I offer a prayer of thanksgiving to sing Your praise and thank You for Your intervention." It is like that. To aspire it is not necessary to direct the aspiration to someone, towards someone. One has an aspiration for a certain state of being, for knowledge, for a realisation, a state of consciousness; one aspires for something, but it is not necessarily a prayer; prayer is something additional.

Prayer is a personal thing, addressed to a personal being, that is, to something — a force or a being — who can hear you and answer you. Otherwise you can't ask for anything.

8 July 1953

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If you are in a state of conscious aspiration and very sincere, well, everything around you will be arranged in order to help in your aspiration, whether directly or indirectly, that is, either to make you progress, put you

in touch with something new or to eliminate from your nature something that has to disappear. This is something quite remarkable. If you are truly in a state of intensity of aspiration, there is not a circumstance which does not come to help you to realise this aspiration. Everything comes, everything, as though there were a perfect and absolute consciousness organising around you all things, and you yourself in your outer ignorance may not recognise it and may protest at first against the circumstances as they show themselves, may complain, may try to change them; but after a while, when you have become wiser, and there is a certain distance between you and the event, well, you will realise that it was just what you needed to do to make the necessary progress. And, you know, it is a will, a supreme goodwill which arranges all things around you, and even when you complain and protest instead of accepting, it is exactly at such moments that it acts most effectively.

16 June 1954

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What are the conditions in which there is a descent of faith?

The most important condition is an almost childlike trust, the candid trust of a child who is sure that it will come, who doesn't even ask himself about it; when he needs something he is sure that it is going to come. Well, it is this, this kind of trust — this indeed is the most important condition.

To aspire is indispensable. But some people aspire with such a conflict inside them between faith and absence of faith, trust and distrust, between the optimism which is sure of victory and a pessimism which asks itself when the catastrophe will come. Now if this is in the being, you may aspire but you don't get anything. And you say, "I aspired but didn't get anything." It is because you demolish your aspiration all the time by your lack of confidence. But if you truly have trust... Children when left to themselves and not deformed by older people have such a great trust that all will be well ! For example, when they have a small accident, they never think that this is going to be something serious: they are spontaneously convinced that it will soon be over, and this helps so powerfully in putting

an end to it.

Well, when one aspires for the Force, when one asks the Divine for help, if one asks with the unshakable certitude that it will come, that it is impossible that it won't, then it is sure to come. It is this kind... yes, this is truly an inner opening, this trustfulness. And some people are constantly in this state. When there is something to be received, they are always there to receive it. There are others, when there is something to have, a force descends, they are always absent, they are always closed at that moment; while those who have this childlike trust are always there at the right time.

And it is strange, isn't it, outwardly there is no difference. They may have exactly the same goodwill, the same aspiration, the same wish to do good, but those who have this smiling confidence within them, do not question, do not ask themselves whether they will have it or not have it, whether the Divine will answer or not — the question does not arise, it is something understood... "What I need will be given to me; if I pray I shall have an answer; if I am in a difficulty and ask for help, the help will come — and not only will it come but it will manage everything." If the trust is there, spontaneous, candid, unquestioning, it works better than anything else, and the results are marvellous. It is with the contradictions and doubts of the mind that one spoils everything, with this kind of notion which comes when one is in difficulties: "Oh, it is impossible! I shall never manage it. And if it is going to be aggravated, if this condition I am in, which I don't want, is going to grow still worse, if I continue to slide down farther and farther, if, if, if, if..." like that, and one builds a wall between oneself and the force one wants to receive. The psychic being has this trust, has it wonderfully, without a shadow, without an argument, without a contradiction. And when it is like that, there is not a prayer which does not get an answer, no aspiration which is not realised.

17 November 1954

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I remember that once we spoke of courage as one of the perfections; I remember having written it down once in a list. But this courage means having a taste for the supreme adventure. And this taste for supreme

adventure is aspiration — an aspiration which takes hold of you completely and flings you, without calculation and without reserve and without a possibility of withdrawal, into the great adventure of the divine discovery, the great adventure of the divine meeting, the yet greater adventure of the divine Realisation; you throw yourself into the adventure without looking back and without asking for a single minute, “What’s going to happen?” For if you ask what is going to happen, you never start, you always remain stuck there, rooted to the spot, afraid to lose something, to lose your balance.

That’s why I speak of courage — but really it is aspiration. They go together. A real aspiration is something full of courage.

And now, surrender. In English the word is “surrender”, there is no French word which gives exactly that sense. But Sri Aurobindo has said [...] that surrender is the first and absolute condition for doing the yoga. So, if we follow what he has said, this is not just one of the necessary qualities: it is the first attitude indispensable for beginning the yoga. If one has not decided to make a total surrender, one cannot begin. But for this surrender to be total, all these qualities are necessary.[...]

So here’s my proposal: we put surrender first, at the top of the list; that is, we accept what Sri Aurobindo has said — that to do the integral yoga one must resolve to surrender entirely; there is no other way, this is *the* way. But after that one must have the five psychological virtues, five psychological perfections, and we say that these perfections are: Sincerity or Transparency Faith or Trust (Trust in the Divine, naturally)

Devotion or Gratitude Courage or Aspiration Endurance or Perseverance.

25 January 1956

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Aspiration is like an arrow, like this (*gesture*). So you aspire, want *very* earnestly to understand, know, enter into the truth. Yes? And then with that aspiration you do this (*gesture*). Your aspiration rises, rises, rises, rises straight up, very strong and then it strikes against a kind of... how to put

it?... lid which is there,²² hard like iron and extremely thick, and it does not pass through. And then you say, "See, what's the use of aspiring? It brings nothing at all. I meet with something hard and cannot pass!" But you know about the drop of water which falls on the rock, it ends up by making a chasm: it cuts the rock from top to bottom. Your aspiration is a drop of water which, instead of falling, rises. So, by dint of rising, it beats, beats, beats, and one day it makes a hole, by dint of rising; and when it makes the hole suddenly it springs out from this lid and enters an immensity of light, and you say, "Ah, now I understand."

It's like that.

So one must be very persistent, very stubborn and have an aspiration which rises straight upwards, that is, which does not go roaming around here and there, seeking all kinds of things.

Only this: to understand, understand, understand, to learn to know, to be.

When one reaches the very top, there is nothing more to understand, nothing more to learn, one *is*, and it's when one *is* that one understands and knows.

13 July 1955

Surrender

Is not surrender the same as sacrifice?

In our Yoga there is no room for sacrifice. But everything depends on the meaning you put on the word. In its pure sense it means a consecrated giving, a making sacred to the Divine.²³ But in the significance that it now bears, sacrifice is something that works for destruction; it carries about it an atmosphere of negation. This kind of sacrifice is not fulfilment; it is a deprivation, a self-immolation. It is your possibilities that you sacrifice, the possibilities and realisations of your personality from the most material to

²² A "lid" in the subtle body separating the ordinary mental consciousness from the higher levels of consciousness.

²³ The word *sacrifice* is derived from the Latin *sacrum facere*, to make sacred.

the highest spiritual range. Sacrifice diminishes your being. If physically you sacrifice your life, your body, you give up all your possibilities on the material plane; you have done with the achievements of your earthly existence.

In the same way you can morally sacrifice your life: you give up the amplitude and free fulfilment of your inner existence. There is always in this idea of self-immolation a sense of forcing, a constriction, an imposed self-denial. This is an ideal that does not give room for the soul's deeper and larger spontaneities. By surrender we mean not this but a spontaneous self-giving, a giving of all your self to the Divine, to a greater Consciousness of which you are a part. Surrender will not diminish, but increase; it will not lessen or weaken or destroy your personality, it will fortify and aggrandise it. Surrender means a free total giving with all the delight of the giving; there is no sense of sacrifice in it. If you have the slightest feeling that you are making a sacrifice, then it is no longer surrender. For it means that you reserve yourself or that you are trying to give, with grudging or with pain and effort, and have not the joy of the gift, perhaps not even the feeling that you are giving. When you do anything with the sense of a compression of your being, be sure that you are doing it in the wrong way. True surrender enlarges you; it increases your capacity; it gives you a greater measure in quality and in quantity which you could not have had by yourself. This new greater measure of quality and quantity is different from anything you could attain before: you enter into an other world, into a wideness which you could not have entered if you did not surrender. It is as when a drop of water falls into the sea; if it still kept there its separate identity, it would remain a little drop of water and nothing more, a little drop crushed by all the immensity around, because it has not surrendered. But, surrendering, it unites with the sea and participates in the nature and power and vastness of the whole sea.

There is no ambiguity or vagueness in the movement, it is clear and strong and definite. If a small human mind stands in front of the Divine Universal Mind and clings to its separateness, it will remain what it is, a small bounded thing, incapable of knowing the nature of the higher reality or even of coming in contact with it. The two continue to stand apart and are, qualitatively as well as quantitatively, quite different from each other. But if the little human mind surrenders, it will be merged in the Divine

Universal Mind; it will be one in quality and quantity with it; losing nothing but its own limitations and deformations, it will receive from it its vastness and luminous clearness. The small existence will change its nature; it will put on the nature of the greater truth to which it surrenders. But if it resists and fights, if it revolts against the Universal Mind, then a conflict and pressure are inevitable in which what is weak and small cannot fail to be drawn into that power and immensity. If it does not surrender, its only other possible fate is absorption and extinction. A human being, who comes into contact with the Divine Mind and surrenders, will find that his own mind begins at once to be purified of its obscurities and to share in the power and the knowledge of the Divine Universal Mind. If he stands in front, but separated, without any contact, he will remain what he is, a little drop of water in the measureless vastness. If he revolts, he will lose his mind; its powers will diminish and disappear. And what is true of the mind is true of all the other parts of the nature. It is as when you fight against one who is too strong for you — a broken head is all you gain. How can you fight something that is a million times stronger? Each time you revolt, you get a knock, and each blow takes away a portion of your strength, as when one who engages in a pugilistic encounter with a far superior rival receives blow after blow and each blow makes him weaker and weaker till he is knocked out. There is no necessity of a willed intervention, the action is automatic. Nothing else can happen if you dash yourself in revolt against the Immensity. As long as you remain in your corner and follow the course of the ordinary life, you are not touched or hurt; but once you come in contact with the Divine, there are only two ways open to you. You surrender and merge in it, and your surrender enlarges and glorifies you; or you revolt and all your possibilities are destroyed and your powers ebb away and are drawn from you into That which you oppose.

There are many wrong ideas current about surrender. Most people seem to look upon surrender as an abdication of the personality; but that is a grievous error. For the individual is meant to manifest one aspect of the Divine Consciousness, and the expression of its characteristic nature is what creates his personality; then, by taking the right attitude towards the Divine, this personality is purified of all the influences of the lower nature which diminish and distort it and it becomes more strongly personal, more

itself, more complete. The truth and power of the personality come out with a more resplendent distinctness, its character is more precisely marked than it could possibly be when mixed with all the obscurity and ignorance, all the dirt and alloy of the lower nature. It undergoes a heightening and glorification, an aggrandisement of capacity, a realisation of the maximum of its possibilities.

4 August 1929

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Surrender is the decision taken to hand over the responsibility of your life to the Divine. Without this decision nothing is at all possible; if you do not surrender, the Yoga is entirely out of the question. Everything else comes naturally after it, for the whole process starts with surrender. You can surrender either through knowledge or through devotion. You may have a strong intuition that the Divine alone is the truth and a luminous conviction that without the Divine you cannot manage. Or you may have a spontaneous feeling that this line is the only way of being happy, a strong psychic desire to belong exclusively to the Divine: "I do not belong to myself," you say, and give up the responsibility of your being to the Truth. Then comes self-offering: "Here I am, a creature of various qualities, good and bad, dark and enlightened. I offer myself as I am to you, take me up with all my ups and downs, conflicting impulses and tendencies — do whatever you like with me." In the course of your self-offering, you start unifying your being around what has taken the first decision — the central psychic will. All the jarring elements of your nature have to be harmonised, they have to be taken up one after another and unified with the central being. You may offer yourself to the Divine with a spontaneous movement, but it is not possible to give yourself effectively without this unification. The more you are unified, the more you are able to realise self-giving. And once the self-giving is complete, consecration follows: it is the crown of the whole process of realisation, the last step of the gradation, after which there is no more trouble and everything runs smoothly. But you must not forget that you cannot become integrally consecrated at once. You are often deluded into such a belief when, for a day or two, you have a strong movement of a particular kind. You are led to hope that everything

else will automatically follow in its wake; but in fact if you become the least bit self-complacent you retard your own advance. For your being is full of innumerable tendencies at war with one another — almost different personalities, we may say. When one of them gives itself to the Divine, the others come up and refuse their allegiance. "We have not given ourselves," they cry, and start clamouring for their independence and expression. Then you bid them be quiet and show them the Truth. Patiently you have to go round your whole being, exploring each nook and corner, facing all those anarchic elements in you which are waiting for their psychological moment to come up. And it is only when you have made the entire round of your mental, vital and physical nature, persuaded everything to give itself to the Divine and thus achieved an absolute unified consecration that you put an end to your difficulties. Then indeed yours is a glorious walk towards transformation, for you no longer go from darkness to knowledge but from knowledge to knowledge, light to light, happiness to happiness.... The complete consecration is undoubtedly not an easy matter, and it might take an almost indefinitely long time if you had to do it all by yourself, by your own independent effort. But when the Divine's Grace is with you it is not exactly like that. With a little push from the Divine now and then, a little push in this direction and in that, the work becomes comparatively quite easy. Of course the length of time depends on each individual, but it can be very much shortened if you make a really firm resolve. Resolution is the one thing required — resolution is the master-key.

1930-1931

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The most important surrender is the surrender of your character, your way of being, so that it may change. If you do not surrender your very own nature, never will this nature change. It is this that is most important. You have certain ways of understanding, certain ways of reacting, certain ways of feeling, almost certain ways of progressing, and above all, a special way of looking at life and expecting from it certain things — well, it is this you must surrender. That is, if you truly want to receive the divine Light and transform yourself, it is your whole way of being you must offer — offer by opening it, making it as receptive as possible so that the divine

Consciousness which sees how you ought to be, may act directly and change all these movements into movements more true, more in keeping with your real truth. This is infinitely more important than surrendering what one does. It is not what one does (what one does is very important, that's evident) that is the most important thing but what one *is*. Whatever the activity, it is not quite the way of doing it but the state of consciousness in which it is done that is important. You may work, do disinterested work without any idea of personal profit, work for the joy of working, but if you are not at the same time ready to leave this work, to change the work or change the way of working, if you cling to your own way of working, your surrender is not complete. You must come to a point when everything is done because you feel within, very clearly, in a more and more imperious way, that it is this which must be done and in this particular way, and that you do it only because of that. You do not do it because of any habit, attachment or preference, nor even any conception, even a preference for the idea that it is the best thing to do — else your surrender is not total. As long as you cling to something, as long as there is something in you which says, "This may change, that may change, but *that*, that will not change", as long as you say about anything at all, "That will not change" (not that it refuses to change, but because you can't think of its changing), your surrender is not complete.

28 April 1951

Sincerity

"What is the fundamental virtue to be cultivated in order to prepare for the spiritual life?"

I have said this many times, but this is an opportunity to repeat it: it is *sincerity*.

A sincerity which must become total and absolute, for sincerity *alone* is your protection on the spiritual path. If you are not sincere, at the very next step you are sure to fall and break your head. All kinds of forces, wills, influences, entities are there, on the look-out for the least little rift in this sincerity and they immediately rush in through that rift and begin to throw

you into confusion.

Therefore, before doing anything, beginning anything, trying anything, be sure *first of all* that you are not only as sincere as you can be, but have the intention of becoming still more so.

For that is your only protection.

1 August 1956

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Fundamentally, whatever be the path one follows — whether the path of surrender, consecration, knowledge — if one wants it to be perfect, it is always equally difficult, and there is but one way, one only, I know of only one: that is perfect sincerity, but *perfect* sincerity!

Do you know what perfect sincerity is?...

Never to try to deceive oneself, never let any part of the being try to find out a way of convincing the others, never to explain favourably what one does in order to have an excuse for what one wants to do, never to close one's eyes when something is unpleasant, never to let anything pass, telling oneself, "That is not important, next time it will be better."

Oh! it is very difficult. Just try for one hour and you will see how very difficult it is. Only one hour, to be *totally, absolutely* sincere. To let nothing pass. That is, all one does, all one feels, all one thinks, all one wants, is *exclusively* the Divine.

"I want nothing but the Divine, I think of nothing but the Divine, I do nothing but what will lead me to the Divine, I love nothing but the Divine."

Try — try, just to see, try for half an hour, you will see how difficult it is! And during that time take great care that there isn't a part of the vital or a part of the mind or a part of the physical being nicely hidden there, at the back, so that you don't see it (*Mother hides her hands behind her back*) and don't notice that it is not collaborating — sitting quietly there so that you don't unearth it... it says nothing, but it does not change, it hides itself. How many such parts! How many parts hide themselves! You put them in your pocket because you don't want to see them or else they get behind

your back and sit there well-hidden, right in the middle of your back, so as not to be seen. When you go there with your torch — your torch of sincerity — you ferret out all the corners, everywhere, all the small corners which do not consent, the things which say “No” or those which do not move: “I am not going to budge. I am glued to this place of mine and nothing will make me move.”... You have a torch there with you, and you flash it upon the thing, upon everything. You will see there are many of them there, behind your back, well stuck.

Try, just for an hour, try!

12 May 1954

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“The question is to be sincere. If you are not sincere, do not begin Yoga.” (The Mother)

Sincerity is perhaps the most difficult of all things and perhaps it is also the most effective.

If you have perfect sincerity, you are sure of victory. It is infinitely difficult. Sincerity consists in making all the elements of the being, all the movements (whether outer or inner), all the parts of the being, all of them, have one single will to belong to the Divine, to live only for the Divine, to will only what the Divine wills, to express only the divine Will, to have no other source of energy than that of the Divine.

And you find that there is not a day, not an hour, not a minute when you do not need to intensify, rectify your sincerity — a total refusal to deceive the Divine. The first thing is not to deceive oneself. One knows one cannot deceive the Divine; even the cleverest of the Asuras cannot deceive the Divine. But even when one has understood that, one sees that quite often in one’s life, in the course of the day, one tries to deceive oneself without even knowing it, spontaneously and almost automatically. One always gives favourable explanations for all that one does, for one’s words, for one’s acts. That is what happens first. I am not speaking of obvious things like quarrelling and saying, “It is the other one’s fault”, I am speaking of the very tiny things of daily life.[...]

I tell you: If you are sincere in all the elements of your being, to the very cells of your body and if your whole being integrally wants the Divine, you are sure of victory but for nothing less than that. That is what I call being sincere.

25 March 1953

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One must be truly sincere, truly.

One must be ready, if there is something which is clinging, clinging tightly, one must be ready to tear it away completely, without its leaving any trace behind. This is why at times one makes the same mistake and repeats it, until the suffering is sufficiently great to impose a total sincerity. One must not try that method, it is bad. It is bad because it destroys many things, it wastes much energy, spreads bad vibrations. But if one can't do otherwise, well, in the intensity of suffering one can find the will for perfect sincerity.

And there is a moment — in everyone's life there is a moment — when this need for perfect sincerity comes as a definitive choice. There is a moment in one's individual life, also a moment in the collective life when one belongs to a group, a moment when the choice *must* be made, when the purification *must* be done. Sometimes this becomes very serious, it is almost a question of life and death for the group: it *must* make a decisive progress... if it wants to survive.

26 May 1954

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What should be done?... Be sincere.

That's it; always, always, the little worm in the fruit. One tells oneself, "Oh! I can't." It is not true; if one wanted, one could.

And there are people who tell me, "I don't have the will-power." That means you are not sincere. For sincerity is an infinitely more powerful force than all the wills in the world. It can change anything whatever in the

twinkling of an eye; it takes hold of it, grips it, pulls it out — and then it's over.

But you close your eyes, you find excuses for yourself.

The problem recurs all the time.

It comes back because you don't pull it out completely. What you do is, you cut the branch, so it grows again.

It takes different forms.

Yes. Well, you have to take it out every time it comes, that's all — until it doesn't come back any more.

We have spoken about it, where was it?... Oh! it was in *Lights on Yoga*, I think. You push the thing down from one part of your consciousness into another; and you push it down again and then it goes into the subconscious, and after that, if you are not vigilant, you think it is finished, and later from there it shows its face. And next, even when you push it out from the subconscious, it goes down into the unconscious; and there too, then, you must run after it to find it.

But there comes a time when it is over.

Only, one is always in too great a hurry, one wants it to be over very quickly. When one has made an effort, "Oh! well, I made an effort, now I should get the reward for my effort."

In fact, it is because there is not that joy of progress. The joy of progress imagines that even if you have realised the goal you have put before you — take the goal we have in view: if we realise the supramental life, the supramental consciousness — well, this joy of progress says, "Oh! but this will be only a stage in the eternity of time. After this there will be something else, and then after that another and yet another, and always one will have to go further." And that is what fills you with joy. While the idea, "Ah! now I can sit down, it is finished, I have realised my goal, I am going to enjoy what I have done", Oh, how dull it is! Immediately one becomes old and stunted.

The definition of youth: we can say that youth is constant growth and perpetual progress — the growth of capacities, possibilities, of the field of

action and range of consciousness, and progress in the working out of details.

Naturally, someone told me, "So one is no longer young when one stops growing?" I said, "Of course, I don't imagine that one grows perpetually! But one can grow in another way than purely physically."

That is to say, in human life there are successive periods. As you go forward, something comes to an end in one form, and it changes its form.... Naturally, at present, we come to the top of the ladder and come down again; but that's really a shame, it shouldn't be like that, it's a bad habit. But when we have finished growing up, when we have reached a height we could consider as that which expresses us best, we can transform this force for growth into a force which will perfect our body, make it stronger and stronger, more and more healthy, with an ever greater power of resistance, and we shall practise physical training in order to become a model of physical beauty. And then, at the same time, we shall slowly begin and seek the perfection of character, of consciousness, knowledge, powers, and finally of the divine Realisation in its fullness of the marvellously good and true, and of His perfect Love.

There you are. And this must be continuous. And when a certain level of consciousness has been reached, when this consciousness has been realised in the material world and you have transformed the material world in the image of this consciousness, well, you will climb yet one more rung and go to another consciousness — and you will begin again. *Voilà*.

But this is not for lazy folk. It's for people who like progress. Not for those who come and say, "Oh! I have worked hard in my life, now I want to rest, will you please give me a place in the Ashram?" I tell them, "Not here. This is not a place for rest because you have worked hard, this is a place for working even harder than before." So, formerly, I used to send them to Ramana Maharshi.²⁴ "Go there, you will enter into meditation and you will get rest." Now it is not possible, so I send them to the Himalayas; I tell them, "Go and sit before the eternal snows! That will do you good."

11 January 1956

²⁴ The sage Ramana Maharshi had his ashram in Tiruvannamalai, about one hundred kilometers from Pondicherry. He passed away in 1950.

Is it possible for a human being to be perfectly sincere? [...] Is there a mental sincerity, a vital sincerity, a physical sincerity? What is the difference between these sincerities?

Naturally, the principle of sincerity is the same everywhere, but its working is different according to the states of being. As for the first question, one could simply answer: No, not if man remains what he is. But he has the possibility of transforming himself sufficiently to become perfectly sincere.

To begin with, it must be said that sincerity is progressive, and as the being progresses and develops, as the universe unfolds in the becoming, sincerity too must go on perfecting itself endlessly. Every halt in that development necessarily changes the sincerity of yesterday into the insincerity of tomorrow.

To be perfectly sincere it is indispensable not to have any preference, any desire, any attraction, any dislike, any sympathy or antipathy, any attachment, any repulsion. One must have a total, integral vision of things, in which everything is in its place and one has the same attitude towards all things: the attitude of true vision. This programme is obviously very difficult for a human being to realise. Unless he has decided to divinise himself, it seems almost impossible that he could be free from all these contraries within him. And yet, so long as one carries them in himself, one cannot be perfectly sincere. Automatically the mental, the vital and even the physical working is falsified. I am emphasising the physical, for even the working of the senses is warped: one does not see, hear, taste, feel things as they are in reality as long as one has a preference. So long as there are things which please you and others which don't, so long as you are attracted by certain things and repulsed by others, you cannot see things in their reality; you see them through your reaction, your preference or your repulsion. The senses are instruments which get out of order, in the same way as sensations, feelings and thoughts. Therefore, to be sure of what you see, what you feel, what you experience and think, you must have a complete detachment; and this is obviously not an easy task. But until then your perception cannot be wholly true, and so it is not sincere.

Naturally, this is the maximum. There are crass insincerities which everybody understands and which, I believe, it is not necessary to dwell upon, as for example, saying one thing and thinking another, pretending that you are doing one thing and doing another, expressing a wish which is not your real wish. I am not even speaking of the absolutely glaring lie which consists in saying something different from the fact, but even that diplomatic way of acting which consists in doing things with the idea of obtaining a certain result, in saying something and expecting it to have a certain effect; every combination of this kind which naturally makes you contradict yourself, is a kind of insincerity gross enough for everybody to easily recognise.

But there are others more subtle which are difficult to discern. For instance, so long as you have sympathies and antipathies, quite naturally and as it were spontaneously you will have a favourable perception of what is sympathetic to you and an unfavourable perception of what — or whom — you dislike. And there too the lack of sincerity will be flagrant. However, you may deceive yourself and not perceive that you are being insincere. Then in that case, you have, as it were, the collaboration of mental insincerity. For it is true that there are insincerities of slightly different types according to the state of being or the parts of the being. Only, the origin of these insincerities is always a similar movement arising from desire and the seeking of personal ends — from egoism, from the combination of all the limitations arising from egoism and all the deformations arising from desire.

In fact, as long as the ego is there, one cannot say that a being is perfectly sincere, even though he is striving to become sincere. One must pass beyond the ego, give oneself up totally to the divine Will, surrender without reserve and without calculation... then one can be perfectly sincere, but not before.

That does not mean that one should not make an effort to be more sincere than one is, saying to oneself, "All right, I shall wait for my ego to disappear in order to be sincere", because one may reverse the terms and say that if you do not try sincerely your ego will never disappear. Therefore, sincerity is the basis of all true realisation, it is the means, the path — and it is also the goal. Without it you are sure to make innumerable blunders and you have constantly to redress the harm you have done to

yourself and to others.

There is, besides, a marvellous joy in being sincere. Every act of sincerity carries in itself its own reward: the feeling of purification, of soaring upwards, of the liberation one gets when one has rejected even one tiny particle of falsehood.

Sincerity is the safeguard, the protection, the guide, and finally the transforming power.

19 December 1956

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The only thing that is truly effective is the change of consciousness; it is the inner liberation through an intimate, constant union, absolute and inevitable, with the vibration of the supramental forces. The preoccupation of every second, the will of all the elements of the being, the aspiration of the entire being, including all the cells of the body, is this union with the supramental forces, the divine forces. And there is no longer any need at all to be preoccupied with what the consequences will be. What has to be in the play of the universal forces and their manifestation will be, quite naturally, spontaneously, automatically, there is no need to be preoccupied with it. The only thing that matters is the constant, total, complete contact — constant, yes, constant — with the Force, the Light, the Truth, the Power, and that ineffable delight of the supramental consciousness.

That is sincerity. All the rest is an imitation, it is almost a part one plays for oneself.

Perfect purity is *to be*, to be ever more and more, in a self-perfected becoming. One must never pretend that one *is*: one must *be*, spontaneously.

This is sincerity.

12 June 1957

Transformation of the Body

When one wants to change something of the material life, whether the character or the functioning of the organs or habits, one must have an unfaltering perseverance, be ready to begin again a hundred times the same thing with the same intensity with which one did it the first time and as though one had never done it before.

People who are touchy cannot do this. But if one can't do it, one can't do yoga, in any case not the integral yoga, one can't change one's body.

To change one's body one must be ready to do millions of times the same thing, because the body is a creature of habits and functions by routine, and because to destroy a routine one must persevere for years.

30 March 1955

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And that is why the work seems... interminable. And yet this is the only way it can be done. The road to be covered between the usual state of the body, the almost total unconsciousness to which we are accustomed because we are "like that", and the perfect awakening of consciousness, the response of all the cells, all the organs, all the functionings... between the two there seem to be centuries of labour. However, if one has learnt to open, to aspire, give oneself up, and if one can make use of these same movements in the body, teach the cells to do the same thing, then things go much faster. But much faster does not mean fast; it is still a long and slow work. And each time that an element which has not entered the movement of transformation wakes up to enter it, one feels that everything must be started again — all that one believed had been done must be done once more. But it is not true, it is not the same thing that one does again, it is something similar in a new element which was either forgotten or else left aside because it was not ready, and which, now that it is ready, awakens and wants to take its place. There are many elements like that....

The body seems to you to be something very simple, doesn't it? It is a body, it is "my" body, and after all it has a single form — but it is not like

that! There are hundreds of combined entities unaware of each other, all harmonised by something deeper which they do not know, and having a perception of unity only because they are not conscious of the multiplicity of the elements and their divergence.

In fact, this multiplicity and divergence are the cause of most disorders and even illnesses. Something is going well, you have caught the guiding thread, you are following your path, you think you are going to get a result, and then, suddenly, there! — something happens quite unexpectedly, you did not know it was there: it wakes up and insists on joining the march. But it creates a terrible disorder and you must begin everything over again.

The sadhana of all the inner beings, inner domains, has been done by many people, has been explained at length, systematised by some, the stages and paths have been traced out and you go from one stage to another, knowing that it has to be like that; but as soon as you go down into the body, it is like a virgin forest.... And everything is to be done, everything is to be worked out, everything is to be built up. So you must arm yourself with *great* patience, *great* patience, and not think that you are good for nothing because it takes so much time. You must never be despondent, never tell yourself, "Oh! this is not for me!" Everyone can do it, if he puts into it the time, the courage, the endurance and the perseverance that are demanded. But all this is needed. And above all, above all, never lose heart, be ready to begin the same thing again ten times, twenty times; a hundred times — until it is really done.

And one often feels that unless *everything is* done, unless the work is finished, well, it is as if one had done nothing.

25 June 1958

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We speak of transformation vaguely, in this way; it gives us the impression of something that is going to happen which will see to it that all is well — I think it comes to that approximately. If we have difficulties, the difficulties will disappear; those who are ill — their illness will vanish; and again, if there are physical shortcomings, these will disappear, and so on. But it is all very hazy, it's just an impression.

There is something quite remarkable: the physical consciousness, the body-consciousness, cannot know a thing with precision, in all its details, except when it is *on the point* of being realised. And this will be a sure indication when, for instance, one can understand the process: through what sequence of movements and transformations will the total transformation come about? in what order, in what way, to put it thus. What will happen first? What will happen later? — all that, in all its details. Each time you see a detail with exactitude, it means that it is on the point of being realised.

One can have the vision of the whole. For instance, it is quite certain that the transformation of the body-consciousness will take place first, that a progress in the mastery and control of all the movements of the body will come next, that this mastery will gradually change (here it becomes more vague), gradually, into a sort of transformation of the movement itself: alteration and transformation — all that is certain. But what must happen in the end, what Sri Aurobindo has spoken about in one of his last articles²⁵ in which he says that even the organs will be transformed, in the sense that they will be replaced by centres of concentration of forces (of concentration and action of forces) of different qualities and kinds which will replace all the organs of the body — that, my children, is much more distant, that is, it is something which... one cannot yet grasp the means of doing it. Take, for instance, the heart: by what means is this function of the heart which makes the blood flow through the whole body going to be replaced by a concentration of forces? By what means will the blood be replaced by a certain kind of force, and all the rest? By what means will the lungs be replaced by another concentration of forces, and what forces, and with what vibrations, and in what way?... All that will come much later. It cannot yet be realised. One can have an inkling of it, foresee it, but...

For the body, to know is to have the power to do. I shall give you an example that's just at hand. You do not know a gymnastic movement except when you do it. Don't you see, when you have done it well, you know it, understand it, but not before that. Physical knowledge is the power of doing. Well, that applies to everything, including transformation.

²⁵ "The Divine Body", written in 1949.

A certain number of years must pass before we can speak with knowledge of how this is going to happen, but all that I can tell you is that it has begun.

21 April 1954

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So, if one has resolved to transform the body, well, one must wait with all the necessary patience — three hundred years, five hundred years, a thousand years, it does not matter — the time needed for the change. As for me, I see that three hundred years is a minimum. To tell you the truth, with the experience I have of things, I think it is truly a minimum.

Just imagine. You have never thought about what it means, have you? How is your body built? In a purely animal way, with all the organs and all the functions. You are absolutely dependent: if your heart stops for even the thousandth part of a second, you are gone and that's the end. The whole thing works and works automatically without your conscious will (happily for you, for if you had to supervise the functioning, it would have gone the wrong way long ago). All that is there. Everything is necessary, because it was organised in that manner. You cannot do without an organ, at least totally; there must be something in you representing it.

Transformation implies that all this purely material arrangement is replaced by an arrangement of concentrations of force having certain types of different vibrations substituting each organ by a centre of conscious energy moved by a conscious will and directed by a movement coming from above, from higher regions. No stomach, no heart any longer, no circulation, no lungs, no... All this disappears. But it is replaced by a whole set of vibrations representing what those organs are symbolically. For the organs are only the material symbols of centres of energy; they are not the essential reality; they simply give it a form or a support in certain given circumstances. The transformed body will then function through its *real* centres of energy and not any longer through their symbolic representatives such as were developed in the animal body. Therefore, first of all you must know what your heart represents in the cosmic energy and what the circulation represents and what the stomach and the brain

represent. To begin with, you must first be conscious of all that. And then, you must have at your disposal the original vibrations of that which is symbolised by these organs. And you must slowly gather together all these energies in your body and change each organ into a centre of conscious energy which will replace the symbolic movement by the real one....

You believe it will take only three hundred years to do that? I believe it will take much more time to have a form with qualities which will not be exactly those we know, but will be much superior: a form that one naturally dreams to see plastic: as the expression of your face changes with your feelings, so the body will change (not the form but within the same form) in accordance with what you want to express with your body. It can become very concentrated, very developed, very luminous, very sane, with a perfect plasticity, with a perfect elasticity and a lightness as one wills... Have you never dreamt of giving a kick to the ground and then soaring into the air, flying away? You move about. You push a little with your shoulder, you go this way; you push again, you go that way; and you go wherever you like, quite easily; and finally when you have finished you come back, enter your body. Well, you must be able to do that with your body, and also certain things related to respiration — but there will no longer be lungs; there's a true movement behind, a symbolic movement which gives you this capacity of lightness; you do not belong any longer to the system of gravitation, you escape it. And so for each organ.

There is no end to imagination: to be luminous whenever one wants it, to be transparent whenever one wants it. Naturally there is no longer any need of any bones also in the system; it is not a skeleton with skin and viscera, it is another thing. It is concentrated energy obeying the will. This does not mean that there will no longer be any definite and recognisable forms; the form will be built by qualities rather than by solid particles. It will be, if one may say so, a practical or pragmatic form; it will be supple, mobile, light at will, in contrast to the fixity of the gross material form.

So, to change this into what I have just described, I believe three hundred years are truly very little. It seems many more than that are needed. Perhaps with a very, very, very concentrated work...

Three hundred years with the same body?

Well, there is change, it is no longer the same body.

But, you see, when our little humanity says three hundred years with the same body, you say: "Why! when I am fifty it already begins to decompose, so at three hundred it will be a horrible thing!" But it is not like that. If it is three hundred years with a body that goes on perfecting itself from year to year, perhaps when the three hundredth year is reached one will say: "Oh! I still need three or four hundred more to be what I want to be." If each year that passes represents a progress, a transformation, one would like to have more and more years in order to be able to transform oneself more and more. When something is not exactly as you want it to be — take, for example, simply one of the things I have just described, say, plasticity or lightness or elasticity or luminosity, and none of them is exactly as you want it, then you will still need at least two hundred years more so that it may be accomplished, but you never think: "How is it? It is still going to last two hundred years more!" On the contrary, you say: "Two hundred years more are *absolutely* necessary so that it may be truly done." And then, when all is done, when all is perfect, then there is no longer any question of years, for you are immortal.

But there are many objections that may be raised. It may be said that it would be impossible for the body to change unless something changes in the surroundings also. What would be your relation with other objects if you have changed so much? With other beings also? It seems necessary that a whole set of things changes, at least in relative proportions, so that one can exist, continue to exist. This then brings much complication, for it is no longer one individual consciousness that has to do the work, it becomes a collective consciousness. And so it is much more difficult still.

20 May 1953

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And mark that your idea of what ought to be is so infinitely far off from what will be, that, by this very fact, even if you try to see in the most complete way possible, you will leave behind such a large portion of the universe that it will be almost a linear realisation, and in any case so small, so narrow, that the greater part of the universe will remain unchanged. And

even if you have a very vast view of the whole, even if you can conceive of something more total and you go ahead on the path which is ready — for it is with paths as it is with beings, some are ready — without having the patience to wait for others, that is, if you wish to realise something very close to the true Truth in comparison with the present state of the world, what will happen? — the dislocation of a certain unity, a rupture not only of harmony but of equilibrium, for there will be an entire part of the creation which will not be able to follow. And instead of a complete realisation of the Divine, you will have a small localised realisation, infinitesimal, and nothing will be done of what finally ought to be done.

Consequently, you should not be impatient, should not be disappointed, depressed, discouraged if the truth you have seen is not immediately realised. Naturally, it is not a question of being down-hearted or grieved or in despair if you have made a mistake, for every mistake can be corrected; from the moment you have found it is a mistake, there is an opportunity to work within you, to make progress and be very happy! But the situation is much more serious and more difficult to overcome when you have seen something true, absolutely, essentially true, and the state of the universe is such that this truth is not yet ripe for realisation. I do not say this happens to many people, but perhaps it may happen to you, and it is then you have to have a great patience, a great understanding, and say to yourself, "It was true, but it was not completely true", that is, it was not a truth in keeping with all the other truths and, above all, not in keeping with the present possibilities; so we tried to realise it too quickly, and because we tried to be too quick it was belied. But do not say it was false because it was belied; say it was premature, that is all you can say — what you saw was true, but it was premature, and you must, with much patience and perseverance, keep your little truth intact for the moment when it will be possible to realise it.

The final victory is for the most patient.

17 February 1951

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The secret is to emerge from the ego, get out of its prison, unite ourselves with the Divine, merge into Him, not to allow anything to separate us from Him. Then, once one has discovered this secret and realises it in one's being, pain loses its justification and suffering disappears. It is an all-powerful remedy, not only in the deeper parts of the being, in the soul, in the spiritual consciousness, but also in life and in the body.

There is no illness, no disorder which can resist the discovery of this secret and the putting of it into practice, not only in the higher parts of the being but in the cells of the body.

If one knows how to teach the cells the splendour that lies within them, if one knows how to make them understand the reality which makes them exist, gives them being, then they too enter the total harmony, and the physical disorder which causes the illness vanishes as do all other disorders of the being.

But for that one must be neither cowardly nor fearful. When the physical disorder comes, one must not be afraid; one must not run away from it, must face it with courage, calmness, confidence, with the certitude that illness is a *falsehood* and that if one turns entirely, in full confidence, with a complete quietude to the divine Grace, It will settle in these cells as It is established in the depths of the being, and the cells themselves will share in the eternal Truth and Delight.

13 February 1957

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In the very, very old traditions — there was a tradition more ancient than the Vedic and the Chaldean which must have been the source of both — in that ancient tradition there is already mention of a “glorious body” which would be plastic enough to be transformed at every moment by the deeper consciousness: it would express that consciousness, it would have no fixity of form. It mentioned luminosity: the constituent matter could become luminous at will. It mentioned a sort of possibility of weightlessness which would allow the body to move about in the air only by the action of will-power and by certain processes of control of the inner energy, and so on. Much has been said about these things.

I don't know if there ever were beings on earth who had partially realised this, but in a very small way there have been partial instances of one thing or another, examples which go to prove that it is possible. And following up this idea, one could go so far as to conceive of the replacement of material organs and their functioning as it now is, by centres of concentration of force and energy which would be receptive to the higher forces and which, by a kind of alchemy, would use them for the necessities of life and the body. We already speak of the different "centres" in the body — this knowledge is very widespread among people who have practised yoga — but these centres could be perfected to the point where they replace the different organs by a direct action of the higher energy and vibrations on matter. Those who have practised occultism well enough, in its most integral form, it could be said, know the process of materialisation of subtle energies and can put them in contact with physical vibrations. Not only is it something that can be done, but it is something which *is* done. And all that is a science, a science which must itself be perfected, completed, and which will obviously be used for the creation and setting in action of new bodies which will be able to manifest the supramental life in the material world.

17 April 1957

CHAPTER 19

The Supramental

There are people who love adventure. It is these I call, and I tell them this: "I invite you to the great adventure."

It is not a question of repeating spiritually what others have done before us, for our adventure begins beyond that. It is a question of a new creation, entirely new, with all the unforeseen events, the risks, the hazards it entails — a *real adventure*, whose goal is certain victory, but the road to which is unknown and must be traced out step by step in the unexplored. Something that has never been in this present universe and that will *never* be again in the same way. If that interests you... well, let us embark. What will happen to you tomorrow — I have no idea.

One must put aside all that has been foreseen, all that has been devised, all that has been constructed, and then... set off walking into the unknown. And — come what may! There.

10 July 1957

Towards the Supramental

In order to know what the Supramental Realisation will be like, the first step, the first condition is to know what the supramental consciousness is. All those who have been, in one way or another, in contact with it have had some glimpse of the realisation to be. But those who have not, can yet aspire for that realisation, just as they can aspire to get the supramental knowledge. True knowledge means awareness by identity: once you get in touch with the supramental world, you can say something about its descent, but not before. What you can say before is that there will be a new creation upon earth; this you say through faith, since the exact character of it escapes you. And if you are called upon to define realisation, you may declare that, individually speaking, it means the transformation of your ordinary human consciousness into the divine and supramental.

The consciousness is like a ladder: at each great epoch there has been one great being capable of adding one more step to the ladder and reaching a place where the ordinary consciousness had never been. It is possible to attain a high level and get completely out of the material consciousness; but then one does not retain the ladder, whereas the great achievement of the great epochs of the universe has been the capacity to add one more step to the ladder without losing contact with the material, the capacity to reach the Highest and at the same time connect the top with the bottom instead of letting a kind of emptiness cut off all connection between the different planes. To go up and down and join the top to the bottom is the whole secret of realisation, and that is the work of the Avatar. Each time he adds one more step to the ladder there is a new creation upon earth.... The step which is being added now Sri Aurobindo has called the Supramental; as a result of it, the consciousness will be able to enter the supramental world and yet retain its personal form, its individualisation and then come down to establish here a new creation. Certainly this is not the last, for there are farther ranges of being; but now we are at work to bring down the supramental, to effect a reorganisation of the world, to bring the world back to the true divine order. It is essentially a creation of order, a putting of everything in its true place; and the chief spirit or force, the Shakti active at present is Mahasaraswati, the Goddess of perfect organisation.

The work of achieving a continuity which permits one to go up and down and bring into the material what is above, is done inside the consciousness. He who is meant to do it, the Avatar, even if he were shut up in a prison and saw nobody and never moved out, still would he do the work, because it is a work in the consciousness, a work of connection between the Supermind and the material being. He does not need to be recognised, he need have no outward power in order to be able to establish this conscious connection. Once, however, the connection is made, it must have its effect in the outward world in the form of a new creation, beginning with a model town and ending with a perfect world.

1930-1931

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Mother, you have said there are many intermediary planes between the mental and the supramental, and that if an ordinary man came in contact with one of these intermediate planes, he would be dazzled.

Why then, since man is in such an undeveloped condition, do we speak of the descent of the supramental plane, instead of the descent of the intermediate planes?

For a very simple reason, because till now the whole physical, material world, the whole earth (let us take the earth) has been ruled by forces and the consciousness that come from what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind. Even what men call God is a force, a power coming from the Overmind and the whole universe was under the rule of the Overmind. To get there one has to pass through many intermediate planes and very few people can reach there without getting dazzled. But what Sri Aurobindo said is that now the time for the “rule” of the Overmind is coming to its end and is going to be replaced by the rule of the Supermind. All who have had spiritual experiences and have discovered the Divine and become united with him, know what it is, the Overmind. But what Sri Aurobindo says is that beyond the Overmind there is something and that it is now the turn of this something to come and rule the earth, to manifest upon earth and rule the earth. Therefore, there is no need to speak of the Overmind, for many people have spoken about it already and have had the experience of it; whereas this is something new that is going to manifest itself in a new way and nobody has been aware of it before. That is why.

The old accounts — there’s no lack of people who have experienced these things or described them, or of books written on the subject. There is no need to repeat once more what others have said. Sri Aurobindo came to say something new. And it is precisely because people are unable to come out of the experiences they have known and heard being spoken of, that they try to identify this Force which Sri Aurobindo called supramental with their experience of the intermediary worlds including the Overmind. For they cannot conceive that there could be something else.... Sri Aurobindo always said that his Yoga began where the former Yogas ended, that to be able to realise his Yoga it was necessary first of all to have reached the extreme limit of what the older Yogas had realised, that is to say, the perception of the Divine, the union, the identification with the Divine. But that Divine, Sri Aurobindo says, is the Divine of the Overmind

which is already something quite unthinkable, in comparison with the human consciousness, because even to reach there one must pass through several planes and in these planes one feels dazzled.

There are beings of the vital, if they appeared to men, or to say things more exactly, whenever they have appeared to men, men have taken them for the supreme God — these vital entities! If you like, we shall call that a disguise but it is a very successful disguise, because those who saw it were thoroughly convinced that they had seen the supreme Godhead. And yet, they were but beings of the vital. And these entities of the Overmind, these overmental gods are mighty entities in comparison with our humanity. When human beings come in relation with them, they become truly bewildered.

There is however a kind of Grace which makes it possible for us to profit by the experience of others. It is something similar to the way of teaching the sciences. If each scientist had to do all over again all the experiments of the past in order to arrive at a new discovery, go over all that the others had found, he would have to spend his whole life in that and there would be no time left to make his new discovery! Now one doesn't need to do all that: one opens a book and sees the results and starting from there can proceed further. Well, Sri Aurobindo wanted to do the same thing. He tells you where you can find the results of what others before him have found — the experiments they made and their results — and where you stand: historically where you stand in the spiritual history of the world. And then he takes you from there, and after the basis has been firmly laid for you, he makes you climb higher up the mountain.

30 September 1953

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What do you mean by a “divine way of life”?

We always call “divine” all that we are not but wish to be. All that seems to us infinitely superior, not only to all that we have done, but to all that we feel we can do; all that surpasses both our conception and our present possibilities, we call “divine”.

I say this not as a joke, but because I am quite convinced that if we go back some thousands of years, when men spoke of the Divine — if ever they did speak of the Divine, as I believe — they spoke perhaps of a state like that of the godheads of the Overmind; and now this mode of being of the Overmind godheads who, obviously, have governed the earth and formed many things on earth for a very long time, seems to us far inferior to what we conceive the Supermind to be. And this Supermind, which is, precisely, what we now call the Divine and try to bring down on earth, will probably strike us in the same way a few thousand or million years hence as the Overmind does today.

And I am sure that in the manifestation, that is, in His self-expression, the Divine is progressive. Outside the manifestation He is something we cannot conceive; but as soon as He manifests in this kind of perpetual becoming, well, He manifests more and more of Himself, as though He were reserving for the end the most beautiful things in His Being.

As the world progresses, what He expresses in the world becomes what we might call more and more divine.

So Sri Aurobindo has used the word Supermind to explain to those who are in the outer and evolutionary consciousness and who have some idea of the way in which the earth has developed — to explain to them that this something which is going to be beyond all this, and superior to human creation, to man, whom he always calls the mental being — this something which is going to come will be greater and better than man; and so he calls it supramental in order to make himself understood. But we could just as well say that it is something more divine than what has been manifested before.

And this he himself says, in what I read today, that it is infinite, that it has no limits.²⁶ That is to say, there will always be a growing perfection; and what now seems to us imperfect must have been the perfection for which certain ages in earth's history aspired.

There is no reason why this should stop. If it stopped, it would be finished. It would be a new Pralaya.

25 January 1956

²⁶ "In a certain sense it may be an error to speak of a goal anywhere in a progression which may well be infinite."

There is a state of consciousness which may be called “gnostic”, in which you are able to see *at the same time* all the theories, all the beliefs, all the ideas men have expressed in their highest consciousness — the most contradictory notions, like the Buddhistic, the Vedantic, the Christian theories, all the philosophical theories, all the expressions of the human mind when it has managed to catch a little corner of the Truth — and in that state, not only do you put each thing in its place, but everything appears to you marvellously true and quite indispensable in order to be able to understand anything at all about anything whatsoever. [...] Anatole France said in one of his books: “So long as men did not try to make the world progress, all went well and everybody was satisfied — no worry about perfecting oneself or perfecting the world, consequently all went well. Therefore the worst thing is to want to make others progress; let them do what they like and don’t bother about anything, that will be much more wise.” On the contrary, others tell you: “There is a Truth to be attained; the world is in a state of ignorance and one must at all costs, in spite of the difficulty of the way, enlighten man’s consciousness and pull him out of his ignorance.” But I tell you that there is a state of consciousness in which both the ways of seeing are absolutely equally true. Naturally, if you take only two aspects, it is difficult to see clearly; one must be able to see all the aspects of the truth glimpsed by the human intelligence and... something more. And then, in that state, nothing is absolutely false, nothing is absolutely bad. In that state one is free from all problems, all difficulties, all battles and everything appears to you wonderfully harmonious.

But if you try to imitate this condition mentally — do you understand? to make a mental imitation of it — you may be sure of doing stupid things; you will be one of those who have a chaos in their head and can say the most contradictory things without even being aware of it.

In that condition there is no contradiction — it is a totality and a totality in which one has the full knowledge of all the truths expressed (which are not sufficient to express the total Truth), in which one knows the respective places of all things, why and of what the universe is formed. Only — I hasten to tell you this — it is not by a personal effort that one

reaches this condition; it is not because one tries to obtain it that one obtains it. You *become* that, spontaneously. It is, if you like, the crowning of an absolute mental sincerity, when you no longer have any partiality, any preference, any attachment to an idea, when you do not even try any longer to know the truth.

You are simply open in the Light, that's all.

I am telling you this, this evening, because what is done, what has been realised by one can be realised by others. It is enough that one body has been able to realise that, one human body, to have the assurance that it *can* be done. You may consider it still very far off, but you can say, "Yes, the gnostic life is certain, because it has begun to be realised."

26 February 1951

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Because until now evil has been opposed by weakness, by a spiritual force without any power for transformation in the material world, this tremendous effort of goodwill has ended only in deplorable failure and left the world in the same state of misery and corruption and falsehood. It is on the *same* plane as the one where the adverse forces are ruling that one must have a greater power than theirs, a power which can conquer them totally in *that very domain*. To put it otherwise, a spiritual force which would be capable of transforming both the consciousness and the material world. This force is the supramental force. What is necessary is to be receptive to its action on the physical plane, and not to run away into a distant Nirvana leaving the enemy with full power over what one abandons.

It is neither sacrifice nor renunciation nor weakness which can bring the victory. It is only Delight, a delight which is strength, endurance, supreme courage. The delight brought by the supramental force. It is much more difficult than giving everything up and running away, it demands an infinitely greater heroism — but that is the only way to conquer.

2 January 1957

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Here it is written: “It is very unwise for anyone to claim prematurely to have possession of the supermind or even to have a taste of it.” (Sri Aurobindo)

What is a foretaste of the supermind?

It is still more unwise to imagine that one has it. That's it. Yes, because some people, as soon as they find a phrase in a book, in a teaching, immediately imagine that they have realised that. So, when Sri Aurobindo began speaking about the supermind — in what he was writing — everyone wrote to him: “I have seen the supramental Light, I had an experience of the supermind!” Now, it is better to keep the word “supermind” for a later time. For the moment let us not speak about it.

Somewhere he has written a very detailed description of all the mental functions accessible to man. Well, when we read this, we say that merely to traverse the mental domain to its highest limit there are so many stages which have not yet been crossed that truly we don't need to speak about the supermind for the time being.

When he speaks of the higher ranges of the mind, one becomes aware that one very rarely lives in these places. It is very rare for one to be in this state of consciousness. On the contrary it is in what he calls the altogether ordinary mind, the mind of the ordinary man, that we live. And to the ordinary consciousness the reason seems to belong to a very high region; and the reason for him is one of the average faculties of the human mind. There are mental regions very much higher than that, which he has described in detail. And it is quite certain that those correspondents, if they had... Suddenly they said that they were having wonderful supramental experiences, because one is rarely in these regions which lie beyond the reason, which are regions of direct perception, intuition and other faculties of intuition of the same kind, which go far beyond the reason; and these are still mental regions, they have nothing of the supramental.

Mother, you said that between the supermind and the mind there are many stages, didn't you? And it is written that the next logical stage in the evolution of Nature is the superman. Why not a race which is...

Intermediary? We shall see that later.

Does this mean that from the mind we can go to the supermind without passing through the intermediary stages?

I did not say that they were between the mind and the supermind. I said it is in the mind itself, without coming out of the mind, that there are all these regions which are almost inaccessible for most human beings. I did not say *between* the mind and supermind. [...] Before reaching the extreme limit of the mind, there are so many regions and mental activities which are not at all accessible to most human beings. And even for those who can reach them, they are not regions where they constantly live. They must make an effort of concentration to get there and they don't always arrive. There are regions which Sri Aurobindo has described which only very rare individuals can reach, and still he speaks of them as mental regions. He does not use for them the word supramental.

It can very well happen — besides, when he spoke of the supermind he said that there are many regions in the supermind itself and that it would naturally be the first ones, the lowest regions, which would manifest to begin with — it can very well happen that there are still a number of intermediary states of being, this is possible — intermediary stages.

Certainly the perfect race will not come spontaneously. Very probably not. But already, even the first attempts... in comparison with the present human being, it will make a great difference, great enough for one to feel that this is something miraculous.

It can very well happen that the first supramental manifestations will be altogether incomplete. But even to these, man as he is at present will seem something absolutely gross. There is no halt in the universal development and even the thing which would seem at a certain time absolutely perfect and finished, will still be only a stage for future manifestations. But men very much like to sit down and say, "Now I have done what I had to do."

But the universe is not like that; it does not sit down, it does not rest, it always goes on. One can never say, "Now it is over, I close the door and that's all." One may shut the door but then one cuts himself off from the universal movement. Expressions are always relative, and the first being which is no longer a human animal but begins to be a divine human, a divine man, will seem something absolutely marvellous, even if he is still very incomplete as the perfect type of this new race. One must get

accustomed to living in a perpetual movement. There is something which likes very much — perhaps it is necessary for facilitating the action — to fix a goal and say, “This indeed is the end”, but not at all. “This is perfection” — there is no absolute perfection. All things are always relative and constantly they are changing.

24 November 1954

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I think that [the manifestation of the supramental] will happen the moment there is a sufficiently large number of consciousnesses which feel absolutely that it cannot be otherwise. Now, most people, the immense majority among you have to make an effort to imagine what it will be, and at best, speculate upon it and perhaps hope that this transformation will make things more pleasing, more pleasant — something like that. But your consciousness is so attached to what is, that it even finds it difficult to imagine that things can be otherwise. And until what must be becomes for a sufficiently big group of consciousnesses an inevitable necessity, and all that has been and all that still is at present appears like an absurdity which cannot last... it is at that moment that this [manifestation] can take place, not before.

There remains a problem, namely, whether it is something which can take place and will take place individually before occurring collectively. It is probable. But no individual realisation can be complete nor even approach this perfection if it is not in harmony with at least a group of consciousnesses representative of a new world. In spite of everything there is so great an interdependence of the individual and the collectivity, that the individual realisation, despite all, is limited, impoverished by the irresponsible atmosphere — if I may say so — of what surrounds it. And it is certain that the entire terrestrial life has to follow a certain curve of progress, so that a new world and a new consciousness can manifest. And that is why I said at the beginning that it depends at least partially on you.

Have you ever tried to picture what this new consciousness could be and what a new race could be like, and finally what a new world could be like?

By analogy, it is quite obvious that the arrival of man upon earth has changed the earth-condition. I cannot say that from a certain point of view this was for the greatest good of all, because there are many who have suffered terribly from it, and here it is obvious that the complications the human being has brought into life have not always been very favourable either for him or for others. But from a certain point of view this has brought about a considerable progress, even in the lower species: man meddled with the life of animals, he meddled with the life of plants, he meddled with the life of metals, of minerals; as I said, it was not always for the greatest joy of those he dealt with, but still it certainly changed their conditions of life considerably. Well, in the same way, it is probable that the supramental being, whatever it might be, will considerably change the life of the earth. In our heart and our thought we hope that all the evils the earth suffers from will be at least ameliorated if not cured, and that the general conditions will be more harmonious, and in any case more tolerable. This may happen, because it was the very nature of the mental consciousness which incarnated in man, who acted for his own satisfaction, with his own development in view, and without much consideration for the consequences of his actions. Perhaps the Supermind will act more harmoniously. In any case we hope so. That is how we conceive of it.

But I am asking you, in turn, a question: have you thought of it? Have you thought of what it could be? [...]

It is certain that for a very long time, perhaps from the very beginning (not the beginning from the evolutionary standpoint, because there were periods of intermediate beings who were much nearer the animal than the true man), when this human form was developed enough and ready to receive something from above, when the first beings of the higher worlds incarnated in human forms, from that time there were always individuals who carried in themselves this need for eternity and the absolute. But it was something individual. And it is only gradually and very progressively, through consecutive periods of light and darkness, that in the whole of humanity something has awakened to the need of a higher good.

It is quite obvious that now, through all the swirlings and all the stupidities, there is an awakening need, almost a kind of sensation of what this [the supramental manifestation] could and should be — which means

that the time is near. For a very long time it has been said, “It will be, it will be”, and it was promised... thousands and thousands of years ago they had already begun to promise that there would be a new consciousness, a new world, something divine which would manifest upon earth, but it was said, “It will be, it will be”, like that; they spoke of ages, eons, thousands and millions of years. They did not have this sensation which we now have, that it must come, that it is very close. Of course human life is very short and there is a tendency to wish to shorten the distances so that they may be in proportion to the dimensions; but in spite of all, there will come a moment when it happens... there will be a time when it happens, there will be a time when the movement swings over into a new reality... There was a time when the mental being could manifest upon earth. The starting point might have been poor, very incomplete, very partial, but all the same there was a starting point. Why can't it be now?... That's all.

Perhaps if those who from the beginning have proclaimed that it would be, those very people say, “It is going to be...”, after all, perhaps they are the best informed. I am considering how from the beginning of the earth's history (we shall not go farther back to the antecedents, you know, for we have already enough to do with the earth), from the beginning of the earth's history, in one form or another, under one name or another, Sri Aurobindo has always presided over the great terrestrial transformations; and so when he tells you, “Well, this is the right time”, perhaps he knows. That's all that I can say.

So, if it is the right time, this is how the problem is put: there are people who are ready or will become ready, and these precisely will be the first to start on the new path. There are others who, perhaps, will become aware of it too late, who will have missed the opportunity; I think there will be many of this kind. But in any case, my point of view is this: even if there should be only half a chance, it would be worth the trouble of trying. For after all... I don't know... I told you just now, there is a moment when life such as it is, the human consciousness such as it is, seems something absolutely impossible to bear, it creates a kind of disgust, repugnance: one says, “No, it is not that, it is not that; it can't be that, it can't continue.” Well, when one comes to this, there is only to throw in one's *all* — all one's effort, all one's strength, all one's life, all one's being — into this chance, if you like, or this exceptional opportunity that is given to cross

over to the other side. What a relief to set foot on the new path, that which will lead you elsewhere! This is worth the trouble of casting behind much luggage, of getting rid of many things in order to be able to take that leap. That's how I see the problem.

In fact it is the sublimest of adventures, and if one has in him in the slightest the true spirit of adventure, it is worth risking all for all. But those who are afraid, who wonder, "Am I not going to let go the substance for the shadow?" according to the most banal proverb one can imagine, those who tell themselves, "Bah! after all it is better to profit by what one has than to risk losing everything, we don't know what is going to happen tomorrow, let us take precautions"... unfortunately this is very widespread, extremely widespread... well, about those who are in this state of mind, I can assure you of one thing: that even when the thing occurs before their very nose, they will not perceive it. They will say, "It is good, in this way I won't regret anything." It is possible. But perhaps later they will; this we do not know.

In any case what *I* call being sincere is this: if one thinks that this new realisation is the only thing which is truly worth being lived; if what is, is intolerable — not only for oneself, perhaps not so much for oneself... but still, if one is not absolutely selfish and mean, one feels that, truly, it has lasted long enough, that one has had enough of it, that it must change — well, when one feels like that, one takes everything, all that one is, all that one can, all that one has, and one throws oneself into it completely without ever looking behind, and come what may! I indeed feel that it would be preferable even to plunge into an abyss in this way than to be on the shore, trembling and wondering, "What will happen to me tomorrow if I take this rather rash step?" There we are.[...]

In fact, the only thing which is very important for the moment is the change of consciousness. And don't think that this is so easy. If you observe yourself attentively, you will perceive that you think, feel, experience and construct like a human animal, that is, like an infrarational being who is three-fourths subconscious, through almost the whole of your day. It is possible that at certain moments you escape from this; but you still need an effort to escape from it. It may happen spontaneously, as by grace, at certain moments; but most of the time you have to make an effort to be able to catch something which is not purely this.[...]

Mother, the appearance of mental man was gradual, wasn't it, from the animal to man?

That... There was all the same a time when it became a man, isn't that so? I told you that, from the standpoint of evolution it seems like that. I indeed am not very well up in all this, you see, I can't tell you how it happened, at least not what science thinks it knows about what happened. I can tell you only what I know.

Well, there was a time when what we call the human form, that is, with human capacities, was ready enough for a being with mental consciousness, entirely conscious, to be able to incarnate in it — and this indeed was truly the first man. Now, historically at what time this happened I can't tell you; but it was a very long time ago. Sometime ago I came across some numbers, which seemed to me to be absolutely reasonable and accurate — but that was extremely long ago. And for a very long time it was like... a kind of vast and quiet state, as when the sea has reached high-tide and spreads out and is calm. It remained calm like that for a very, very, very long time; and it was only after very long that what we call human activity and human civilisation began to take place, and for this, even from the beginning of this till today... we have figures, haven't we, approximately...? (*turning to Pavitra*) Pavitra, do you know them?

(Pavitra) I don't remember them now.

There are figures, but they are quite enormous. And this is only the period that can be called historic — though it isn't so, ordinarily reckoning — but still, they have discovered signs, documents, indications, something which can give you an idea of the time. Well, all this happened only very long after the first mental consciousness incarnated in a human form, which had become sufficiently human, you see, to become a man; and probably before this form was produced there must have been numerous trials of Nature which spread out, perhaps over thousands and thousands and millions of years. I don't know. But there was a time, as I said, when this mental consciousness was able to come and take possession of a form. After this, as I also told you, for very, very long... in order that this form could adapt itself and perfect itself sufficiently to express this

consciousness completely, a very, very, very long time was necessary — that is understood. Well, it is more than probable (not more than probable, certain), that it will happen again in the same way.

There will come a time when a human consciousness is in the required state for a supralmental consciousness to be able to enter this human consciousness and manifest.

But it is possible that before this becomes a new race like the human race, it may take very, very long. And it will be done progressively. But as I say, there is one thing: when it happens, it will happen. It does not happen, does not stretch out like a rubber band, you see; there is a time when it happens, when the descent takes place, the fusion occurs, the identification comes about. It can be done in a flash. There is a moment when it occurs. Later it may take very, very, very long; one must not hope that overnight one is going to see supermen springing up here and there. No, it won't be like that. Only, those who will have done what I have said, those who will have thrown themselves in entirely, risked all for all, those will know it. But they will be the only ones to know; they will know when it takes place.

The others will not be able even to see?

The others? They will not even be aware of it! They will continue their stupid life, without knowing what has happened.

*But all the same, they will be able to see this superman before them.
What will be the altitude of the superman towards man?*

What is the attitude of man towards the animal? No, let us hope that he [the superman] is a little more kind! (*Laughter*)

But you must not delude yourself. For the supralmental consciousness man is truly stupid. Yes, even with all his perfections, all his realisations, all that, even with all his accomplishments, well, he seems *terribly* stupid. Only, that's no reason for ill-treating him. But I don't think that the superman will ill-treat anyone, just because he will have a consciousness which will be able to pass behind appearances. Let us hope that he will be quite kind.

(Pavitra) What will be man's attitude towards the superman?

Ah! (Laughter) Let us hope that it is not the same attitude as the one which man has towards all his gods, because he has rather ill-treated them. His prophets and his gods, he has put them upon the cross, he has stoned them, has burnt them alive — indeed, man has behaved rather badly with all those who came to preach a new life to him. Let us hope that man becomes a little more reasonable... Now he would put them in prison.

12 October 1955

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If there is some manifestation [of a new world], will it be purely spiritual, that is, will only those who do yoga be able to perceive it, or will there be any consequences in the world of facts?

My child, why do you put this in the future?

There have already been, for years, extraordinary, fantastic consequences in the world. But to see this, one must have a little knowledge; otherwise one takes them for quite normal and ordinary things — because one doesn't even know how they happen.

So perhaps this will be exactly the same thing; there are likely to be tremendous changes, fantastic actions, and, well, people will say, "But this — naturally, it is like that", because they don't know how it comes about.

An action in the world? — It is constant. It is something which spreads and acts everywhere, gives out everywhere new impulsions, new orientations, new ideas, new acts of will — everywhere. But still, as one does not see how it happens, one thinks it "quite natural", as they say.

It is quite natural, but with another naturalness than that of ordinary physical Nature.

Indeed, it is quite logical to say that one must be conscious of the Spirit to be able to perceive the work of the Spirit. If you are not conscious of the Spirit, how will you be able to see it at work? Because the result of what the Spirit does is necessarily material in the material world; and as it is material, you find it quite natural. What do you know of what Nature does,

and what do you know of what the Spirit does? All that Nature does — I am speaking of physical Nature we know very little about it, almost nothing, since we have to constantly learn things which upset all that we thought we knew before. And so, how to distinguish between what is purely the work of Nature and the work of the Spirit through Nature? One should know how to distinguish the one from the other. And how to distinguish them when one's consciousness is not quite limpid and sure of what the Spirit is? How to recognise It, and how to see Its Work? This seems to me very simple logic.

The world will go on. Things will happen. And perhaps there will be a handful of men who will know how they were done. That's all.

And if today one were suddenly precipitated, without any transition, into the world as it was, let us say, two or three thousand years ago; oh ! even less than that perhaps — one or two thousand years ago it would be such a suffocating contrast that probably very few people would be able to bear it. But as this came about "like that", with the amiable slowness of Nature, with all her fantasies, one finds it quite natural and doesn't even notice it.

It is not an image, it is not just fine words when it is said that if one enters the true consciousness, if one changes one's consciousness, well, the world itself changes for you. And it is not only an appearance or an impression: one sees differently than one does in the ordinary consciousness; relations are different, causes are different, effects are different. And instead of seeing only something which is not transparent — one cannot see what's behind, it is a surface, a crust; it is only this one sees and one can't even see what moves it, what makes it exist — everything is turned inside out, and it is that which appears artificial and unreal, and almost nonexistent. And so, when one sees things in this way, normally, you know, without straining oneself, without having to practise meditation and concentration and make strenuous efforts to see things like this, when it is one's normal, natural vision, then one understands things in a completely different way — naturally, the world is different!

4 January 1956

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“The supramental world has to be formed or created in us by the Divine Will as the result of a constant expansion and self-perfected.”
(Sri Aurobindo)

That is to say, to hope to receive, use and form in oneself a supramental being, and consequently a supramental world, there must first of all be an expansion of consciousness and a *constant* personal progress: not to have sudden flights, a little aspiration, a little effort, and then fall back into somnolence. This must be the *constant* idea of the being, the *constant* will of the being, the *constant* effort of the being, the *constant* preoccupation of the being.

If for five minutes in the day you happen to remember that there is something in the universe like the supramental Force, and that, after all, “it would be nice if it manifested in me”, and then all the rest of the time you are thinking of something else and are busy with other things, there is not much chance that it would come and do any serious work in you. Sri Aurobindo says this quite clearly and precisely. He does not tell you that *you* will do it, he says it is the Divine Will. So don’t come and say, “Ah! I can’t.” No one is asking you to do it. But there *must be* enough aspiration and adhesion in the being to make the expansion of the being, the expansion of consciousness possible. For to tell the truth, everybody is small, small, small, so small that there is not enough room to put any supramental in! It is so small that it is already quite filled up with all the ordinary little human movements. There must be a great widening to make room for the movements of the Supermind.

And then there must also be an aspiration for progress: not to be satisfied with what one is, how one is, what one does, what one knows or thinks one knows; but to have a constant aspiration for something more, something better, for a greater light, a vaster consciousness, a truer truth and a more universal goodness. And over and above all this, a goodwill which never fails.

That can’t be done in a few days.[...]

However, there is a very great difference, always, between a kind of mental curiosity which plays with words and ideas, and a true aspiration of the being which means that truly, really, it is *that* which counts, essentially, and nothing else — that aspiration, that inner will because of which

nothing has any value except *that*, that realisation; nothing counts except *that*; there is no other reason for existence, for living, than *that*.

And yet it is this that's needed if one wants the Supramental to become visible to the naked eye.

And mark that I am not speaking of a physical transformation, for this everyone knows: you don't expect to become luminous and plastic overnight, to lose your weight, be able to displace yourself freely, appear in a dozen places at the same time and what not.... No, I believe you are reasonable enough not to expect this to happen right away. It will take some time.

But still, simply, the working of the consciousness, simply a certain self-mastery, a control over one's body, a direct knowledge of things, a capacity of identification and a clear vision — instead of that hazy and vague sight which sees only the mere appearances that are so deceptive, so unreal, so fossilised — a more direct perception, an inner perception, this ought to be able to come and come quickly if one has prepared oneself.

Simply to have that feeling that the air one breathes is more living, the strength one has more lasting. And instead of always groping like a blind man to know what should be done, to have a clear, precise, inner intimation: it is this — not that: *this*.

These are things one can acquire immediately if one is ready.

27 June 1956

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Will it take long for the Supermind which is involved in material Nature to emerge into the outer consciousness and bring visible results?

That depends on the state of consciousness from which one answers, for... For the human consciousness, obviously, I think it will take quite a long time. For another consciousness it will be relatively very fast, and for yet another consciousness, it is already accomplished. It is an accomplished fact. But in order to become aware of this, one must be able to enter into

another state of consciousness than the ordinary physical consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo has spoken — I believe I have read it to you, I think it's in *The Synthesis of Yoga* — of the true mind, the true vital and the true physical or subtle physical, and he has said that they coexist with the ordinary mind, vital and physical, and that in certain conditions one may enter into contact with them, and then one becomes aware of the difference between what really is and the appearances of things.

Well, for a developed consciousness, the Supermind is already realised somewhere in a domain of the subtle physical, it already exists there visible, concrete, and expresses itself in forms and activities. And when one is in tune with this domain, when one lives there, one has a very strong feeling that this world would only have to be condensed, so to say, for it to become visible to all. What would then be interesting would be to develop this inner perception which would put you into contact with the supramental truth which is already manifested, and is veiled for you only for want of appropriate organs to enter into relation with it.

It is possible that those who are conscious of their dreams may have dreams of a new kind which put them into contact with that world, for it is accessible to the subtle physical of all those who have the corresponding organs in themselves. And there is necessarily a subtle influence of this physical on outer matter, if one is ready to receive impressions from it and admit them into one's consciousness.

5 September 1956

The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth

(The Mother stated that the consciousness which Sri Aurobindo and she called the Supramental manifested upon earth on 29 February 1956. In April of that year she gave two messages regarding this manifestation:

“The manifestation of the Supramental upon earth is no more a promise, but a living fact, a reality.

“It is at work here, and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognise it.”

“Lord, Thou hast willed and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.”)

Sweet Mother, you have said: The Supramental has descended upon earth. What does that mean exactly? You have also said: “The things that were promised are fulfilled.” What are these things?

Ah, that's ignorance indeed! This was promised a very long time ago, this was said very long ago — not only here — since the beginning of the earth. There have been all kinds of predictions, by all kinds of prophets; if has been said, “There will be a new heaven and a new earth, a new race will be born, the world will be transformed....” Prophets have spoken about this in all the traditions.

You have said, “They are fulfilled.” Where is the new race?

The new race? Wait for something like... a few thousand years, and you will see it!

When the mind descended upon earth, between the time the mind manifested in the earth-atmosphere and the time the first man appeared, nearly a million years elapsed. Now it will go faster because man expects it, he has a vague idea; he is expecting in some sense the advent of the superman, while, certainly, the apes did not expect the birth of man, they

had never thought of it — for the good reason that they probably don't think much. But man has thought of it and awaits it, so it will go faster. But faster means still thousands of years probably. We shall speak about it again after a few thousand years!

(*Silence*)

People who are inwardly ready, who are open and in contact with higher forces, people who have had a more or less direct personal contact with the supramental Light and Consciousness are able to feel the difference in the earth-atmosphere.

But for that... Only the like can know the like, only the supramental Consciousness in an individual can perceive this Supermind acting in the earth-atmosphere. Those who, for some reason or other, have developed this perception, can see it. But those who are not even conscious of an inner being — just slightly within — and who would be quite at a loss to say what their soul is like, these certainly are not ready to perceive the difference in the earth-atmosphere. They still have a long way to go for that. Because, for those whose consciousness is more or less exclusively centred in the outer being — mental, vital and physical — things need to take on an absurd and unexpected appearance for them to be able to recognise them. Then they call them miracles.

But the constant miracle of the intervention of forces which changes circumstances and characters and has a very widespread result, this they do not call a miracle, for only the mere appearance is seen and this seems quite natural. But, truly speaking, if you were to reflect upon the least little thing that happens, you would be obliged to acknowledge that it is miraculous.

It is simply because you don't reflect upon it that you take things as they are, for what they are, without questioning; otherwise every day you would have any number of occasions to tell yourself, "Really, but this is quite astonishing! How did it happen?"

Quite simply, it is a habit of seeing things in a purely superficial way.

2 May 1956

Mother; when mind descended into the earth-atmosphere, the apes had not made any effort to change into man, had they? It was Nature which provided the effort. But here...

But it is not man who is going to change himself into superman!

No?

Just try! (Laughter)

That's it, you see, it is something else which is going to work.

So, we are...

Only — yes, there is an only, I don't want to be so cruel: Now MAN CAN COLLABORATE. That is to say, he can lend himself to the process, with goodwill, with aspiration, and help as best he can. And that is why I said it would go faster. I hope it will go *much* faster.

But even so, much faster is still going to take a little time!

(*Silence*)

Listen. If all of you who have heard about this, not once but perhaps hundreds of times, who have spoken about it yourselves, thought of it, hoped for it, wanted it — there are people who came here for that, with the intention of receiving the supramental Force and being transformed into supermen — that was their aim, wasn't it?... But how is it that all of you were so unfamiliar with this Force that when it came you didn't even feel it?

Can you solve this problem for me? If you have the solution to this problem, you will have the solution to the difficulty.

I am not speaking of people from outside who have never thought of this, never been concerned with it, and who don't even know that there is something like a Supermind to be received, you understand. I am speaking of those who have based their life on this aspiration — and I do not doubt their sincerity, not for a moment — who have worked, some for thirty years, some for thirty-five, some a little less, who have done everything saying, "When the Supermind comes..."

When the Supermind comes... ", that was the refrain, "When the Supermind comes..." Therefore, they were truly in the best possible state, one couldn't dream of a better. How is it that the inner preparation was so — let us say simply — so incomplete, that when the Vibration came they did not immediately feel it with the impact of identity?

Individually, the aim of each one was to prepare himself, to enter into a more or less close individual relation with this Force, to help; or, if they could not help, at least to be ready when the Force would manifest, to recognise it and open to it. And instead of being an alien element in a world where what you carry within yourself is not manifested, you suddenly become *that*, you enter straight in, fully, into this very atmosphere: it is this Force that is there, surrounding you, penetrating you.

If you had had even a little inner contact, immediately you would have recognised it, wouldn't you?

Well, anyway, that is what happened to those who had a little inner contact; they recognised it, felt it; they said, "Ah! here it is, it has come." But how is it, then, that so many hundreds of people, not to speak of the small handful of those who truly wanted nothing but that, thought of nothing but that, had staked their whole life on that, how is it that they did not feel anything? What can this mean?

Of course, it is only like that knows like. That is an obvious fact.

There was a possibility of coming into contact with the Thing individually — Sri Aurobindo had even described it as the necessary process: a certain number of people who, through their inner effort and aspiration, enter into contact with this Force. That was what we used to call the ascent to the Supermind. And so, even if it were by an inner ascent — that is to say, by freeing themselves from the material consciousness — if by an inner ascent they had touched the Supermind, they should *naturally* have recognised it the moment it came. But it was indispensable to have had a previous contact: if they had not touched it, how could they have recognised it?

That is to say, the universal movement is like that — I read that to you some days ago — certain individuals, who are the pioneers, the vanguard, through inner effort and inner progress enter into communication with the new Force which is to manifest and receive it into themselves. And then,

as there are calls of this kind, the thing is made possible, and the age, the time, the moment of the manifestation comes. This is how it happened — and the Manifestation took place.

But, then all those who were ready must have recognised it.

I hasten to tell you that there are some who did recognise it, but still[...]

Mother, a statement has gone round here, very recently — it says, “What has just happened, with this Victory, is not a descent but a manifestation. And it is more than an individual event: the Supermind has emerged into the universal play.”

Yes, yes, yes. In fact I said all this, I acknowledge it. So?

They say, “The supramental principle is at work...”

But I have just explained all this to you at length (*Mother laughs*), this is terrible!

What I call a “descent” is this: first the consciousness rises in an ascent, you catch the Thing up there, and come down with it. That is an *individual* event.

When this individual event has happened in a way that proves sufficient to create a possibility of a general kind, it is no longer a “descent”, it is a “manifestation”.

What I call a descent is the individual movement, in an individual consciousness. And when it is a new world manifesting in an old world — just as, for a comparison, when mind spread upon the earth — I call that a manifestation.

You may call it whatever you like, it's all the same to me, but we should understand each other.

What I call a descent is in the individual consciousness. Just as one speaks of ascent — there is no ascent, you see: there is neither above nor below nor any direction, it is a way of speaking — you speak of ascent when you have the feeling of rising up towards something; and you call it a descent when, after having caught that thing, you bring it down into yourself.

But when the gates are open and the flood comes in, you can't call it a descent. It is a Force which is spreading out. Understood?... Ah!

It's all one to me, the words you use. I am not particularly attached to words, but I explain them to you, and it is better to understand each other, for otherwise there is no end to explanations.

Now, to people who ask you these insidious questions, you may reply that the best way of receiving anything whatever is not to pull, but to give. If they want to give themselves to the new life, well, the new life will enter into them.

But if they want to pull the new life down into themselves, they will close their door with their own egoism. That's all.

2 May 1956

A New World Is Born

It is quite difficult to free oneself from old habits of being and to be able to freely conceive of a new life, a new world. And naturally, the liberation begins on the highest planes of consciousness: it is easier for the mind or the higher intelligence to conceive of new things than for the vital beings, for instance, to feel things in a new way. And it is still more difficult for the body to have a purely material perception of what a new world will be. Yet this perception must *precede* the material transformation; first one must *feel* very concretely the strangeness of the old things, their lack of relevance, if I may say so. One must have the feeling, even a material impression, that they are outdated, that they belong to a past which no longer has any purpose. For the old impressions one had of past things which have become historic — which have their interest from that point of view and support the advance of the present and the future — this is still a movement that belongs to the old world: it is the old world that is unfolding with a past, a present, a future. But for the creation of a new world, there is, so to speak, only a continuity of transition which gives an appearance —an impression rather — the impression of two things still intermingled but almost disconnected, and that the things of the past no longer have the power or the strength to endure, with whatever modifications, in the new things. That other world is necessarily an

absolutely new experience.

One would have to go back to the time when there was a transition from the animal to the human creation to find a similar period, and at that time the consciousness was not sufficiently mentalised to be able to observe, understand, feel intelligently — the passage must have been made in a completely obscure way. So, what I am speaking about is absolutely new, *unique* in the terrestrial creation, it is something unprecedented, truly a perception or a sensation or an impression... that is quite strange and new.

(*After a silence*) A disconnection: something which has overstayed its time and has only quite a subordinate force of existence, from something totally new, but still so young, so imperceptible, almost weak, so to say; it hasn't yet the power to impose and assert itself and to predominate, to take the place of the other. So there is a concomitance but, as I said, with a disconnection, that is, the connection between the two is missing.

It is difficult to describe, but I am speaking to you about it because this is what I felt yesterday evening. I felt it so acutely... that it made me look at certain things, and once I had seen them I felt it would be interesting to tell you about them.

(*Silence*)

It seems strange that something so new, so special and I might say so unexpected should happen during a film-show.²⁷ For people who believe that some things are important and other things are not, that there are activities which are helpful to yoga and others which are not, well, this is one more opportunity to show that they are wrong. I have always noticed that it is unexpected things which give you the most interesting experiences.

Yesterday evening, suddenly something happened which I have just described to you as best I could — I don't know if I have succeeded in

²⁷ Film-shows were often held at the Ashram Playground. The Mother attended most of them. The film described here was a Bengali movie, *Rani Rasmani*, which narrates the life of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Rani Rasmani, the rich widow who built in 1847 the Kali temple at Dakshineshwar, near Calcutta. Sri Ramakrishna lived there for most of his life.

making myself understood — but it was truly quite new and altogether unexpected. We were shown, comparatively clumsily, a picture of the temple on the banks of the Ganges, and the statue of Kaliand while I was seeing that, which was a completely superficial appearance and, as I said, rather clumsy, I saw the reality it was trying to represent, what was behind, and this put me in touch with all that world of religion and worship, of aspiration, man's whole relationship with the gods, which was — I am already speaking in the past tense — which was the flower of the human spiritual effort towards something more divine than man, something which was the highest and almost the purest expression of his effort towards what is higher than he. And suddenly I had *concretely, materially*, the impression that it was another world, a world that had ceased to be real, living, an outdated world which had lost its reality, its truth, which had been transcended, surpassed by something which had taken birth and was only beginning to express itself, but whose *life* was so *intense*, so true, so sublime, that all this became false, unreal, worthless.

Then I truly understood — for I understood not with the head, the intelligence but with the body, you understand what I mean — I understood in the cells of the body — that a new world *is born* and is beginning to grow.[...]

Well, I announced to you all that this new world was born. But it has been so engulfed, as it were, in the old world that so far the difference has not been very perceptible to many people. Still, the action of the new forces has continued very regularly, very persistently, very steadily, and to a certain extent, very effectively. And one of the manifestations of this action was my experience — truly so very new — of yesterday evening. And the result of all this I have noted step by step in almost daily experiences. It could be expressed succinctly, in a rather linear way:

First, it is not only a “new conception” of spiritual life and the divine Reality. This conception was expressed by Sri Aurobindo, I have expressed it myself many a time, and it could be formulated somewhat like this: the old spirituality was an escape from life into the divine Reality, leaving the world just where it was, as it was; whereas our new vision, on the contrary, is a divinisation of life, a transformation of the material world into a divine world. This has been said, repeated, more or less understood, indeed it is the basic idea of what we want to do.

But this could be a continuation with an improvement, a widening of the old world as it was — and so long as this is a conception up there in the field of thought, in fact it is hardly more than that — but what has happened, the really new thing, is that a new world is *born, born, born*. It is not the old one transforming itself it is a *new* world which is *born*. And we are right in the midst of this period of transition where the two are entangled — where the other still persists all-powerful and entirely dominating the ordinary consciousness, but where the new one is quietly slipping in, still very modest, unnoticed — unnoticed to the extent that outwardly it doesn't disturb anything very much, for the time being, and that in the consciousness of most people it is even altogether imperceptible. And yet it is working, growing — until it is strong enough to assert itself visibly.

In any case, to simplify things, it could be said that characteristically the old world, the creation of what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind, was an age of the gods, and consequently the age of religions. As I said, the flower of human effort towards what is above it gave rise to innumerable religious forms, to a religious relationship between the best souls and the invisible world. And at the very summit of all that, as an effort towards a higher realisation there has arisen the idea of the unity of religions, of this “one single thing” which is behind all these manifestations; and this idea has truly been, so to speak, the extreme limit of human aspiration. Well, that is at the frontier, it is something that still belongs *completely* to the Overmind world, the Overmind creation and which from there seems to be looking towards this “other thing” which is a new creation it cannot grasp — which it tries to reach, feels coming, but cannot grasp. To grasp it, a reversal is needed. It is necessary to leave the Overmind creation. It was necessary that the new creation, the supramental creation should take place.

And now, all these old things seem so old, so out-of-date, so arbitrary — such a travesty of the real truth.

In the supramental creation there will *no longer be any religions*. The whole life will be the expression, the flowering into forms of the divine Unity manifesting in the world. And there will no longer be what men now call gods.

These great divine beings themselves will be able to participate in the new creation; but to do so, they will have to put on what we could call the “supramental substance” on earth. And if some of them choose to remain in their world as they are, if they decide not to manifest physically, their relation with the beings of a supramental earth will be a relation of friends, collaborators, equals, for the highest divine essence will be manifested in the beings of the new supramental world on earth.

When the physical substance is supramentalised, to incarnate on earth will no longer be a cause of inferiority, quite the contrary. It will give a plenitude which cannot be obtained otherwise.

But all this is in the future; it is a future... which has *begun*, but which will take some time to be realised integrally. Meanwhile we are in a very special situation, extremely special, without precedent. We are now witnessing the birth of a new world; it is very young, very weak — not in its essence but in its outer manifestation — not yet recognised, not even felt, denied by the majority. But it is here. It is here, making an effort to grow, absolutely *sure* of the result. But the road to it is a completely new road which has never before been traced out — nobody has gone there, nobody has done that! It is a beginning, a *universal beginning*. So, it is an absolutely unexpected and unpredictable adventure.

There are people who love adventure. It is these I call, and I tell them this: “I invite you to the great adventure.”

It is not a question of repeating spiritually what others have done before us, for our adventure begins beyond that. It is a question of a new creation, entirely new, with all the unforeseen events, the risks, the hazards it entails — a *real adventure*, whose goal is certain victory, but the road to which is unknown and must be traced out step by step in the unexplored. Something that has never been in this present universe and that will *never* be again in the same way. If that interests you... well, let us embark. What will happen to you tomorrow — I have no idea.

One must put aside all that has been foreseen, all that has been devised, all that has been constructed, and then... set off walking into the unknown. And — come what may! There.

10 July 1957

Well, it is from this change, this sudden transformation of the universal element which quite certainly is going to bring about a kind of chaos in the perceptions, that a new knowledge will emerge. This, in the most general way, is the result of the new manifestation. [...] But it is possible, in fact, that things are happening now which we are not used to watching. But it is a question of interpretation. The only thing I am sure of is what I have just told you, that the quality, the number and the nature of the possible combinations in the universe are suddenly going to change so considerably that it will probably be quite bewildering for all those who do research.

Now, we shall see.[...]

Since no two things, two combinations, two universal manifestations are ever the same, how can anything repeat itself? It can only be an appearance but is not a fact. And to fix rigid laws in this way — not that you cut yourself off from the apparent surface laws, for the mind makes many laws, and the surface very obligingly seems to comply with these laws, but it is only an appearance — but anyway this cuts you off from the creative Power of the Spirit, it cuts you off from the true Power of the Grace, for you can understand that if by your aspiration or your attitude you introduce a higher element, a new element — what we may now call a supramental element — into the existing combinations, you can suddenly change their nature, and all these so-called necessary and ineluctable laws become absurdities. That is to say that you yourself, with your conception, with your attitude and your acceptance of certain alleged principles, you yourself close the door upon the possibility of the miracle — they are not miracles when one knows how they happen, but obviously for the outer consciousness they seem miraculous. And it is you *yourself*, saying to yourself with a logic that seems quite reasonable, “Well, if I do this, that will necessarily happen, or if I don’t do that, necessarily this other thing will happen”, it is you *yourself* who close the door — it is as though you were putting an iron curtain between yourself and the free action of the Grace.

How nice it would be to imagine that the Supreme Consciousness, essentially free, presiding at the universal Manifestation, could be full of fantasy in its choice and make things follow one another not according to a

logic accessible to human thought but in accordance with another kind of logic, that of the unforeseen!

Then there would no longer be any limits to the possibilities, to the unexpected, the marvellous; and one could hope for the most splendid, the most delightful things from this sovereignly free Will, playing eternally with all the elements and creating unceasingly a new world which logically would have absolutely nothing to do with the preceding one.

Don't you think it would be charming? We have had enough of the world as it is! Why not let it become at least what we think it ought to be?

And I am telling you all this in order that each one of you may put as few barriers as you can in the way of the possibilities to come.

3 October 1956

The Evolution of Humanity

"The first obscure material movement of the evolutionary Force is marked by an aeonic graduality; the movement of life-progress proceeds slowly but still with a quicker step, it is concentrated into the figure of millenniums; mind can still further compress the tardy leisureliness of Time and make long paces of the centuries; but when the conscious spirit intervenes, a supremely concentrated pace of evolutionary swiftness becomes possible." (Sri Aurobindo)

I am reading this to you because I have been asked about the action of the Supermind, and I had compared this manifestation of the Supermind to that of the mind which, according to all modern scientific discoveries, took nearly a million years to evolve from the animal brain, the ape-brain, to the first human brain. And I told you that, consequently, one should not expect this to take place in a few months or a few years, that it would obviously take much longer. Some people, it seems, thought that I was announcing that the superman would not come before another million years! I want to correct this impression.

Sri Aurobindo has said that as the development rises in the scale of consciousness, the movement becomes more and more rapid, and that

when the Spirit or the Supermind intervenes, it can go much faster.

Therefore we may hope that in a few centuries, the first supramental race will appear.

But even that is rather disconcerting for some people, for they think it contradicts what Sri Aurobindo has always promised: that the time has come for the supramental transformation to be possible.... But we must not confuse a supramental transformation with the appearing of a new race.

What Sri Aurobindo promised and what naturally interests us, we who are here now, is that the time has come when some beings among the elite of humanity, who fulfil the conditions necessary for spiritualisation, will be able to transform their bodies with the help of the supramental Force, Consciousness and Light, so as no longer to be animal-men but become supermen.

This promise Sri Aurobindo has made and he based it on the knowledge he had that the supramental Force was on the point of manifesting on the earth. In fact it had descended in him long ago, he knew it and knew what its effects were.

And now that it has manifested universally, I could say, generally, the certainty of the possibility of transformation is of course still greater. There is no longer any doubt that those who will fulfil or who now fulfil the conditions are on the way to this transformation.

The conditions Sri Aurobindo gives in detail in *The Synthesis of Yoga* and in still greater detail in his last articles on the Supramental Manifestation.²⁸ So now it is only a question of realisation.

10 October 1956

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Sweet Mother, now that the Supennind has descended, why can't one pass from the rational mind directly to the Supermind?

Who said that one can't?

²⁸ These articles, written by Sri Aurobindo in 1949-50, were later published as a book entitled *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth*.

Sri Aurobindo is describing here [in *The Life Divine*] what was to be done to enter into contact with the Supermind and prepare the ground for its manifestation; but now that it has entered the earth-atmosphere, I don't see why a single, precise procedure should be inflicted upon it in its manifestation. If it chooses to directly illuminate an instrument which it finds suitable or ready or adaptable, I don't see why it should not do so.

And I repeat this: who has said that it cannot be otherwise? Nobody. What Sri Aurobindo has described here is quite another thing and, indeed, this is what did happen. It was the preparation necessary for the manifestation to take place. But now I don't see why or on what basis a particular process should be imposed upon the supramental action and why it should not have the freedom to choose its own means.

I think that all possibilities are predictable and that all sincere aspiration and complete consecration will have a response, and that the processes, means, transitions, transformations will be innumerable in nature — not at all that things will happen only in a particular way and not otherwise.

In fact, anything, everything that is ready to receive even a particle or a particular aspect of the supramental consciousness and light must *automatically* receive it. And the effects of this consciousness and light will be innumerable, for they will certainly be adapted to the possibilities, the capacity of each one according to the sincerity of his aspiration.

The more total the consecration and the intenser the aspiration, the more integral and intense can be the result. But the effect of the supramental action will be countless in its manifestations — multiple, innumerable, infinitely varied, not necessarily following a precise line which is the same for all. That is impossible. For it is contrary to the very nature of the supramental consciousness.

The very quality of the atmosphere has changed.

The consequences are bound to be infinitely varied, but perceptible. That is to say, it will be possible to distinguish the consequences of ordinary movements from the consequences of the supramental action, for these will have a particular nature, a special character.

13 June 1956

How long it will take [for the supramental presence to be felt and perceived] is difficult to foresee. It will depend a great deal on the goodwill and the receptivity of a certain number of people, for the individual always advances faster than the collectivity, and by its very nature, humanity is destined to manifest the Supermind before the rest of creation.

At the basis of this collaboration [with the supramental] there is necessarily the will to change, no longer to be what one is, for things to be no longer what they are. There are several ways of reaching it, and all the methods are good when they succeed! One may be deeply disgusted with what exists and wish ardently to come out of all this and attain something else; one may — and this is a more positive way — one may feel within oneself the touch, the approach of something positively beautiful and true, and willingly drop all the rest so that nothing may burden the journey to this new beauty and truth.

What is indispensable in every case is the *ardent* will for progress, the willing and joyful renunciation of all that hampers the advance: to throw far away from oneself all that prevents one from going forward, and to set out into the unknown with the ardent faith that this is the truth of tomorrow, *inevitable*, which must necessarily come, which nothing, nobody, no bad will, even that of Nature, can prevent from becoming a reality — perhaps of a not too distant future — a reality which is being worked out now and which those who know how to change, how not to be weighed down by old habits, will *surely* have the good fortune not only to see but to realise.

People sleep, they forget, they take life easy — they forget, forget all the time.... But if we could remember... that we are at an exceptional hour, a *unique* time, that we have this immense good fortune, this invaluable privilege of being present at the birth of a new world, we could easily get rid of everything that impedes and hinders our progress.

So, the most important thing, it seems, is to remember this fact; even when one doesn't have the tangible experience, to have the certainty of it and faith in it; to remember always, to recall it constantly, to go to sleep

with this idea, to wake up with this perception; to do all that one does with this great truth as the background, as a constant support, this great truth that we are witnessing the birth of a new world.

We can participate in it, we can become this new world. And truly, when one has such a marvellous opportunity, one should be ready to give up everything for its sake.

24 July 1957

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“A new humanity means for us the appearance, the development of a type or race of mental beings whose principle of mentality would be no longer a mind in the Ignorance seeking for knowledge but even in its knowledge bound to the Ignorance, a seeker after Light but not its natural possessor, open to the Light but not an inhabitant of the Light, not yet a perfected instrument, truth-conscious and delivered out of the Ignorance. Instead, it would be possessed already of what could be called a mind of Light, a mind capable of living in the truth, capable of being truth-conscious and manifesting in its life a direct in place of an indirect knowledge. Its mentality would be an instrument of the Light and no longer of the Ignorance. At its highest it would be capable of passing into the supermind and from the new race would be recruited the race of supramental beings who would appear as the leaders of the evolution in earth-nature.” (Sri Aurobindo)

This was certainly what he [Sri Aurobindo] expected of us, what he conceived of as the superman who must be the intermediate being between humanity as it is and the supramental being *created* in the supramental way, that is, no longer belonging to animality at all and delivered from all animal needs.

As we are, we have been created in the ordinary animal way, and therefore, even if we transform ourselves, there will remain something of this animal origin. The supramental being as he conceived of it, is not formed in the ordinary animal way *at all* but directly, through a process that for the moment still seems occult to us, but is a direct handling of

forces and substance in such a way that the body can be a “materialisation” and not a formation according to the ordinary animal principle.

It is quite obvious that intermediate beings are necessary, that it is these intermediate beings who must find the means of creating beings of the supermind, and, undoubtedly, when Sri Aurobindo wrote this he was convinced that this is what we must do.

I think — I know — that it is now certain that we shall realise what he expects of us. It has become no longer a hope but a certainty. Only the time necessary for this realisation will be longer or shorter according to our individual effort, our concentration, our goodwill... and the *importance* we give to this fact. For the inattentive observer things may appear very much what they were before, but for one who knows how to see and is not deceived by appearances things are going well.

Let each one do his best and perhaps not many years will have to elapse before the first visible results become apparent to all.

It is for you to know whether this interests you more than everything else in the world.... There comes a moment when the body itself finds that there is *nothing in the world* which is so worth living for as this transformation; that there is nothing which can have as great an interest as this passionate interest of transformation. It is as though all the cells of the body were athirst for that Light which wants to manifest; they cry out for it, they find an intense joy in it and are *sure* of the Victory.

This is the aspiration that I am trying to communicate to you, and you will understand that everything else in life is dull, insipid, futile, worthless in comparison with that: the transformation in the Light.

25 September 1957

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Sweet Mother, will there not be any intermediary states between man and superman?

There will probably be many.

Man and superman? You are not speaking of the new supramental race,

are you? Are you really speaking of what *we* call the superman, that is, man born in the human way and trying to transform the physical being he has received by his ordinary human birth? Are there any stages? — There will certainly be countless *partial* realisations.

According to each one's capacity, the degree of transformation will differ, and it is certain that there will be a considerable number of attempts, more or less fruitful or unfruitful, before we come to something like the superman, and even those will be more or less successful attempts.

All those who strive to overcome their ordinary nature, all those who try to realise materially the deeper experience which has brought them into contact with the divine Truth, all those who, instead of turning to the Beyond or the Highest, try to realise physically, externally, the change of consciousness they have realised within themselves — all are apprentice-supermen. And there, there are countless differences in the success of their efforts. Each time we try not to be an ordinary man, not to live the ordinary life, to express in our movements, our actions and reactions the divine Truth, when we are governed by that Truth instead of being governed by the general ignorance, we are apprentice-supermen, and according to the success of our efforts, well, we are more or less able apprentices, more or less advanced on the way.

All these are stages, so... In reality, in this race to the Transformation, the question is to know which of the two will arrive first: the one who wants to transform his body in the image of the divine Truth, or the old habit of the body to go on disintegrating until it is so deformed that it can no longer continue to live in its outer integrality. It is a race between transformation and decay. For there are only two stopping-places, two things which can indicate to what extent one has succeeded: either success, that is to say, becoming a superman — then of course one can say, "Now I have reached the goal"... or else death. Till then, normally, one is "on the way".

It is one of these two things — either attaining the goal or a sudden rupture of life — which temporarily puts an end to the advance. And on the road each one has gone more or less far, but until one reaches the end one cannot say what stage one is at. It is the final step that will count. So only the one who comes a few hundred or thousand years later and looks

back, will be able to say, "There was this stage and that stage, this realisation and that realisation...." That is history, it will be a historical perception of the event. Till then all of us are in the movement and the work.

How far have we gone and how far shall we go? It is better not to think too much about that, for it cripples you and you can't run well. It is better to think only about running and nothing else. That is the only way to run well. You look at where you want to go and put all your effort in the movement to go forward. How far you have gone is not your concern. I say, "This is history", it will come later. The historians of our effort will tell us — because perhaps we shall still be there — will tell us what we did, how we did it. For the moment what is necessary is to do it; this is the only thing that matters.

8 October 1958

The Supramental Boat

(The Mother reads her comments upon an experience she had on 3 February 1958:)

Between the beings of the supramental world and men, almost the same separation exists as between men and animals. Some time ago I had the experience of identification with animal life, and it is a fact that animals do not understand us; their consciousness is so constructed that we elude them almost entirely. And yet I have known pet animals — cats and dogs, but especially cats — that used to make an almost yogic effort of consciousness to reach us. But usually, when they see us as we live and act, they do not understand, they do not *see* us as we are and they suffer because of us. We are a constant enigma to them. Only a very tiny part of their consciousness has a link with us. And it is the same thing for us when we try to look at the supramental world. Only when the link of consciousness is established shall we see it — and even then only the part of our being which has undergone transformation in this way will be able to see it as it is — otherwise the two worlds would remain apart like the animal and human worlds.

The experience I had on the third of February is a proof of this. Before that I had had an individual subjective contact with the supramental world, whereas on the third of February I moved in it concretely, as concretely as I once used to walk in Paris, in a world *that exists in itself*, outside all subjectivity.

It is like a bridge being thrown between the two worlds. Here is the experience as I dictated it immediately afterwards:

(*Silence*)

The supramental world exists permanently and I am there permanently in a supramental body. I had the proof of this even today when my earth-consciousness went there and remained there consciously between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. Now, I know that what is lacking for the two worlds to unite in a constant and conscious relation, is an intermediate zone between the physical world as it is and the supramental world as it is. This zone remains to be built, both in the individual consciousness and the objective world, and it is being built. When I used to speak of the new world which is being created, it was of this intermediary zone that I was speaking. And similarly, when I am on this side, that is, in the field of the physical consciousness, and I see the supramental power, the supramental light and substance constantly penetrating matter, it is the construction of this zone which I see and in which I participate.

I was on a huge boat which was a symbolic representation of the place where this work is going on. This boat, as large as a city, is fully organised, and it had certainly already been functioning for some time, for its organisation was complete. It is the place where people who are destined for the supramental life are trained. These people — or at least a part of their being — had already undergone a supramental transformation, for the boat itself and everything on board was neither material nor subtle-physical nor vital nor mental — it was a supramental substance. This substance was of the most material supramental, the supramental substance which is closest to the physical world, the first to manifest. The light was a mixture of gold and red, forming a uniform substance of a luminous orange. Everything was like that — the light was like that, the people were like that — everything had that colour, although with various shades which

made it possible to distinguish things from each other. The general impression was of a world without shadows; there were shades but no shadows. The atmosphere was full of joy, calm, order; everything went on regularly and in silence. And at the same time one could see all the details of an education, a training in all fields, by which the people on board were being prepared.

This immense ship had just reached the shore of the supramental world and a first group of people who were destined to become the future inhabitants of this supramental world were to disembark. Everything had been arranged for this first landing. At the wharf several very tall beings were posted. They were not human beings, they had never been men before. Nor were they the permanent inhabitants of the supramental world. They had been delegated from above and posted there to control and supervise the landing. I was in charge of the whole thing from the beginning and all the time. I had prepared all the groups myself. I stood on the boat at the head of the gangway, calling the groups one by one and sending them down to the shore. The tall beings who were posted there were inspecting, so to say, those who were landing, authorising those who were ready and sending back those who were not and who had to continue their training on board the ship. While I was there looking at everybody, the part of my consciousness which came from here became extremely interested; it wanted to see and recognise all the people, see how they had changed and check which ones were taken immediately and which ones had to remain to continue their training. After a while, as I stood there observing, I began to feel that I was being pulled back so that my body might wake up — a consciousness or a person here — and in my consciousness I protested, "No, no, not yet, not yet! I want to see the people!" I was seeing and noting everything with intense interest.... Things continued in this way until suddenly the clock here began to strike three, and this brought me back violently. There was a sensation of suddenly falling into my body. I came back with a shock because I had been called back very suddenly, but with all my memory. I remained quiet, without moving, until I could recollect the whole experience and keep it.

On the boat the nature of objects was not the one we know on earth; for instance, clothes were not made of cloth and what looked like cloth was not manufactured: it formed a part of the body, it was made of the same

substance which took different forms. It had a kind of plasticity. When a change had to be made, it took place, not by any artificial and external means but by an inner operation, an operation of consciousness which gave form or appearance to the substance.

Life created its own forms. There was *one single* substance in everything; it changed the quality of its vibration according to need and use.

Those who were sent back for fresh training were not of a uniform colour, it was as if their body had greyish, opaque patches of a substance resembling earthly substance; they were dull, as if they had not been entirely permeated with light, not transformed. They were not like that everywhere, only in places.

The tall beings on the shore were not of the same colour, at least they did not have that orange tint; they were paler, more transparent. Except for one part of their body, one could only see the outline of their form. They were very tall, they seemed not to have any bones and could take any form according to their need. Only from the waist down had they a permanent density, which was not perceptible in the rest of their body. Their colour was much lighter, with very little red. it was more golden or even white. The parts of whitish light were translucent; they were not positively transparent but less dense, more subtle than the orange substance.

When I was called back and while I was saying “Not yet”, each time I had a brief glimpse of myself, that is, of my form in the supramental world. I was a mixture of the tall beings and the beings aboard the ship. My upper part, particularly the head, was only a silhouette whose contents were white with an orange fringe. Going down towards the feet, the colour became more like that of the people on the boat, that is, orange; going upwards, it was more translucent and white and the red grew less. The head was only a silhouette with a sun shining within it; rays of light came from it which were the action of the will.

As for the people I saw on board the ship, I recognised them all. Some were from here, from the Ashram, some came from elsewhere, but I know them too. I saw everybody but as I knew that I would not remember them all when I returned, I decided not to give any names. Besides, it is not necessary. Three or four faces were very clearly visible, and when I saw

them, I understood the feeling I had here on earth when looking into their eyes: there was such an extraordinary joy.... People were mostly young, there were very few children and they were about fourteen or fifteen, certainly not below ten or twelve — I did not remain long enough to see all the details. There weren't any very old people, apart from a few exceptions. Most of the people who went ashore were middle-aged, except a few. Already, before this experience, some individual cases had been examined several times at a place where people capable of being supramentalised were examined; I had a few surprises and noted them; I even told some people about it. But the ones whom I put ashore today, I saw very distinctly; they were middle-aged, neither young children nor old people, apart from a few rare exceptions, and that corresponded fairly well with what I expected. I decided not to say anything, not to give any names. As I did not remain until the end, it was not possible for me to get an exact picture; the picture was not absolutely clear or complete. I do not want to say things to some and not to others.

What I can say is that the point of view, the judgment, was based *exclusively* on the substance of which the people were made, that is, whether they belonged completely to the supramental world, whether they were made of that very special substance. The standpoint taken is neither moral nor psychological. It is probable that the substance their bodies were made of was the result of an inner law or inner movement which at that time was not in question. At least it is quite clear that the values are different.

When I came back, simultaneously with the recollection of the experience I knew that the supramental world is permanent, that my presence there is permanent, and that only a missing link was necessary for the connection to be made in the consciousness and the substance, and it is this link which is now being forged. I had the impression — an impression which remained for quite a long time, almost a whole day — of an extreme relativity — no, not exactly that: the impression that the relation between this world and the other completely changed the standpoint from which things should be evaluated or appraised. This standpoint had nothing mental about it and it gave a strange inner feeling that lots of things we consider good or bad are not really so. It was very clear that everything depended on the capacity of things, on their aptitude in expressing the

supramental world or being in relation with it. It was so completely different, sometimes even altogether contrary to our ordinary appraisal. I recollect one little thing which we usually consider to be bad; how strange it was to see that in truth it was something excellent! And other things we consider to be important have in fact absolutely no importance at all: whether a thing is like this or like that is not at all important. What is very obvious is that our appraisal of what is divine or undivine is not right. I even laughed to see certain things.... Our usual feeling of what is anti-divine seems artificial, seems based on something that's not true, not living — besides, what we call life here did not seem living to me compared with that world — anyway, this feeling should be founded on our relation between the two worlds and on how things make the relation between them easier or more difficult. This would make a great difference in our appraisal of what brings us nearer to the Divine or what separates us from Him. In people too I saw that what helps them to become supramental or hinders them from it, is very different from what our usual moral notions imagine. I felt how... ridiculous we are.

19 February 1958

CHAPTER 20

The Present Situation

The Progress of Humanity

In spite of all adverse appearances, it may well be that earth has been preparing for a certain realisation by steps and stages. There has been a change in civilisation and a change in nature. If it is not apparent, it is because we see from an external point of view and because matter and its difficulties have never been seriously or thoroughly dealt with up till now. Still internally there has been a progress: in the inner consciousness there have been descents of the Light. But as to any realisation in matter, it is difficult to say anything, because we do not exactly know what might have happened there.

There have been in the distant past great and beautiful civilisations, perhaps as advanced materially as ours. Looked at from a certain standpoint the most modern might seem to be only a repetition of the most ancient cultures, and yet one cannot say that there has been no progress anywhere. An inner progress at least has been achieved and a greater readiness to respond to the higher consciousness has been born into the material parts. It has been necessary to do over and over again the same things, because what was attempted was never sufficiently done; but each time it has come nearer to being adequately done. When we practise an exercise over and over again we seem to be only repeating the same thing always, but still the accumulative result is some effective change.

The mistake is to look at these things through the dimensions of the human consciousness, for so seen these deep and vast movements seem inexplicable. It is dangerous to try to explain or understand them with the limited mental intelligence. That is the reason why philosophy has always failed to unveil the secret of things; it is because it has tried to fit the universe into the size of the human mind.

5 May 1929

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Mental capacity seems to have grown, mental power seems to have developed, men seem to be much more capable of playing with ideas, of having mental command over all principles, but at the same time they have lost the simple and healthy candour of people who lived closer to Nature and knew less how to play with ideas. Thus humanity as a whole seems to have reached a very dangerous turning-point. Those who are trying to find a solution to the general corruption preach a return to the simplicity of yore, but of course that is quite impossible: you cannot go back.

We must go farther on, we must advance, climb greater heights and go beyond the arid search for pleasure and personal welfare, not through fear of punishment, even punishment after death, but through the development of a new sense of beauty, a thirst for truth and light, through understanding that it is only by widening yourself, illuminating yourself, setting yourself ablaze with the ardour for progress, that you can find both integral peace and enduring happiness.

One must rise up and widen — rise up... and widen.

18 April 1958

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After all, in spite of all appearances, humanity progresses; it has progressed particularly in the mind. There are things that no longer need to be said.... Or else one must go to countries that are at a very primitive stage, and even so... ideas have spread everywhere, the mental light has spread everywhere and in the most unexpected places one finds instances of receptivity and understanding.

One really has the impression that during the last century a light came and spread upon the earth with the result that certain ideas, which were once idea-forces, new ideas with the power to stir up the consciousness in men, have lost their relevance, they are now old. A new light is at work.

In practice, the progress is not very great, even in some respects perhaps there has been a retrogression, but in the mind, in the understanding, in the intellectual vision of things, there has truly been a great change.

It seems we are marching on the way at an accelerated pace and these things which used to be of the first importance are becoming almost commonplace in the light of new discoveries. Life as it is is bad, disorder is everywhere, suffering is everywhere, confusion is everywhere, chaos is everywhere, ignorance is everywhere — we all know it, don't we? It seems so hackneyed.

But that one can emerge from it through a total realisation, a total transformation, through a new light that will establish order and harmony in things, is a message of hope that has to be given. This is the true, the dynamic message.

A new life must be built.

Then all these difficulties that seemed so unsurmountable — oh! they fall of themselves.

When you can live in light and joy, are you going to cling to shadow and suffering?

27 June 1958

The Possibility of Catastrophe

You said that if there were a third world war, it would be the end of the present civilisation. Would the terrestrial condition be affected favourably by it or adversely?

Listen. Would you ask whether a fatal illness is favourable to health or not? It is exactly that. A civilisation, whatever it may be, is the result of very long efforts to become conscious of oneself, of Nature, and to master this Nature and draw the best possible advantage from it. We were saying a while ago that the training of the physical being consists in preparing an instrument so that the Divine may manifest Himself. A civilisation prepares an instrument so that the Divine may manifest in that instrument. The more slowly, carefully, minutely the civilisation is worked out, and succeeds in conquering the laws of Nature, the more favourable is the instrument to the manifestation of the Divine. That is why we also have this idea of the prolongation of life, it is to be able to perfect the instrument so as to manifest the divine Force which wants to manifest. Otherwise, it would evidently be much easier, as soon as the body became a little ill or a

little old or incapable of reacting as it did when young, to do what one does with an old torn dress — one throws it away and gets another. Unfortunately, it is not like that. All the fruit of the work, all the accumulated effort to become conscious is lost.

If, for instance, this civilisation we have built, which in a way has so considerably mastered the forces of Nature, which has succeeded in understanding laws of an altogether unique order and has accumulated so many experiences of all kinds to reach self-understanding and self-expression, if all this disappeared, it would be necessary, naturally, to begin all over again. And then, for a new-born child, how many years of slow and insipid education are needed for its brain to be ready to express even a simple general idea, for its movements to be conscious instead of being absolutely unconscious, how many years! For a civilisation, how many years would be necessary simply to get back all that is lost? There have been many civilisations on the earth, there are scientists trying to rediscover what has been, but nobody can say with certitude exactly what was there: the major part of these civilisations is completely lost (I am speaking of civilisations preceding this one which for us is historical). Well, if thousands of years are yet needed to begin another, obviously.... In any case, for our external human consciousness, it is a loss of time.

But we are told that the Work to be done, the promised Realisation is going to take place now. It is going to take place now because the framework of this civilisation seems to be favourable as a platform or a base for building up. But if this civilisation is destroyed, upon what are we going to build? First a foundation platform must be made in order to be able to build. If five or ten thousand years are still needed to make this platform, this proves that it is not now that things will be done — they will be done, that is well understood, they will be done, but... How many lives have you all had? What do you remember of your past lives? What is the good of all the efforts you have made in your past lives to perfect yourselves, to try to understand yourselves, to master yourselves a little, simply to make use of the instrument which has been given to you? What remains to you of all that? Will you tell me? Who here can tell me that he is consciously profiting by the experiences of his past lives — unconsciously there is something which remains but not much — but consciously?... No one will answer?

*No, precisely, one has the impression that after having lived so long,
one is only beginning to know a very little.*

Yes, exactly, it is just like that. This is because the farther one goes, the more does one realise that there is everything to understand and everything to learn. And consequently, if one has behind him some sixty years, it is nothing. One would like to have hundreds and hundreds of years before one to be able to do the work. It is like that, you are all little children, you see, so the years seem to you long, because you have not lived much; but you will see, the more one advances, the more does one realise that there is a long road in front, long, very long, and one would not like to have to begin all over again, for it is so much more time lost. *17 April 1951*

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There is an idea in the earth-atmosphere — an idea which might be called preposterous, but unhappily it is much worse than preposterous, it is catastrophic — the idea that if there were a great upheaval, perhaps it would be better afterwards.... One is so jammed between prohibitions, impossibilities, interdictions, rules, the complications of every second, that one feels stifled and really gets the admirable idea that if everything were demolished perhaps it would be better afterwards!... It is in the air. And all the governments have put themselves in such impossible conditions; they have become so tied up that it seems to them they will have to break everything to be able to move forward.... (*Silence*) This is unfortunately a little more than a possibility, it is a *very* serious threat. And it is not quite certain that life will not be made still more impossible because one feels incapable of emerging from the chaos — the chaos of complications — in which humanity has put itself. It is like the shadow — but unfortunately a very active shadow — of the new hope which has sprung up in the human consciousness, a hope and a need for something more harmonious; and the need becomes so much more acute as life, as it is at present organised, becomes more and more contrary to it. The two opposites are facing each other with such intensity that one can expect something like an explosion....

(*Silence*)

This is the condition of the earth, and it is not very bright. But for us one possibility remains — I have spoken about it to you several times already — even if, outside, things are deteriorating completely and the catastrophe cannot possibly be avoided, there remains for us, I mean those for whom the supramental life is not a vain dream, those who have faith in its reality and the aspiration to realise it — I don't necessarily mean those who have gathered here in Pondicherry, in the Ashram, but those who have as a link between them the knowledge Sri Aurobindo has given and the will to live according to that knowledge — there remains for them the possibility of intensifying their aspiration, their will, their effort, to gather their energies together and shorten the time for the realisation. There remains for them the possibility of working this miracle — individually and to a small extent collectively — of conquering space, duration, the time needed for this realisation; of replacing time by intensity of effort and going fast enough and far enough in the realisation to liberate themselves from the consequences of the present condition of the world; of making such a concentration of force, strength, light, truth, that by this very realisation they can be above these consequences and secure against them, enjoy the protection bestowed by the Light and Truth, by Purity — the divine Purity through the inner transformation — and that the storm may pass over the world without being able to destroy this great hope of the near future; that the tempest may not sweep away this beginning of realisation.

Instead of falling asleep in an easy quietude and letting things happen according to their own rhythm, if one strains to the utmost one's will, ardour, aspiration and springs up into the light, then one can hold one's head higher; one can have, in a higher region of consciousness, enough room to live, to breathe, to grow and develop above the passing cyclone.

This is possible. In a very small way, this was already done during the last war, when Sri Aurobindo was here. It can be done again. But one must want it and each one must do his own work as sincerely and completely as he can.

7 August 1957

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In present-day politics can we say in which camp I divine or anti-divine]...

Unfortunately, things become completely clear-cut in this way — to the extent that one can say these are for and these against — only when there is that frightful materialisation of a war, because at that moment it is obvious that the victory of one side is preferable to the victory of the other, not that these are better than the others — this is understood, that from the divine point of view all are equal in worth, it's the same thing — but because the consequences of the victory are such that the victory of one side is better than that of another. But this is when the thing becomes absolutely brutal, a reciprocal extermination. Otherwise, to tell the real truth, the divine Force acts for its work everywhere, in men's errors as in their goodwill, through ill-will as through favourable things. There is nothing that's not mixed; nowhere is there something which could be said to be truly a pure instrument of the Divine, and nowhere is there an absolute impossibility of the Divine's using a man or action to go forward on the path. So, as long as things are uncertain, the Divine works everywhere almost equally.

If men go in for such a great madness, then it is different. But it is truly a "great madness", in the sense that it precipitates a whole mass of individuals and wills into an activity which leads straight to destruction — their own destruction. I am not speaking of bombs and the destruction of a city or a people, I am speaking of destruction as it is spoken about in the Gita, you see, when it is said that the Asura goes to his own destruction. That's what happens, and this is a very great misfortune, because it is always better to be able to save, illumine, transform, than to have to destroy brutally. And it is this terrible choice of the war which is its true horror; it's that it materialises the conflict so brutally and totally that some elements which could have been saved during peace are, because of war, necessarily destroyed — and not only men and things but forces, the conscience of beings.

14 September 1955

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One thing seems obvious, humanity has reached a certain state of general tension — tension in effort, in action, even in daily life — with such an excessive hyperactivity, so widespread a trepidation, that mankind as a whole seems to have come to a point where it must either break through the resistance and emerge into a new consciousness or else fall back into an abyss of darkness and inertia.

This tension is so complete and so widespread that something obviously has to break. It cannot go on in this way. We may take it as a sure sign of the infusion into matter of a new principle of force, consciousness, power, which by its very pressure is producing this acute state. Outwardly, we could expect the old methods used by Nature when she wants to bring about an upheaval; but there is a new characteristic, which of course is only visible in an elite, but even this elite is fairly widespread — it is not localised at one point, at one place in the world; we find traces of it in all countries, all over the world: the will to find a new, higher, progressive solution, an effort to rise towards a vaster, more comprehensive perfection.

Certain ideas of a more general nature, of a wider, perhaps more “collective” kind, are being worked out and are acting in the world. And both things go together: a possibility of a greater and more total destruction, a reckless inventiveness which increases the possibility of catastrophe, a catastrophe which would be on a far greater scale than it has ever been; and, at the same time, the birth or rather the manifestation of much higher and more comprehensive ideas and acts of will which, when they are heard, will bring a wider, vaster, more complete, more perfect remedy than before.

This struggle, this conflict between the constructive forces of the ascending evolution of a more and more perfect and divine realisation, and the more and more destructive, powerfully destructive forces — forces that are mad beyond all control — is more and more obvious, marked, visible, and it is a kind of race or struggle as to which will reach the goal first. It would seem that all the adverse, anti-divine forces, the forces of the vital world, have descended on the earth, are making use of it as their field of action, and that at the same time a new, higher, more powerful spiritual force has also descended on earth to bring it a new life. This makes the struggle more acute, more violent, more visible, but it seems also more

definitive, and that is why we can hope to reach an early solution.

There was a time, not so long ago, when the spiritual aspiration of man was turned towards a silent, inactive peace, detached from all worldly things, a flight from life, precisely to avoid battle, to rise above the struggle, escape all effort; it was a spiritual peace in which, along with the cessation of all tension, struggle, effort, there ceased also suffering in all its forms, and this was considered to be the true and only expression of a spiritual and divine life. It was considered to be the divine grace, the divine help, the divine intervention. And even now, in this age of anguish, tension, hypertension, this sovereign peace is the best received aid of all, the most welcome, the solace people ask and hope for. For many it is still the true sign of a divine intervention, of divine grace.

In fact, no matter what one wants to realise, one must begin by establishing this perfect and immutable peace; it is the basis from which one must work; but unless one is dreaming of an exclusive, personal and egoistic liberation, one cannot stop there. There is another aspect of the divine grace, the aspect of progress which will be victorious over all obstacles, the aspect which will propel humanity to a new realisation, which will open the doors of a new world and make it possible not only for a chosen few to benefit by the divine realisation but for their influence, their example, their power to bring to the rest of mankind new and better conditions.

This opens up roads of realisation into the future, possibilities which are already foreseen, when an entire part of humanity, the one which has opened consciously or unconsciously to the new forces, is lifted up, as it were, into a higher, more harmonious, more perfect life.... Even if individual transformation is not always permissible or possible, there will be a kind of general uplifting, a harmonisation of the whole, which will make it possible for a new order, a new harmony to be established and for the anguish of the present disorder and struggle to disappear and be replaced by an order which will allow a harmonious functioning of the whole.

There will be other consequences which will tend to eliminate in an opposite way what the intervention of the mind in life has created, the perversions, the ugliness, the whole mass of distortions which have

increased suffering, misery, moral poverty, an entire area of sordid and repulsive misery which makes a whole part of human life into something so frightful. That must disappear. This is what makes humanity in so many ways infinitely worse than animal life in its simplicity and the natural spontaneity and harmony that it has in spite of everything. Suffering in animals is never so miserable and sordid as it is in an entire section of humanity which has been perverted by the use of a mentality exclusively at the service of egoistic needs.

We must rise above, spring up into Light and Harmony or fall back, down into the simplicity of a healthy unperverted animal life.

(When this talk was first published in 1958, the Mother added the following note on the lifting up of an entire part of humanity by the action of the new forces:)

But those who cannot be lifted up, those who refuse to progress, will automatically lose the use of the mental consciousness and will fall back to a sub-human level.

I shall tell you about an experience I had which will help you to understand better. It was shortly after the supramental experience of the third of February, and I was still in the state in which things of the physical world seemed so far off, so absurd. A group of visitors had asked permission to come to me and one evening they came to the Playground. They were rich people, that is, they had more money than they needed to live on. Among them there was a woman in a sari; she was very fat, her sari was arranged so as to hide her body. As she was bending down to receive my blessings, one corner of the sari came open, uncovering a part of her body, a naked belly — an enormous one. I felt a real shock.... There are corpulent people who have nothing repugnant about them, but I suddenly saw the perversion, the rottenness that this belly concealed, it was like a huge abscess, expressing greed, vice, depraved taste, sordid desire, which finds its satisfaction as no animal would, in grossness and especially in perversity. I saw the perversion of a depraved mind at the service of the lowest appetites. Then, all of a sudden, something sprang up from me, a prayer, like a Veda: "O Lord, this is what must disappear!" One understands very well that physical misery, the unequal distribution of the goods of this world could be changed, one can imagine economic and

social solutions which could remedy this, but it is that misery, the mental misery, the vital perversion, it is that which cannot change, doesn't want to change. And those who belong to this type of humanity are condemned in advance to disintegration.

That is the meaning of original sin: the perversion which began with the mind.

That part of humanity, of human consciousness, which is capable of uniting with the supermind and liberating itself, will be completely transformed — it is advancing towards a future reality which is not yet expressed in its outer form; the part which is closest to Nature, to animal simplicity, will be reabsorbed into Nature and thoroughly assimilated. But the corrupted part of human consciousness which allows perversion through its misuse of the mind will be abolished.

This type of humanity is part of an unfruitful attempt — which must be eliminated —just as there have been other abortive species which have disappeared in the course of universal history.

Certain prophets in the past have had this apocalyptic vision but, as usual, things were mixed, and they did not have together with their vision of the apocalypse the vision of the supramental world which will come to raise up the part of humanity which consents and to transform this physical world. So, to give hope to those who have been born into it, into this perverted part of human consciousness, they have taught redemption through faith: those who have faith in the sacrifice of the Divine in Matter will be automatically saved, in another world — by faith alone, without understanding, without intelligence. They have not seen the supramental world nor that the great Sacrifice of the Divine in Matter is the sacrifice of involution which must culminate in the total revelation of the Divine in Matter itself.

19 March 1958

The Possibility of Perfection

"Death is the question Nature puts continually to Life and her reminder to it that it has not yet found itself If there were no siege of death, the creature would be bound forever in the form of an imperfect living. Pursued by death he awakes to the idea of perfect life and seeks out its means and its possibility." (Sri Aurobindo)

There seems to be matter enough here for us not to need to go any further. This is a question which every person whose consciousness is awakened a little has asked himself at least once in his life. There is in the depths of the being such a need to perpetuate, to prolong, to develop life, that the moment one has a first contact with death, which, although it may be quite an accidental contact, is yet inevitable, there is a sort of recoil in the being.

In persons who are sensitive, it produces horror; in others, indignation. There is a tendency to ask oneself: "What is this monstrous farce in which one takes part without wanting to, without understanding it? Why are we born, if it is only to die? Why all this effort for development, progress, the flowering of the faculties, if it is to come to a diminution ending in decline and disintegration?..." Some feel a revolt in them, others less strong feel despair and always this question arises: "If there is a conscious Will behind all that, this Will seems to be monstrous."

But here Sri Aurobindo tells us that this was an indispensable means of awakening in the consciousness of matter the need for perfection, the necessity of progress, that without this catastrophe, all beings would have been satisfied with the condition they were in — perhaps.... This is not certain.

But then, we have to take things as they are and tell ourselves that we must find the way out of it all.

The fact is that everything is in a state of perpetual progressive development, that is, the whole creation, the whole universe is advancing towards a perfection which seems to recede as one goes forward towards it, for what seemed a perfection at a certain moment is no longer perfect after a time. The most subtle states of being in the consciousness follow

this progression even as it is going on, and the higher up the scale one goes, the more closely does the rhythm of the advance resemble the rhythm of the universal development, and approach the rhythm of the divine development; but the material world is rigid by nature, transformation is slow, very slow, there, almost imperceptible for the measurement of time as human consciousness perceives it... and so there is a constant disequilibrium between the inner and outer movement, and this lack of balance, this incapacity of the outer forms to follow the movement of the inner progress brings about the necessity of decomposition and the change of forms. But if, into this matter, one could infuse enough consciousness to obtain the same rhythm, if matter could become plastic enough to follow the inner progression, this rupture of balance would not occur, and death would no longer be necessary.

So, according to what Sri Aurobindo tells us, Nature has found this rather radical means to awaken in the material consciousness the necessary aspiration and plasticity.

It is obvious that the most dominant characteristic of matter is inertia, and that, if there were not this violence, perhaps the individual consciousness would be so inert that rather than change it would accept to live in a perpetual imperfection.... That is possible. Anyway, this is how things are made, and for us who know a little more, there is only one thing that remains to be done, it is to change all this, as far as we have the means, by calling the Force, the Consciousness, the new Power which is capable of infusing into material substance the vibration which can transform it, make it plastic, supple, progressive.

Obviously the greatest obstacle is the attachment to things as they are; but even Nature as a whole finds that those who have the deeper knowledge want to go too fast: she likes her meanderings, she likes her successive attempts, her failures, her fresh beginnings, her new inventions; she likes the fantasy of the path, the unexpectedness of the experience; one could almost say that for her the longer it takes, the more enjoyable it is.

But even of the best games one tires. There comes a time when one needs to change them and one could dream of a game in which it would no longer be necessary to destroy in order to progress, where the zeal for progress would be enough to find new means, new expressions, where the

élan would be ardent enough to overcome inertia, lassitude, lack of understanding, fatigue, indifference.

Why does this body, as soon as some progress has been made, feel the need to sit down? It is tired. It says, "Oh! you must wait. I must be given time to rest." This is what leads it to death. If it felt within itself that ardour to do always better, become more transparent, more beautiful, more luminous, eternally young, one could escape from this macabre joke of Nature.

For her this is of no importance. She sees the whole, she sees the totality; she sees that nothing is lost, that it is only recombining quantities, numberless minute elements, without any importance, which are put back into a pot and mixed well — and something new comes out of it. But that game is not amusing for everybody. And if in one's consciousness one could be as vast as she, more powerful than she, why shouldn't one do the same thing in a better way?

This is the problem which confronts us now. With the addition, the new help of this Force which has descended, which is manifesting, working, why shouldn't one take in hand this tremendous game and make it more beautiful, more harmonious, more true?

It only needs brains powerful enough to receive this Force and formulate the possible course of action. There must be conscious beings powerful enough to convince Nature that there are other methods than hers.... This looks like madness, but all new things have always seemed like madness before they became realities.

The hour has come for this madness to be realised. And since we are all here for reasons that are perhaps unknown to most of you, but are still very conscious reasons, we may set ourselves to fulfil that madness — at least it will be worthwhile living it.

6 February 1957

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"Wherefore he [God] selected or made such a material, when he had all infinite possibility to choose from? Because of his divine Idea which

saw before it not only beauty and sweetness and purity, but also force and will and greatness. Despise not force, nor hate it for the ugliness of some of its faces, nor think that love only is God. All perfect perfection must have something in it of the stuff of the hero and even of the Titan. But the greatest force is born out of the greatest difficulty.” (Sri Aurobindo)

After all, the whole problem is to know whether humanity has reached the state of pure gold or whether it still needs to be tested in the crucible.

One thing is evident, humanity has not become pure gold; that is visible and certain.

But something has happened in the world’s history which allows us to hope that a selected few in humanity, a small number of beings, perhaps, are ready to be transformed into pure gold and that they will be able to manifest strength without violence, heroism without destruction and courage without catastrophe.

But in the very next paragraph Sri Aurobindo gives the answer: “If man could once consent to be spiritualised.” If only the individual could consent to be spiritualised... could consent.²⁹

Something in him asks for it, aspires, and all the rest refuses, wants to continue to be what it is: the mixed ore which needs to be cast into the furnace.

At the moment we are at a decisive turning-point in the history of the earth, once again. From every side I am asked, “What is going to happen?” Everywhere there is anguish, expectation, fear. “What is going to happen?...” There is only one reply: “If only man could consent to be spiritualised.”

And perhaps it would be enough if some individuals became pure gold, for this would be enough to change the course of events.... We are faced with this necessity in a very urgent way.

This courage, this heroism which the Divine wants of us, why not use it to fight against one’s own difficulties, one’s own imperfections, one’s own obscurities? Why not heroically face the furnace of inner purification so

²⁹ “All would change if man could once consent to be spiritualised; but his nature, menial and vital and physical, is rebellious to the higher law. He loves his imperfection.”

that it does not become necessary to pass once more through one of those terrible, gigantic destructions which plunge an entire civilisation into darkness?

This is the problem before us. It is for each one to solve it in his own way.

This evening I am answering the questions I have been asked, and my reply is that of Sri Aurobindo: If man could once consent to be spiritualised....

And I add: Time presses... from the human point of view.

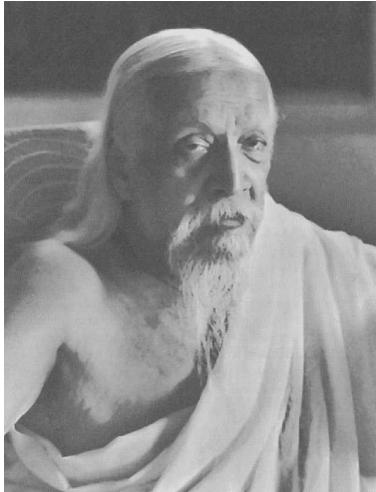
27 March 1957



The Mother

The Mother was born Mina Alfassa on 21 February 1878 in Paris. A student at the Académie Julian, she became an accomplished artist. Gifted from an early age with a capacity for spiritual and occult experience, she went to Tlemcen, Algeria, in 1906 and 1907 to study occultism with the adepts Max Theon and his wife. Between 1911 and 1913 she gave a number of talks to various groups of seekers in Paris.

In 1914 the Mother voyaged to Pondicherry, South India, to meet the Indian revolutionary and mystic Sri Aurobindo. After a stay of eleven months, she was obliged by the outbreak of the First World War to return to France. A year later she went to Japan, where she remained for four years. In April 1920 the Mother rejoined Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry. Six years later, when the Sri Aurobindo Ashram was founded, Sri Aurobindo entrusted its material and spiritual charge to her. Under her guidance the Ashram grew into a large, many-faceted spiritual community. She also established a school, the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, in 1952, and an international township, Auroville, in 1968. The Mother passed away on 17 November 1973.



Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo was born in Kolkata on 15 August 1872. At the age of seven he was taken to England for his education. There he studied at St. Paul's School, London, and at King's College, Cambridge. Returning to India in 1893, he worked for the next thirteen years in the Princely State of Baroda (Vadodara) in the service of the Maharaja and as a professor in the State's college.

In 1906 Sri Aurobindo quit his post in Baroda and went to Kolkata, where he became one of the leaders of the Indian national movement. As editor of the newspaper *Bande Mataram*, he boldly put forward the idea of complete independence from Britain. Arrested three times for sedition or treason, he was released each time for lack of evidence.

Sri Aurobindo began the practice of Yoga in 1905. Within a few years he achieved several fundamental spiritual realisations. In 1910 he withdrew from politics and went to Pondicherry in French India in order to concentrate on his inner life and work. During his forty years there, he developed a new spiritual path, the Integral Yoga, whose ultimate aim is the transformation of life by the power of a supramental consciousness. In 1926, with the help of the Mother, he founded the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. His vision of life is presented in numerous works of prose and poetry, among which the best known are *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga* and *Savitri*. Sri Aurobindo passed away on 5 December 1950.

Note on the Texts

Publication History

This compilation of Georges Van Vrekhem was first brought out in 1997 in a Dutch translation entitled *Alle leven is yoga: De integral visie de Moeder*, published by Uitgeverij Ankh-Hermes bv, Deventer, Netherlands. The present English version is published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

Scope of Selection of Texts

The texts making up this compilation have been taken from Volumes 3 to 9 of the Collected Works of the Mother, which together comprise nearly 3,000 pages of material. The book includes selections from the Mother's early conversations (1929-31) and her conversations at the Ashram playground (1950-58). It does not include other conversations published in the Collected Works: the oral commentaries on Sri Aurobindo's *Thoughts and Aphorisms* in Volume 10, the *Agenda* conversations published during the Mother's lifetime in Volume 11, the talks on education in Volume 12, the talks on Auroville in Volume 13, and the miscellaneous talks in Volume 15.

Original Language of the Texts

The conversations from 1929 to 1931 were in English; those from 1950 to 1958 were in French. The French texts comprise about eighty-five per cent of the material. Thus most of the texts in this book are English translations of talks originally given in French.

References to the Texts

This book has been compiled from the following volumes of the Collected Works of the Mother, published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram,

Pondicherry:

Volume	Title	Year
3	Questions and Answers [1929-31]	1977
4	Questions and Answers 1950-51	1977
5	Questions and Answers 1953	1976
6	Questions and Answers 1954	1979
7	Questions and Answers 1955	1979
8	Questions and Answers 1956	1977
9	Questions and Answers 1957-58	1977

The references below are given in an abbreviated form. The page number of this book appears on the left; on the right come the volume and page number(s) of the Collected Works text. For example:

1 6:25-27. This abbreviation indicates that the reference on page one of this book may be found in Collected Works Volume 6 on pages 25-27.

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Glossary

The philosophical and psychological terms in this glossary are defined almost entirely in the words of Sri Aurobindo.

Absolute, the — the supreme reality of that transcendent Being which we call God. Indian thought calls it Brahman, European thought the Absolute because it is a self-existent which is absolved of all bondage to relativities.

adhara — support, receptacle; the mental-vital-physical system as a vessel of the spiritual consciousness.

adverse forces — *see* hostile forces

Agni — the godhead of fire; the fire of aspiration, purification, transformation.

Ananda — delight, beatitude, bliss.

Ashram — a spiritual community; the house or houses of a Teacher or Master of spiritual philosophy in which he receives and lodges those who come to him for the teaching and practice.

Asura — a hostile, anti-divine being, in revolt against the Divine, against the Light and the Truth.

Avatar — a divine incarnation, one in whom the divine consciousness has descended into human birth for a great world-work. The word avatara means a descent: it is the coming down of the Divine below the line which divides the divine from the human world or status.

Brahma — the creator Deity; in the Veda the Power of the Divine which creates the worlds by the Word.

Brahman — the Reality, the Eternal, the Infinite, the Absolute, the Supreme Being, the One beside whom there is nothing else existent.

Brahmin — the priest of knowledge, the man of learning and thought and

knowledge.

Chit — pure consciousness, pure awareness; the essential consciousness of the Spirit.

Conscious Force — the Power of the Divine Mother which dominates all existence and builds the worlds; the universal Energy that is the Power of the Cosmic Spirit working out the cosmic and individual truth of things.

consciousness — the self-aware force of existence. The essence of consciousness is the power to be aware of itself and its objects; but it is not only power of awareness of self and things, it is or has a dynamic and creative energy.

Cosmic Spirit — the universal aspect of the Divine, the one Self inhabiting the universe and containing everything in it.

creation, the — the manifestation; the self-projection of Brahman into the conditions of Space and Time.

dharma — the truth or law of our being; the right law of individual and social life. ,

Divine, the — the Supreme Being from which all comes and in which all lives. In its supreme Truth, the Divine is absolute and infinite peace, consciousness, existence, power and delight.

Divine Consciousness — the spiritual consciousness to which the Divine alone exists, because all is the Divine. Force, Light, Knowledge and Ananda together make up the higher, spiritual or Divine Consciousness.

ego — the separative sense of individuality which makes each being conceive of itself as an independent personality. Ego implies the identification of one's existence with the outer mental, vital and physical self.

evolution — the progressive unfolding of Spirit out of the density of material consciousness; the method by which the One Being and

Consciousness, involved here in Matter, liberates itself from matter into life, from life into mind, from mind into the Spirit.

Force, the — the Divine Force, the one Energy that alone exists and alone makes universal or individual action possible, for this Force is the Divine itself in the body of its power. In the individual, it is a Force for purification, illumination, transformation.

Gita, the — short form of Bhagavad Gita, “the Song of the Blessed Lord”, being the spiritual teachings of Sri Krishna spoken to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra: it occurs as an episode in the Mahabharata.

gnostic — of the nature of Gnosis, a supreme totally self-aware and all-aware Intelligence having the truth-vision of things.

God — the Absolute, the Spirit, the Self spaceless and timeless, the Self manifest in the Cosmos and Lord of Nature. God is the All and that which transcends the All.

Gods, the — in origin and essence the Gods are permanent Emanations of the Divine put forth from the Supreme; in their cosmic action they are Powers and Personalities of the Divine each with its independent cosmic standing, function and work in the universe.

Grace, the — the Divine Grace, the help of a higher Divine Force other than the force of Karma, which can lift the sadhak beyond the present possibilities of his nature.

Guru — spiritual teacher; the Guide in the Yoga; one who has realised the Truth and himself possesses and is able to communicate the light, the experience.

higher consciousness — the higher spiritual or divine consciousness.

higher mind — a luminous thought-mind whose instrumentation is through an elevated thought-power and comprehensive mental sight. The higher mind is the range of spiritualised mind just above the normal mind.

higher vital — the mental vital and emotional vital parts of the vital being

taken together. The mental vital gives a mental expression by thought, speech or otherwise to the emotions, desires, passions, sensations or other movements of the vital being; the emotional vital is the seat of various feelings such as love, joy, sorrow, hatred and the rest.

hostile forces — anti-divine, not merely undivine forces that are in revolt against the Divine, against the Light and Truth, and opposed to the Yoga.

Ignorance, the — the ignorance of oneness; the separative consciousness and the egoistic mind and life that flow from it and all that is natural to them.

inconscience, the — *see* inconscient, the

inconscient, the — the Supreme's state of self-involved, self-oblivious consciousness and force which is at the basis of the material world.

inner being — the inner mind, inner vital, inner physical, with the psychic behind as the inmost.

inspiration — something that comes out of the knowledge planes like a flash and opens up the mind to the Truth in a moment.

integral — of or relating to all the parts of the being, mental, vital, physical, psychic, spiritual.

Integral Yoga — a union (yoga) in all the parts of our being with the Divine and a consequent transmutation of all their now jarring elements into the harmony of a higher divine consciousness and existence; this yoga implies not only the realisation of God but the entire consecration and change of the inner and outer life till it is fit to manifest a divine consciousness and become part of a divine work.

intuition — an edge or ray or outleap of a superior light; it gets the Truth in flashes and turns these flashes of Truth-perception into intuitions — intuitive ideas.

Karma — action, work; the work or function of a man; action entailing its consequences, the chain of act and consequence.

kartavyam karma — the work to be done.

Knowledge, the — the knowledge of the One Reality, the consciousness of Unity.

Life — Being at labour in Matter to express itself in terms of Conscious Force; an energy of Spirit subordinated to action of mind and body, which fulfils itself through mentality and physicality and acts as a link between them.

Light, the — primarily a spiritual manifestation of the Divine Reality illuminative and creative. Spiritual Light is not knowledge, but the illumination that comes from above and liberates the being from obscurity and darkness.

lower nature — the universal lower Nature is a mechanism of active Force put forth for the working of the evolutionary Ignorance. The lower nature of the individual is his mind, life and body.

lower vital — the part of the vital being made up of the smaller movements of human life-desire and life-reactions. The lower vital is occupied with small desires and feelings, such as food desire, sexual desire, small likings, dislikings, vanity, quarrels, love of praise, anger at blame, little wishes of all kinds, etc.

Mahabharata — the epic poem dealing with the great war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas.

Mahasaraswati — the Divine Mother's Power of Work and her spirit of perfection and order.

manifestation, the — *see* creation, the

mantra — set words or sounds having a spiritual significance or power; sacred syllable, name or mystic formula,

material vital — the part of the lower vital plane or being turned entirely to physical things, full of desires and greeds and seekings for pleasure on the physical plane.

Matter — Being manifest as substance; substance of the one Conscious

Being; a form of the force of Conscious Being.

mental, the — *see* mind

mental being — the mental conscious being, the mental self.

mind — the part of the nature which has to do with cognition and intelligence, with ideas, with mental or thought perceptions, the reactions of thought to things, with the truly mental thoughts and formations, mental vision and will etc. that are part of man's intelligence. The ordinary mind has three main parts: mind proper, vital mind and physical mind.

Mother, the — the Divine Mother, the consciousness and force of the Divine, which is the Mother of all things; the Divine in its consciousness force. The Mother is the divine Conscious Force that dominates all existence, upholding us and the universe.

Nature — the outer or executive force of the Conscious Force which forms and moves the worlds; a mechanism of active Force put out for the working of the evolutionary Ignorance.

Nirvana — nothingness; the extinction of all being as we know it.

occultism — the knowledge and right use of the hidden forces of Nature.

overmental — of or relating to the Overmind.

Overmind — the highest plane of spiritualised mind. Full of lights and powers, the Overmind sees calmly, steadily, in great masses and extensions of space and time and relation; it creates and acts in the same way. The Overmind is a delegate of the Supermind, its delegate to the cosmic Ignorance. The Supermind is the total Truth-Consciousness; the Overmind draws down the truths separately and gives them a separate identity,

physical, the — the part of the individual nature which includes the physical body and the physical consciousness.

physical being — the physical conscious being; the physical self.

physical consciousness — the physical mind and the physical vital as well as the body consciousness proper.

physical mind — the part of the mind which is concerned with physical things only; limited by the physical view and experience of things, it mentalises the experience brought by the contact of outward life and things, but does not go beyond that.

plane — a level of world-existence; a world or level in the scale of being; a settled poise or world of existence and consciousness.

Pralaya — dissolution, disintegration, destruction; the end of a cycle of aeons; the temporary disintegration of a universal form of existence and all the individual forms which move in its rounds.

Presence, the — the Divine Presence; the sense and perception of the Divine as a Being felt as present in one's existence and consciousness or in relation with it.

psychic — of or relating to the soul (as distinguished from the mind and vital). Used in the sense of the Greek word "psyche", meaning "soul", the term "psychic" refers to all the movements and experiences of the soul, those which rise from or directly touch the psychic being; it does not refer to all the more inward and all the abnormal experiences in which the mind and vital predominate.

psychic, the — the soul; the psychic essence; the psychic being.

psychic being — the evolving of the individual, the divine portion in him which evolves from life to life, growing by its experiences until it becomes a fully conscious being. From its place behind the heart centre, the psychic being supports the mind, life and body, aiding their growth and development.

Ramayana — the life-story of Rama, a celebrated epic poem of Valmiki.

realisation — the reception in the consciousness and the establishment there of the fundamental truths of the Divine.

rebirth — the evolution and growth of the individual into a more and

more developed and perfect consciousness through a succession of lives on earth.

reincarnation — *see* rebirth

revelation — the direct sight, the direct hearing or the inspired memory of the Truth.

Rishi — seer, sage.

Sachchidananda — Sat-Chit-Ananda, the One Divine Being with a triple aspect of Existence (Sat), Consciousness (Chit) and Delight (Ananda). God is Sachchidananda.

sadhak — one who practises a spiritual discipline; one who is getting or trying to get spiritual realisation.

sadhana — spiritual practice or discipline; the practice of Yoga.

Samadhi — inner or yogic trance; the sanctuary or tomb of a saint.

sannyasi — an ascetic; one who has renounced the world.

Sat — Being, Existence; pure existence.

sattwic — of the nature of Sattwa, the quality of Nature that illumines and clarifies. Sattwa is the quality of light, harmony, purity and peace.

Self — the universal Spirit, the self-existent Being, the conscious essential Existence one in all.

Shakti — Force, Power; the Divine Power; the consciousness and force of the Divine.

siddhi — perfection, accomplishment of the aims of Yoga.

soul — the psychic essence; the divine element in the individual; a spark of the Divine that comes down into the manifestation to support the evolution of the individual. In the course of the evolution, the soul grows and evolves in the form of a soul-personality, the psychic being. The term “soul” is often used as a synonym for “psychic being”.

Spirit — the Consciousness above mind; the Self which is always in oneness with the Divine.

spiritual — of the Spirit. All contacts with the Self, the Higher Consciousness, the Divine above are spiritual.

spiritualised mind — the higher ranges of mind overtopping our normal mind and leading to Supermind. These successive states, levels or graded powers of being are hidden in our own superconscious parts; in ascending order they are: Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind, Intuition and Overmind.

subconscious, the — a nether diminished consciousness which lies between the Inconscient and the conscious mind, life and body; it is an automatic, obscure, incoherent, half-unconscious realm in which light and consciousness can with difficulty come. The subconscious is not to be confused with the subliminal; the subconscious is that which is below the ordinary physical consciousness, the subliminal that which is behind and supports it.

subconscious, the — *see* subconscious, the

subliminal, the — the inner being taken in its entirety of inner mind, inner vital, inner physical, with the soul or psychic entity supporting them. The subliminal in man is the largest part of his nature; it is not subconscious, but conscient and greater than the waking consciousness.

subliminal being — *see* subliminal, the

subtle body — a subtler material existence behind our outer body which provides the substance not only of our physical but of our vital and mental sheaths.

subtle physical, the — the plane of consciousness closest to the physical; it may also be considered as a sub-plane of the physical with a vital and mental character.

superconscious, the — something above our present consciousness from which the higher consciousness comes down into the body; it includes the higher planes of mental being as well as the native heights of

supramental and pure spiritual being.

superman — the intermediary being between man and the supramental being; the next superior type after man, he who will consciously evolve out of man, rise above ego and mind and possess himself universalised and divinised in a divine force, a divine love and joy and a divine knowledge.

Supermind — *see* Supramental, the

Supramental, the — the Supermind, the Truth-Consciousness, the highest divine consciousness and force operative in the universe. A principle of consciousness superior to mentality, it exists, acts and proceeds in the fundamental truth and unity of things and not like the mind in their appearances and phenomenal divisions. Its fundamental character is knowledge by identity, by which the Self is known, the Divine Sachchidananda is known, but also the truth of manifestation is known because this too is that.

supramental being — the spiritual being beyond the human being, possessed of the supramental consciousness and force, who shall impose on his mental, vital, bodily workings a higher law than that of the dividing mind.

Supreme, the — the transcendent Divine Being.

Titan — an Asura.

transformation — not just a change of consciousness, but the bringing down of the higher, divine consciousness and nature into the lower nature of mind, life and body, and the replacement of the lower by the higher.

Truth-Consciousness — the Supramental, the Supermind; the consciousness of essential truth of being (satyam), of ordered truth of active being (ritam) and the vast self-awareness (brihat) in which alone this consciousness is possible.

Upanishads — a class of Hindu sacred writings, regarded as the source of the Vedanta philosophy.

Veda — a generic name for the most ancient Indian sacred literature; the term “Veda” is sometimes reserved for the mantras or metrical hymns of the Rigveda.

Vedanta — a system of philosophy and spiritual discipline based on the Upanishads and teaching the culminating knowledge of the Absolute.

vital, the — the life-nature made up of desires, sensations, feelings, passions, energies of action, will of desire, reactions of the desire-soul of man and all that play of possessive and other related instincts, anger, greed, lust, etc. that belong to this field of nature. The vital has three main parts: the higher vital, the central vital or vital proper, and the lower vital being.

vital being — the vital conscious being, the vital self.

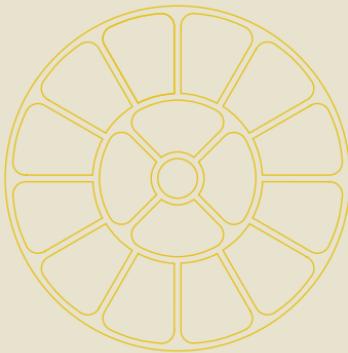
vital plane — the plane connected with the life-world or desire-world a plane in which life and desire find their untrammelled play and their easy self-expression and from there throw their influences and formations on our outer life.

Will, the — the Divine Will, something that has descended here into the evolutionary world of Ignorance, standing at the back of things, pressing on the Darkness with its Light, leading things presently towards the best possible in the conditions of a world of Ignorance.

Witness, the — the witness consciousness calm and detached from the outer actions of Nature.

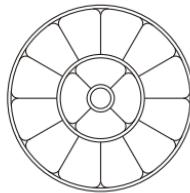
Yoga — union (yoga) with the Divine and the conscious seeking for this union. Yoga is in essence the union of the soul with the immortal being and consciousness and bliss of the Divine, effected through the human nature with a result of development into the divine nature of being.

Yogi — one who practises Yoga, but especially one who has attained the goal of Yoga and is already established in spiritual realisation.



THE MOTHER

Prayers and Meditations



The Mother

**Prayers
and
Meditations**

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry

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The Mother in Algeria, 1906-1907

Publisher's Note

Prayers and Meditations consists of extracts from the Mother's spiritual diaries. Most of them are from the period 1912 to 1917. The 313 prayers reproduced here were selected by the Mother for publication. Written in French, they appear here in English translation.

A small collection of prayers — about one-fifth of the total — was brought out in English in 1941. Sri Aurobindo translated some of those prayers himself and, in the other cases, revised translations made by disciples. These prayers wholly or partly translated by Sri Aurobindo are marked in this volume with an asterisk (*).

Details about publication are provided in the Note on the Text.

Some give their soul
to the Divine, some their
life, some offer their work,
some their money. A few
consecrate all of themselves
and all they have - soul,
life, work, wealth; these
are the true children of
God. Others give nothing.
These whatever their position,
power and riches are for the
Divine purpose valueless
cyphers.

This book is meant for
those who aspire for an
utter consecration to the
Divine



1941 - 1948.

This book comprises extracts from a diary written during years of intensive yogic discipline. It may serve as a spiritual guide to three principal categories of seekers: those who have undertaken self-mastery, those who want to find the road leading to the Divine, those who aspire to consecrate themselves more and more to the Divine Work.

The Mother

Prayers and Meditations

*November 2, 1912**

ALTHOUGH my whole being is in theory consecrated to Thee, O Sublime Master, who art the life, the light and the love in all things, I still find it hard to carry out this consecration in detail. It has taken me several weeks to learn that the reason for this written meditation, its justification, lies in the very fact of addressing it daily to Thee. In this way I shall put into material shape each day a little of the conversation I have so often with Thee; I shall make my confession to Thee as well as it may be; not because I think I can tell Thee anything—for Thou art Thyself everything, but our artificial and exterior way of seeing and understanding is, if it may be so said, foreign to Thee, opposed to Thy nature. Still by turning towards Thee, by immersing myself in Thy light at the moment when I consider these things, little by little I shall see them more like what they really are,—until the day when, having made myself one in identity with Thee, I shall no more have anything to say to Thee, for then I shall be Thou. This is the goal that I would reach; towards this victory all my efforts will tend more and more. I aspire for the day when I can no longer say “I”, for I shall be *Thou*.

How many times a day, still, I act without my action being consecrated to Thee; I at once become aware of it by an indefinable uneasiness which is translated in the sensibility of my body by a pang in my heart. I then make my action objective to myself and it seems to me ridiculous, childish or blameworthy; I deplore it, for a moment I am

sad, until I dive into Thee and, there losing myself with a child's confidence, await from Thee the inspiration and strength needed to set right the error in me and around me,—two things that are one; for I have now a constant and precise perception of the universal unity determining an absolute interdependence of all actions.

*November 3, 1912**

LET Thy Light be in me like a Fire that makes all alive; let Thy divine Love penetrate me. I aspire with all my being for Thy reign as sovereign and master of my mind and heart and body; let them be Thy docile instruments and Thy faithful servitors.

*November 19, 1912**

I SAID yesterday to that young Englishman who is seeking for Thee with so sincere a desire, that I had definitively found Thee, that the Union was constant. Such is indeed the state of which I am conscious. All my thoughts go towards Thee, all my acts are consecrated to Thee; Thy Presence is for me an absolute, immutable, invariable fact, and Thy Peace dwells constantly in my heart. Yet I know that this state of union is poor and precarious compared with that which it will become possible for me to realise tomorrow, and I am as yet far, no doubt very far, from that identification in which I shall totally lose the notion of the “I”, of that “I”, which I still use in order to express myself, but which is each time a constraint, like a term unfit to express the thought that is seeking for expression. It seems to me indispensable for human communication, but all depends on what this “I” manifests; and how many times already, when I pronounce it, it is Thou who speakest in me, for I have lost the sense of separativity.

But all this is still in embryo and will continue to grow towards perfection. What an appeasing assurance there is in this serene confidence in Thy All-Might!

Thou art all, everywhere, and in all, and this body which acts is Thy own body, just as is the visible universe in its entirety; it is Thou who breathest, thinkest and lovest in this substance which, being Thyself, desires to be Thy willing servant.

*November 26, 1912**

WHAT a hymn of thanksgiving should I not be raising at each moment unto Thee! Everywhere and in everything around me Thou revealest Thyself and in me Thy Will and Consciousness express themselves always more and more clearly even to the point of my having almost entirely lost the gross illusion of “me” and “mine”. If a few shadows, a few flaws can be seen in the great Light which manifests Thee, how shall they bear for long the marvellous brightness of Thy resplendent Love? This morning, the consciousness that I had of the way Thou art fashioning this being which was “I” can be roughly represented by a great diamond cut with regular geometrical facets, a diamond in its cohesion, firmness, pure limpidity, transparency, but a brilliant and radiant flame in its intense ever-progressive life. But it was something more, something better than all that, for nearly all sensation inner and outer was exceeded and that image only presented itself to my mind as I returned to conscious contact with the outer world.

It is Thou that makest the experience fertile, Thou who renderest life progressive, Thou who compellest the darkness to vanish in an instant before the Light, Thou who givest to Love all its power, Thou who everywhere raisest up matter in this ardent and wonderful aspiration, in this sublime thirst for Eternity.

Thou everywhere and always; nothing but *Thou* in the essence and in the manifestation.

O Shadow and Illusion, dissolve! O Suffering, fade and disappear! Lord Supreme, art Thou not there?

*November 28, 1912**

THE outer life, the activity of each day and each instant, is it not the indispensable complement of our hours of meditation and contemplation? And is not the proportion of time given to each the exact image of the proportion which exists between the amount of effort to be made for the preparation and realisation? For meditation, contemplation, Union is the result obtained — the flower that blooms; the daily activity is the anvil on which all the elements must pass and repass in order to be purified, refined, made supple and ripe for the illumination which contemplation gives to them. All these elements must be thus passed one after the other through the crucible before outer activity becomes needless for the integral development. Then is this activity turned into the means to manifest Thee so as to awaken the other centers of consciousness to the same dual work of the forge and the illumination. Therefore are pride and satisfaction with oneself the worst of all obstacles. Very modestly we must take advantage of all the minute opportunities offered to knead and purify some of the innumerable elements, to make them supple, to make them impersonal, to teach them forgetfulness of self and abnegation and devotion and kindness and gentleness; and when all these modes of being have become habitual to them, then are they ready to participate in the Contemplation, and to identify themselves with Thee in the supreme Concentration. That is why it seems to me that the work must be long and slow even for the best and that striking conversions cannot

be integral. They change the orientation of the being, they put it definitively on the straight path; but truly to attain the goal none can escape the need of innumerable experiences of every kind and every instant.

. . . O Supreme Master who shinest in my being and each thing, let Thy Light be manifest and the reign of Thy Peace come for all.

*December 2, 1912**

SO long as one element of the being, one movement of the thought is still subjected to outside influences, not solely under Thine, it cannot be said that the true Union is realised; there is still the horrible mixture without order and light,— for that element, that movement is a world, a world of disorder and darkness, as is the entire earth in the material world, as is the material world in the entire universe.

*December 3, 1912**

LAST night I had the experience of the effectivity of confident surrender to Thy guidance; when it is needful that something should be known, one knows it, and the more passive the mind to Thy illumination, the clearer and the more adequate is its expression.

I listened to Thee as Thou spakest in me, and I would have liked to write down what Thou saidst so that the formula in all its precision might not be lost,—for now I should not be able to repeat what was said. Then I thought that this care for conservation was again an insulting lack of confidence towards Thee, for Thou canst make of me all that I need to be, and in the measure in which my attitude allows Thee to act on me and in me, Thy omnipotence has no limits. To know that at each instant what must be surely is, as perfectly as is possible, for all those who know how to see Thee in everything and everywhere! No more fear, no more uneasiness, no more anguish; nothing but a perfect Serenity, an absolute Confidence, a supreme unwavering Peace.

*December 5, 1912**

IN Peace and Silence the Eternal manifests; allow nothing to disturb you and the Eternal will manifest; have perfect equality in face of all and the Eternal will be there. . . . Yes, we should not put too much intensity, too much effort into our seeking for Thee; the effort and intensity become a veil in front of Thee; we must not desire to see Thee, for that is still a mental agitation which obscures Thy Eternal Presence; it is in the most complete Peace, Serenity and Equality that all is Thou even as Thou art all, and the least vibration in this perfectly pure and calm atmosphere is an obstacle to Thy manifestation. No haste, no inquietude, no tension, Thou, nothing but Thou, without any analysis or any objectivising, and Thou art there without a possible doubt, for all becomes a Holy Peace and a Sacred Silence.

And that is better than all the meditations in the world.

*December 7, 1912**

LIKE a flame that burns in silence, like a perfume that rises straight upward without wavering, my love goes to Thee; and like the child who does not reason and has no care, I trust myself to Thee that Thy Will may be done, that Thy Light may manifest, Thy Peace radiate, Thy Love cover the world. When Thou willest I shall be in Thee, Thyself, and there shall be no more any distinction; I await that blessed hour without impatience of any kind, letting myself flow irresistibly toward it as a peaceful stream flows toward the boundless ocean.

Thy Peace is in me, and in that Peace I see Thee alone present in everything, with the calm of Eternity.

*December 10, 1912**

O SUPREME Master, Eternal Teacher, it has been once more granted me to verify the unequalled effectivity of a full confidence in Thy leading. Thy Light was manifested through my mouth yesterday and it met no resistance in me; the instrument was willing, supple, keen of edge.

It is Thou who art the doer in each thing and each being, and he who is near enough to Thee to see Thee in all actions without exception, will know how to transform each act into a benediction.

To abide always in Thee is the one thing that matters, always and ever more and more in Thee, beyond illusions and the deceptions of the senses, not drawing back from action, refusing it, rejecting it—a struggle useless and pernicious—but living Thee alone in the act whatever it may be, ever and always Thee; then the illusion is dispelled, the falsehoods of the senses vanish, the bond of consequences is broken, all is transformed into a manifestation of the glory of Thy Eternal Presence.

So let it be. Amen.

*December 11, 1912**

I AWAIT, without haste, without inquietude, the tearing of another veil, the Union made more complete. I know that the veil is formed of a whole mass of small imperfections, of attachments without number. . . . How shall all these disappear? Slowly, as the result of countless small efforts and a vigilance not faltering even for a moment, or suddenly, through a great illumination of Thy All-Puissant Love? I know not, I do not even put to myself the question; I wait, keeping watch as best I can, in the certitude that nothing exists save Thy Will, that Thou alone art the doer and I am the instrument; and when the instrument is ready for a completer manifestation, the manifestation will quite naturally take place.

Already there is heard from behind the veil the wordless symphony of gladness that reveals Thy sublime Presence.

*February 5, 1913**

THEY voice is heard as a melodious chant in the stillness of my heart, and is translated in my head by words which are inadequate and yet replete with Thee. And these words are addressed to the Earth and say to her: — Poor sorrowful Earth, remember that I am present in thee and lose not hope; each effort, each grief, each joy and each pang, each call of thy heart, each aspiration of thy soul, each renewal of thy seasons, all, all without exception, what seems to thee sorrowful and what seems to thee joyous, what seems to thee ugly and what seems to thee beautiful, all infallibly lead thee towards me, who am endless Peace, shadowless Light, perfect Harmony, Certitude, Rest and Supreme Blessedness.

Hearken, O Earth, to the sublime voice that arises,
Hearken and take new courage!

*February 8, 1913**

O LORD, Thou art my refuge and my blessing, my strength, my health, my hope, and my courage. Thou art supreme Peace, unalloyed Joy, perfect Serenity. My whole being prostrates before Thee in a gratitude beyond measure and a ceaseless worship; and that worship goes up from my heart and my mind towards Thee like the pure smoke of incense of the perfumes of India.

Let me be Thy herald among men, so that all who are ready may taste the beatitude that Thou grantest me in Thy infinite Mercy, and let Thy Peace reign upon earth.

*February 10, 1913**

MY being goes up to Thee in thanksgiving, not because Thou usest this weak and imperfect body to manifest Thyself, but because *Thou dost manifest Thyself*, and that is the Splendour of splendours, the Joy of joys, the Marvel of marvels. All who seek Thee with ardour should understand that Thou art there whenever there is need of Thee; and if they could have the supreme faith to give up seeking Thee, but rather to await Thee, at each moment putting themselves integrally at Thy service, Thou wouldst be there whenever there was need of Thee; and is there not always need of Thee with us, whatever may be the different, and often unexpected, forms of Thy manifestation?

Let Thy glory be proclaimed,
And sanctify life;
Let it transform men's hearts,
And Thy Peace reign on earth.

*February 12, 1913 **

AS soon as all effort disappears from a manifestation, it becomes very simple, with the simplicity of a flower opening, manifesting its beauty and spreading its fragrance without clamour or vehement gesture. And in this simplicity lies the greatest power, the power which is least mixed and least gives rise to harmful reactions. The power of the vital should be mistrusted, it is a tempter on the path of the work, and there is always a risk of falling into its trap, for it gives you the taste of immediate results; and, in our first eagerness to do the work well, we let ourselves be carried away to make use of this power. But very soon it deflects all our action from the right course and introduces a seed of illusion and death into what we do.

Simplicity, simplicity! How sweet is the purity of Thy Presence! . . .

*March 13, 1913**

... LET the pure perfume of sanctification burn always, rising higher and higher, and straighter and straighter, like the ceaseless prayer of the integral being, desiring to unite with Thee so as to manifest Thee.

*May 11, 1913 **

AS soon as I have no longer any material responsibilities, all thoughts about these things flee far away from me, and I am solely and entirely occupied with Thee and Thy service. Then, in that perfect peace and serenity, I unite my will to Thine, and in that integral silence I listen to Thy truth and hear its expression. It is by becoming conscious of Thy Will and identifying ours with Thine that there is found the secret of true liberty and all-puissance, the secret of the regeneration of forces and the transfiguration of the being.

To be constantly and integrally at one with Thee is to have the assurance that we shall overcome every obstacle and triumph over all difficulties, both within and without.

O Lord, Lord, a boundless joy fills my heart, songs of gladness surge through my head in marvellous waves, and in the full confidence of Thy certain triumph I find a sovereign Peace and an invincible Power. Thou fillest my being, Thou animatest it, Thou settest in motion its hidden springs, Thou illuminest its understanding, Thou intensiest its life, Thou increasest tenfold its love; and I no longer know whether the universe is I or I the universe, whether Thou art in me or I in Thee; Thou alone art and all is Thou; and the streams of Thy infinite grace fill and overflow the world.

Sing O lands, sing O peoples, sing O men,
The Divine Harmony is there.

June 15, 1913

EVEN he who might have attained a perfect contemplation in silence and solitude would have arrived at it only by withdrawing from his body, by disregarding it; and so the substance of which the body is constituted would remain as impure, as imperfect as before, since he would have left it to itself; and by a misguided mysticism, through the lure of supraphysical splendours, the egoistic desire to unite with Thee for his own personal satisfaction, he would have turned his back upon the very reason of his earthly existence, he would have refused like a coward to accomplish his mission — the redemption and purification of Matter. To know that a part of our being is perfectly pure, to commune with this purity, to be identified with it, can be useful only if this knowledge is later used to hasten the transfiguration of the earth, to accomplish Thy sublime work.

June 17, 1913

GRANT, O Lord, that I may be like a fire that illumines and gives warmth, like a spring of water that quenches thirst, like a tree that shelters and protects. . . . Men are so unhappy and ignorant and have so great a need of help.

My trust in Thee, the certitude within me grow deeper day by day; and day by day too I feel Thy love more ardent within my heart, Thy light more brilliant and yet also more sweet; and more and more am I unable to distinguish Thy Work from my life and my individual being from the entire earth.

O Lord, Lord, Thy Splendour is infinite, marvellous is Thy Truth; and Thy all-powerful Love shall save the world.

*June 18, 1913 **

To turn towards Thee, unite with Thee, live in Thee and for Thee, is supreme happiness, unmixed joy, immutable peace; it is to breathe infinity, to soar in eternity, no longer feel one's limits, escape from time and space. Why do men flee from these boons as though they feared them? What a strange thing is ignorance, that source of all suffering! How miserable that obscurity which keeps men away from the very thing which would bring them happiness and subjects them to this painful school of ordinary existence fashioned entirely from struggle and suffering!

June 27, 1913

THE voice is so modest, so impartial, so sublime in its patience and mercy that it does not make itself heard with any authority, any force of will but comes like a cool breeze, sweet and pure, like a crystalline murmur that brings a note of harmony to a discordant concert. Yet, for him who knows how to listen to the note, to breathe that breeze, it holds such treasures of beauty, such a fragrance of pure serenity and noble grandeur, that all foolish illusions vanish or are transformed into a joyful acceptance of the marvellous truth that has been glimpsed.

*July 21, 1913**

... **Y**ET what patience is needed! How imperceptible the stages of progress! ...

Oh! how I call Thee from the very depths of my heart, True Light, Sublime Love, Divine Master who art the source of our light and of our living, our guide and our protector, the Soul of our soul and the Life of our life, the Reason of our being, the supreme Knowledge, the immutable Peace!

July 23, 1913

O LORD, inconceivable Splendour, may Thy Beauty spread through all the earth, may Thy Love be kindled in every heart and Thy Peace reign over all.

A deep and solemn chant, smiling and subtle, rises from my heart, and I do not know whether this chant goes from me to Thee or comes from Thee to me or whether Thou and I and the entire universe are this marvellous chant of which I have just become conscious. . . . Surely there is no longer any Thou or I or any separate universe; only an immense harmony is there, sublime and infinite, which is all things and of which all things will one day grow aware. It is the harmony of boundless Love, Love victorious over all suffering and all obscurity.

By this law of Love, Thy law, I want to live more and more integrally; to it unreservedly I give myself.

And all my being exults in an inexpressible Peace.

August 2, 1913

THIS morning, as I was glancing over the month that is beginning and wondering how I could serve Thee better, I heard the small voice within like a murmur in the silence, and this is what it said to me: "See how very little all outer circumstances matter. Why strive and strain so to realise thy own conception of Truth? Be more supple, more trusting. The only duty is not to let oneself be troubled by anything. To torment oneself about doing the right thing causes as much harm as a bad will. Only in a calm as of deep waters can be found the possibility of True Service."

And this reply was so luminous and pure, it carried within itself such a striking reality, that the state it described was communicated without any difficulty. It seemed to me I was floating in the calm of deep waters; I understood; I saw clearly what the best attitude would be; and now I have only to ask Thee, O Sublime Master, my Supreme Teacher, to give me the strength and clear-sightedness I need to remain constantly in this state.

"Do not torment thyself, child. Silence, peace, peace."

August 8, 1913

O SWEET harmony that dwellest in all things, sweet harmony that fillest my heart, manifest thyself in the most external forms of life, in every feeling, every thought, every action.

All is to me beautiful, harmonious, silent, despite the outer turmoil. And in this silence it is Thou, O Lord, whom I see; and I see Thee in so unique a way that I can express this perception only as that of an unvarying smile. In truth, the real nature of the feeling experienced in the presence of the sweetest, most calm, most compassionate smile has a poor resemblance to what I feel when I see Thee in this way.

May Thy Peace be with all.

August 15, 1913

IN this even-fall, Thy Peace deepens and grows more sweet and Thy Voice more clear and distinct in the silence that fills my being.

O Divine Master, Thine is all our life, our thought, our love, all our being. Take unto Thyself once more what is Thine; for Thou art ourselves in our Reality.

August 16, 1913

O LOVE, divine Love, Thou fillest my whole being and overflowest on every side. I am Thyself even as Thou art I, and I see Thee in each being, each thing, from the soft breath of the passing breeze to the glorious sun which gives us light and is a symbol of Thee.

O Thou whom I cannot understand, in the silence of the purest devotion I adore Thee.

August 17, 1913

O LORD, Master of our life, let us soar very high above all care for our material preservation. Nothing is more humiliating and depressing than these thoughts so constantly turned towards the preservation of the body, these preoccupations with health, the means of subsistence, the framework of life. . . . How very insignificant is all this, a thin smoke that a simple breath can disperse or a single thought turned towards Thee dispel like a vain mirage!

Deliver those who are in this bondage, O Lord, even as those who are the slaves of passion. On the path that leads to Thee these obstacles are at once terrible and puerile—terrible for those who are yet under their sway, puerile for one who has passed beyond.

How shall I describe that utter relief, that delightful lightness which comes when one is free from all anxiety for oneself, for one's life and health and satisfaction, and even one's progress?

This relief, this deliverance Thou hast granted to me, O Thou, Divine Master, Life of my life and Light of my light, O Thou who unceasingly teachest me love and makest me know the purpose of my existence.

It is Thou who livest in me, Thou alone; and why should I be preoccupied with myself and what might happen to me? Without Thee the dust constituting this body that strives to manifest Thee, would disperse amorphous and inconscient; without Thee this sensibility which makes possible a relation with all other centres of

manifestation, would vanish into a dark inertia; without Thee this thought that animates and illumines the whole being, would be vague, vacant, unrealised; without Thee the sublime love which vivifies, coordinates, animates and gives warmth to all things would be a yet unawakened possibility. Without Thee all is inert, brute or inconscient. Thou art all that illumines and enraptures us, the whole reason of our existence and all our goal. Is this not enough to cure us of every personal thought, to make us spread our wings and soar above the contingencies of material life, so as to fly away into Thy divine atmosphere and be able to return as Thy messengers to the earth to announce the glorious tidings of Thy approaching Advent?

O Divine Master, sublime Friend, marvellous Teacher, in a fecund silence I bow to Thee.

October 7, 1913

THIS return after an absence of three months to the house which is consecrated to Thee, O Lord, has been the occasion of two experiences. The first is that in my outer being, my surface consciousness, I no longer have the least feeling of being in my own home and the owner of anything there: I am a stranger in a strange land, much more of a stranger here than in the open countryside among the trees; and I smile, now that I have learnt what I did not know, I smile at the idea of having felt myself "mistress of the house", an idea I had before my departure; it was necessary for all pride to be broken, crushed, trampled down definitively so that I could at last understand, see and feel things as they are. I used to offer to Thee this dwelling, O Lord, as though it were possible that I should possess something and consequently be able to make an offering of it to Thee. All is Thine, O Lord, it is Thou who placest all things at our disposal; but how blind we are when we imagine that we can be owners of any one of these! I am a visitor here as elsewhere, as everywhere, Thy messenger and Thy servant upon earth, a stranger among men, and yet the very soul of their life, the love of their heart. . . .

Secondly, the whole atmosphere of the house is charged with a religious solemnity; one immediately goes down into the depths; the meditations here are more ingathered and serious; dispersion vanishes to give place to concentration; and I feel this concentration literally descending from my head and entering into my heart;

and the heart seems to attain a depth more profound than the head. It is as though for three months I had been loving with my head and that now I were beginning to love with my heart; and this brings me an incomparable solemnity and sweetness of feeling.

A new door has opened in my being and an immensity has appeared before me.

I cross the threshold with devotion, feeling hardly worthy yet of entering upon this hidden path, veiled to the sight and as though invisibly luminous within.

All is changed, all is new; the old wrappings have fallen off and the new-born child half-opens its eyes to the shining dawn.

November 22, 1913

A FEW minutes passed in silence before Thee are worth centuries of felicity. . . .

Grant, O Lord, that all shadows may be dispelled and that I may be more and more Thy faithful servant in constancy and serenity. Before Thee may my heart be pure as a pure crystal, so that wholly it may reflect Thee.

Oh! the sweetness of abiding in silence before Thee....

November 25, 1913

THE greatest enemy of a silent contemplation turned towards Thee is surely this constant subconscious registering of the multitude of phenomena with which we come into contact. So long as we are mentally active, our conscious thought veils for us this overactivity of our subconscious receptivity; an entire part of our sensibility, and perhaps not the smallest, acts like a cine-camera without our knowledge and indeed to our detriment. It is only when we silence our active thought, which is relatively easy, that we see this multitude of little subconscious notations surging up from every side and often drowning us under their overwhelming flood. So it happens that, as soon as we attempt to enter the silence of deep contemplation, we are assailed by countless thoughts—if thoughts they could be called—which do not interest us in the least, do not represent for us any active desire, any conscious attachment, but only prove to us our inability to control what may be described as the mechanical receptivity of our subconscious. A considerable labour is needed to silence all these useless noises, to stop this wearisome train of images and to purify one's mind of these thousand little nothings, so obstructing and worthless. And it is so much time uselessly lost; it is a terrible wastage.

And the remedy? In an over-simple way, certain ascetic disciplines recommend solitude and inaction: sheltering one's subconscious from all possible registration; that seems to me a childish remedy, for it leaves the ascetic

at the mercy of the first surprise-attack; and if one day, confident of being perfectly master of himself, he wants to come back among his fellowmen in order to help them, his subconscious, so long deprived of its activity of reception, will surely indulge it more intensively than ever before, as soon as the least opportunity offers.

There is certainly another remedy. What is it? Undoubtedly, one must learn to control one's subconscious just as one controls one's conscious thought. There must be many ways of achieving this. Regular introspection in the Buddhist manner and a methodical analysis of one's dreams — formed almost always from this subconscious registration — are part of the method to be found. But there is surely something more rapidly effective. . . .

O Lord, Eternal Master, Thou shalt be the Teacher, the Inspirer; Thou wilt teach me what should be done, so that after an indispensable application of it to myself, I may make others also benefit from what Thou hast taught me.

With a loving and trustful devotion, I bow to Thee.

November 28, 1913

IN this calm concentration which comes before day-break, more than at any other moment, my thought rises to Thee, O Lord of our being, in an ardent prayer.

Grant that this day which is about to dawn may bring to the earth and to men a little more of pure light and true peace; may Thy manifestation be more complete and Thy sweet law more widely recognised; may something higher, nobler, more true be revealed to mankind; may a vaster and deeper love spread abroad so that all painful wounds may be healed; and may this first sunbeam dawning upon the earth be the herald of joy and harmony, a symbol of the glorious splendour hidden in the essence of life.

O Divine Master, grant that today may bring to us a completer consecration to Thy Will, a more integral gift of ourselves to Thy work, a more total forgetfulness of self, a greater illumination, a purer love. Grant that in a communion growing ever deeper, more constant and entire, we may be united always more and more closely to Thee and become Thy servitors worthy of Thee. Remove from us all egoism, root out all petty vanity, greed and obscurity. May we be all ablaze with Thy divine Love; make us Thy torches in the world.

A silent hymn of praise rises from my heart like the white smoke of incense of the perfumes of the East.

And in the serenity of a perfect surrender, I bow to Thee in the light of the rising day.

November 29, 1913

WHY all this noise, all this movement, this vain and futile agitation; why this whirlwind carrying men away like a swarm of flies caught in a storm? How sad is the sight of all that wasted energy, all those useless efforts! When will they stop dancing like puppets on a string, pulled they know not by whom or what? When will they find time to sit quietly and go within, to recollect themselves and open that inner door which screens from them Thy priceless treasures, Thy infinite boons? . . .

How sorrowful and miserable seems to me their life of ignorance and obscurity, their life of mad agitation and unprofitable dispersion! — when one single spark of Thy sublime light, one single drop of Thy divine love, can transform this suffering into an ocean of delight!

O Lord, my prayer soars towards Thee: May they know at last Thy peace and that calm and irresistible strength which comes of an immutable serenity — the privilege of those whose eyes have been opened and who are able to contemplate Thee in the flaming core of their being.

But the hour of Thy manifestation is come.

And soon hymns of gladness will burst forth on every side.

Before the solemnity of this hour I bow down in devotion.

December 13, 1913

GIVE me Thy light, O Lord, grant that I do not fall into any error. Grant that the infinite reverence, the utter devotion, that intense and profound love I bring to Thee may be radiant, convincing, contagious, and be awakened in every heart.

O Lord, Eternal Master, Thou art my Light and my Peace; guide my steps, open my eyes, illumine my heart, and lead me on the paths that go straight to Thee.

O Lord, Lord, grant that I may have no other will than Thine and that all my acts may be an expression of Thy divine law.

A great Light floods my whole being, and I am no longer conscious of anything but Thee. . . .

Peace, peace, peace upon all the earth.

December 16, 1913

PURE and disinterested love, Thy love in what we are able to perceive and manifest of it, is the sole key that can open all hearts that seek for Thee. Those who follow the path of the intellect may have a very high and true conception; they may have all the information about the true life, the life One with Thee, but they do not *know* it; they have no inner experience of that life and are ignorant of all contact with Thee. These men whose knowledge is intellectual and whose action is confined to a construction which they believe to be the best, are the most difficult of all to convert; it is harder to awaken the consciousness of the Divine in them than in any other person of goodwill. Love alone can work this miracle, for love opens all doors, penetrates every wall, clears every obstacle. And a little true love does more than the most beautiful speeches.

Lord, let this pure flower of love blossom in me, that it may give its fragrance to all those who come near us, and that this fragrance may sanctify them.

In this love lie peace and joy, the fount of all strength and all realisation. It is the infallible healer, the supreme consoler; it is the victor, the sovereign teacher.

O Lord, my sweet Master, Thou whom I adore in silence and to whom I have entirely consecrated myself, Thou who governest my life, kindle in my heart the flame of Thy pure love that it may burn like a glowing brazier, consuming all imperfections and transforming into a comforting warmth and radiating light the dead wood of egoism and the black coals of ignorance.

O Lord, I turn towards Thee with a devotion at once
joyful and solemn and I implore Thee:
Let Thy love manifest,
Thy reign come.
May Thy peace govern the world.

December 29, 1913

O LORD, grant that this collective convention of the ending year be for us also the occasion to put an end to a whole lot of bonds and attachments, illusions and weaknesses which have no longer any purpose in our lives. At every moment we must shake off the past like falling dust, that it may not soil the virgin path which, at every moment also, is opening before us.

May our mistakes, acknowledged and rectified within us, be no more than vain mirages powerless to bring any consequences and, pressing our foot down firmly upon all that no longer should exist, on all ignorance, all obscurity, all egoism, may we take our flight boldly towards wider horizons and intenser light, a more perfect compassion, a more disinterested love. . . . towards Thee.

I hail Thee, O Lord, Master of our life, and I want to proclaim Thy reign over all the earth.

January 1, 1914

TO Thee, supreme Dispenser of all boons, to Thee who givest life its justification, by making it pure, beautiful and good, to Thee, Master of our destinies and goal of all our aspirations, was consecrated the first minute of this new year.

May it be completely glorified by this consecration; may those who hope for Thee, seek Thee in the right path; may those who seek Thee find Thee, and those who suffer, not knowing where the remedy lies, feel Thy life gradually piercing the hard crust of their obscure consciousness.

I bow down in deep devotion and in boundless gratitude before Thy beneficent splendour; in the name of the earth I give Thee thanks for manifesting Thyself; in its name I implore Thee to manifest Thyself ever more fully, in an uninterrupted growth of Light and Love.

Be the sovereign Master of our thoughts, our feelings, our actions.

Thou art our reality, the only Reality.

Without Thee all is falsehood and illusion, all is dismal obscurity.

In Thee are life and light and joy.

In Thee is supreme Peace.

January 2, 1914

THIS marvellous silence manifests Thee despite the mad human agitation—the immutable and constant silence so living in all things that one has but to listen to hear it, in contrast with all that is futile noise, vain agitation, useless dispersion of energies. Let it flower in our being as a source of light and peace; may its power radiate over all in beneficent streams.

Thou art the savour of all life and the reason for all activity, the goal of our thoughts.

January 3, 1914

IT is always good to look within oneself from time to time and see that one is nothing and can do nothing, but afterwards one must turn one's eyes to Thee, knowing that Thou art all and Thou canst do all.

Thou art the life of our life
and the light of our being,
Thou art the master of our destinies.

January 4, 1914

THE tide of materialistic thoughts is always on the watch, waiting for the least weakness, and if we relax but one moment from our vigilance, if we are even slightly negligent, it rushes in and invades us from all sides, submerging under its heavy flood the result sometimes of numberless efforts. Then the being enters a sort of torpor, its physical needs of food and sleep increase, its intelligence is clouded, its inner vision veiled, and in spite of the little interest it really finds in such superficial activities, they occupy it almost exclusively. This state is extremely painful and tiring, for nothing is more tiring than materialistic thoughts, and the mind, worn out, suffers like a caged bird which cannot spread its wings and yet longs to be able to soar freely.

But perhaps this state has its own use which I do not see. . . . In any case, I do not struggle; and like a child in its mother's arms, like a fervent disciple at the feet of his master, I trust myself to Thee and surrender to Thy guidance, sure of Thy victory.

January 5, 1914

FOR a long while I have been sitting with this notebook before me, unable to make up my mind to write, so much is all within me mediocre, worthless, insipid, hopelessly commonplace. Not a single thought in my head, not a single feeling in my heart, a complete indifference to everything and an insurmountable dullness.

How can such a state be of any use?

I am a veritable zero in the world.

But all this is not at all important. And provided Thy work is accomplished, Thy manifestation takes place and the earth becomes more and more Thy harmonious and fruitful kingdom, it matters little whether I accomplish this Work or not.

And as it is certain that It will be done, I should have no reason to worry even if I felt like it. From the depths to the outermost surface, all this, my being, is only a handful of dust; it is but natural that it should be scattered on the winds and leave no trace behind. . . .

January 6, 1914

THOU art the one and only goal of my life and the centre of my aspiration, the pivot of my thought, the key of the synthesis of my being. And as Thou art beyond all sensation, all feeling and all thought, Thou art the living but ineffable experience, the Reality lived in the depths of the being but untranslatable in our poor words; and it is because human intelligence is powerless to reduce Thee to a formula that some, a little disdainfully, label "sentiment" the knowledge that it is possible to have of Thee, but it is surely as far from sentiment as it is from thought. So long as one has not attained this supreme Knowledge, one has no solid basis or lasting centre for one's mental and emotional synthesis, and all other intellectual constructions can only be arbitrary, artificial and vain.

Thou art eternal silence and perfect peace in what we are able to perceive of Thee.

Thou art all the perfection we must acquire, all the marvels to be realised, all the splendour to be manifested.

And all our words are but children's babblings when we venture to speak of Thee.

In silence is the greatest reverence.

January 7, 1914

GIVE them all, O Lord, Thy peace and light, open their blinded eyes and their darkened understanding; calm their futile worries and their vain anxieties. Turn their gaze away from themselves and give them the joy of being consecrated to Thy work without calculation or mental reservation. Let Thy beauty flower in all things, awaken Thy love in all hearts, so that Thy eternally progressive order may be realised upon earth and Thy harmony be spread until the day all becomes Thyselv in perfect purity and peace.

Oh! let all tears be wiped away, all suffering relieved, all anguish dispelled, and let calm serenity dwell in every heart and powerful certitude strengthen every mind. Let Thy life flow through all like a regenerating stream that all may turn to Thee and draw from that contemplation the energy for all victories.

January 8, 1914

LET us shun the paths that are too easy and ask no effort, the paths which give us the illusion of having reached our goal; let us shun that negligence which opens the door to every downfall, that complacent self-admiration which leads to every abyss. Let us understand that however great may have been our efforts, our struggles, even our victories, compared with the distance yet to be travelled, the one we have already covered is nothing; and that all are equal — infinitesimal grains of dust or identical stars — before Eternity.

But Thou art the conqueror of all obstacles, the Light that illumines all ignorance, the Love that vanquishes all pride. And no error can persist in front of Thee.

January 9, 1914

LORD, incomprehensible reality, Thou who ever fleest before our conquest, effective though it may be, Thou who shalt always be the Unknown despite all that we shall learn to know of Thee, despite all that we shall ravish from Thy eternal mystery, we would go forward, making a complete and constant effort, combining all the multiple paths leading to Thee, go forward like a rising, indomitable tide, breaking down all obstacles, crossing every barrier, lifting up every veil, scattering all clouds, piercing through all darkness, go forward towards Thee, ever to Thee, in a movement so powerful, so irresistible that a whole multitude may be drawn in our wake, and the earth, conscious of Thy new and eternal Presence, understand at last its true purpose, and live in the harmony and peace of Thy sovereign realisation.

Teach us always more,
Give us more light,
Dispel our ignorance,
Illumine our minds,
Transfigure our hearts,
And give us the Love that never runs dry, and makes
Thy sweet law flower in every being.
We are Thine for all Eternity.

January 10, 1914

MY aspiration rises towards Thee ever the same in its almost childlike form, so ordinary in its simplicity, but my call is ever more ardent, and behind the faltering words there is all the fervour of my concentrated will. And I implore Thee, O Lord, in spite of the naïveté of this expression that is hardly intellectual, I implore Thee for more true light, true purity, sincerity and love, and all this for all, for the multitude constituting what I call my being, and for the multitude constituting the universal being; I implore Thee, though I know that it is perfectly useless to implore Thee, for we alone, in our ignorance and ill-will, can stand in the way of Thy glorious and total manifestation, but something childlike within me finds a support in this mental attitude; I implore Thee that the peace of Thy reign may spread throughout the earth.

O inaccessible summit which we unceasingly scale without ever reaching Thee, sole Reality of our being whom we believe we have found only to see Thee immediately escape us, marvellous state which we think we have seized but which leads us farther and farther into ever unexplored depths and immensities; no one can say, "I have known Thee," and yet all carry Thee in themselves, and in the silence of their soul can hear the echo of Thy voice; but this silence is itself progressive, and whatever be the perfection of the union we have realised, as long as we belong by our body to the world

of relativity, this Union with Thee can always grow more perfect.

But all these words we use to speak about Thee are only idle talk. Grant that I may become Thy faithful servitor.

January 11, 1914

EVERY moment all the unforeseen, the unexpected, the unknown is before us, every moment the universe is created anew in its entirety and in every one of its parts. And if we had a truly living faith, if we had the absolute certitude of Thy omnipotence and Thy sole reality, Thy manifestation could at each moment become so evident that the whole universe would be transformed by it. But we are so enslaved to everything that is around us and has gone before us, we are so influenced by the whole totality of manifested things, and our faith is so weak that we are yet unable to serve as intermediaries for the great miracle of transfiguration. . . . But, Lord, I know that it will come one day. I know that a day will come when Thou wilt transform all those who come to us; Thou wilt transform them so radically that, liberated completely from the bonds of the past, they will begin to live in Thee an entirely new life, a life made solely of Thee, with Thee as its sovereign Lord. And in this way all anxieties will be transformed into serenity, all anguish into peace, all doubts into certainties, all ugliness into harmony, all egoism into self-giving, all darkness into light and all suffering into immutable happiness.

But art Thou not already performing this beautiful miracle? I see it flowering everywhere around us!

O divine law of beauty and love, supreme liberator, there is no obstacle to Thy power. Only our own blindness deprives us of the comforting sight of Thy constant victory.

My heart sings a hymn of gladness and my thought
is illumined with joy.

Thy transcendent and marvellous love is the sove-
reign Master of the world.

January 12, 1914

A TEACHING can be profitable only if it is perfectly sincere, that is, if it is lived while it is being given, and words often repeated, thoughts expressed frequently can no longer be sincere. . . .

January 13, 1914

THOU hast passed, O Lord, like a great wave of love over my life, and when I was immersed in it I knew integrally and intensely that I had offered to Thee—when? I do not know, at no precise moment and most probably always—my thought, my heart, my body in a living holocaust.

And in that great love which enveloped me and that consciousness of perfect renunciation there was an immense serenity vaster than the universe and a sweetness so intense and so full of infinite compassion that tears began to flow slowly from my eyes. Nothing could have been more remote from both suffering and happiness, it was unutterable peace.

O sublime Love, centre of our life, Marvel of marvels, at last I find Thee again and live anew in Thee, but how much more powerfully, how much more consciously than before! How much better I know Thee, understand Thee! Each time I find Thee anew, my communion with Thee grows more integral, more complete, more definitive.

O Presence of ineffable beauty, thought of supreme redemption, sovereign power of salvation, with what joy all my being feels Thee living within it, sole principle of its life and of all life, wonderful builder of all thought, all will, all consciousness. On this world of illusion, this sombre nightmare, Thou hast bestowed Thy divine reality, and each atom of matter contains something of Thy Absolute.

Thou art, Thou livest, Thou radiatest, Thou reignest.

January 19, 1914

O LORD, divine Master of Love, Thou art the eternal victor, and those who become perfectly attuned to Thee, those who live for Thee alone and by Thee alone, cannot but win all victories; for in Thee is the supreme force, the force of complete disinterestedness, of perfect clear-sightedness, sovereign kindness.

In Thee, by Thee, all is transfigured and glorified; in Thee is found the key to all mysteries and all powers. But one can attain Thee only if one no longer desires anything except to live in Thee, serve Thee, make Thy divine work triumph more swiftly for the salvation of a greater number of men.

O Lord, Thou alone art real and all else is an illusion; for when one lives in Thee one sees and understands all things, nothing escapes Thy perfect knowledge, but everything wears another appearance; for all is Thou in essence, all being the fruit of Thy work, of Thy magnanimous intervention; and in the most sinister darkness Thou couldst kindle a star.

May our devotion grow ever deeper.

May our consecration grow ever more perfect.

And mayst Thou, already the real sovereign of life, become in effect its true sovereign.

*January 24, 1914**

O THOU who art the sole reality of our being, O sublime Master of love, Redeemer of life, let me have no longer any other consciousness than of Thee at every instant and in each being. When I do not live solely with Thy life, I agonise, I sink slowly towards extinction; for Thou art my only reason for existence, my one goal, my single support. I am like a timid bird not yet sure of its wings and hesitating to take its flight; let me soar to reach definitive identity with Thee.

January 29, 1914

IT is Thy Presence in every being, O divine Master of love, that makes it possible for every man, even the most cruel, to be open to pity and even the most vile to respect, almost despite himself, honour and justice. It is Thou who, beyond all conventions and prejudices, illuminest with a special light, divine and pure, all that we are and all that we do, and makest us see clearly the difference between what we actually are and what we could be.

Thou art the impassable barrier set up against the excess of evil, darkness and ill-will; Thou art the living hope in every heart of all possible and future perfections.

To Thee all the fervour of my adoration.

Thou art the gateway within reach of our conception leading to unsuspected and inconceivable splendours, splendours which will be revealed to us progressively.

January 30, 1914

ALL that is conscious within me belongs unreservedly to Thee, and gradually I shall strive always harder to conquer the subconscious, the yet dark bedrock.

O divine Master of love, eternal Teacher, Thou guidest our lives. It is in Thee alone and for Thee alone that we want to live; enlighten our consciousness, guide our steps, and grant that we may do the utmost we can, using all our energies solely to serve Thee.

January 31, 1914

EVERY morning may our thought rise fervently towards Thee, asking Thee how we can manifest and serve Thee best. At every moment in the manifold choices which we can make and which, despite their apparent insignificance, are always of great importance — since according to our decision we become subject to one category of determinisms or another — at every moment may our attitude be such that Thy divine Will may determine our choice and that thus it may be Thou who directest our entire life. According to the consciousness in which we are when taking a decision, we become subject to the determinism of the order of realities in which we are conscious; whence the consequences, often unforeseen and troublesome, that are contradictory to the general orientation of one's life and form obstacles which are sometimes terrible to overcome later. Therefore, O Lord, Divine Master of love, we want to be conscious of Thee and Thee alone, be identified with Thy supreme law each time we take a decision, each time we choose, so that it may be Thy Will which moves us, and that our life be thus effectively and integrally consecrated to Thee.

In Thy Light we shall see, in Thy Knowledge we shall know, in Thy Will we shall realise.

*February 1, 1914**

I TURN towards Thee who art everywhere and within all and outside all, intimate essence of all and remote from all, centre of condensation for all energies, creator of conscious individualities: I turn towards Thee and salute Thee, O liberator of the worlds, and, identified with Thy divine love, I contemplate the earth and its creatures, this mass of substance put into forms perpetually destroyed and renewed, this swarming mass of aggregates which are dissolved as soon as constituted, of beings who imagine that they are conscient and permanent individualities and who are as ephemeral as a breath, always alike or almost the same, in their diversity, repeating indefinitely the same desires, the same tendencies, the same appetites, the same ignorant errors.

But from time to time Thy sublime light shines in a being and radiates through him over the world, and then a little wisdom, a little knowledge, a little disinterested faith, heroism and compassion penetrates men's hearts, transforms their minds and sets free a few elements from that sorrowful and implacable wheel of existence to which their blind ignorance subjects them.

But how much greater a splendour than all that have gone before, how marvellous a glory and light would be needed to draw these beings out of the horrible aberration in which they are plunged by the life of cities and so-called civilisations! What a formidable and, at the same time, divinely sweet puissance would be needed to turn aside all these wills from the bitter struggle for their selfish,

mean and foolish satisfactions, to snatch them from this vortex which hides death behind its treacherous glitter, and turn them towards Thy conquering harmony!

O Lord, eternal Master, enlighten us, guide our steps, show us the way towards the realisation of Thy law, towards the accomplishment of Thy work.

I adore Thee in silence and listen to Thee in a religious concentration.

February 2, 1914

O LORD, I would like to be so ardent a love that all lonelinesses may be filled up by it and all sorrows soothed.

O Lord, I cry unto Thee: Make me a burning brazier which consumes all suffering and transforms it into joyous light irradiating the hearts of all! . . .

Grant my prayer: Transform me into a brazier of pure love and boundless compassion.

February 5, 1914

WHAT could be said that is not always the very same aspiration: the law of divine love, the purest expression of what we can conceive of Thee, must be realised more and more upon earth and triumph over all ignorant egoism; we must become more and more perfectly the faithful servitors of that power of love and light, we must live in it, by it; that alone must live and act in us.

O Lord, become the sovereign Master of our lives and dispel all the obscurities which can still prevent us from seeing Thee and constantly communing with Thee.

Liberate us from all ignorance, liberate us from ourselves that we may open wide the doors of Thy glorious manifestation.

February 7, 1914

FOR him who, by being integrally united with Thee, is constantly conscious of what expresses Thee most perfectly in action considering the circumstances, no external rule is any longer necessary. The principles of life are in sum only makeshifts for diminishing as far as possible the ignorance of those who do not know Thee yet, and for counteracting somehow or other the moments of blindness and obscurity of those who have only an intermittent contact with Thee.

To make rules for oneself and to make them as general, that is, as supple as possible, is good, but provided one considers them only as artificial lights which should not be used except when the full natural light of communion with Thee fails. Besides, a constant revision of these rules is imperative, for they can be only the expression of a present knowledge and must necessarily gain by all growth and improvement of knowledge.

That is why when meditating upon the attitude one should have towards all those who come to us, in order not only to refrain from doing them any harm but, above all, to strive to do them the utmost possible good — that is, to help them as best one can in making the supreme discovery, the discovery of Thee within them — I saw clearly that no rule was vast and supple enough to be perfectly adapted to Thy law, and that the only true solution was to be always in communion with Thee, so that it could be adapted perfectly to all the infinite variety of circumstances.

February 8, 1914

O LORD, sweet Master of love, Thou who bringest us out of the darkness to awaken us to consciousness, who deliverest us from suffering to make us commune within Thy eternal peace, every morning my aspiration soars ardently towards Thee, and I implore that my being, integrally awake to Thy knowledge, may now live only by Thee, in Thee, for Thee; I implore that more and more perfectly identified with Thee, I may now be only Thyself manifested in word and act; I implore that all those who come to us, all who are in contact with us, may awaken to the full knowledge of Thy divine presence, Thy sovereign law, and let themselves be definitively transformed by it; I implore that all men upon earth, in spite of their bitter suffering, may feel dawning in it the sublime consolation of Thy light and love, and the marvellous comfort of Thy peace; I implore that every substance impregnated more and more by Thy sovereign forces may put up an ever-diminishing resistance of blind ignorance against Thee, and that triumphing over all darkness Thou mayst transfigure definitively and integrally this universe of strife and anguish into a universe of harmony and peace. . . .

So that Thy law may be fulfilled.

February 9, 1914

W HATEVER names may be given to Thee, O Lord, by the élite of humanity, athirst for something absolute, it seeks ardently for Thee. Even those who seem to move farthest away from Thee, even those who are exclusively occupied with themselves, are they not searching for an absolute in sensation, an absolute in satisfaction, and in spite of its vanity that search also can some day lead to Thee; Thou art far too much at the core, at the heart of all things for even the very worst egoisms not to be transformed by Thee into aspirations. . . . The only thing we must fear and avoid is the inertia of inconscience, of blind and heavy ignorance. That state lies at the very bottom of the infinite ladder that rises towards Thee. And all Thy effort consists in pulling Matter out of this primeval darkness so as to awaken it to consciousness. Even passion is preferable to inconscience. We must therefore go constantly forward to conquer that universal bedrock of inconscience and through our own organism transform it gradually into luminous consciousness.

O Lord, sweet Master of love, Thou whom I see so living, so conscious within all things, I adore Thee with a boundless devotion.

February 10, 1914

WITH peace in our hearts, with light in our minds, we feel Thee, O Lord, so living within us that we await events with serenity, knowing that Thy path is everywhere, since we carry it in our own being, and that in all circumstances we can become the heralds of Thy word, the servitors of Thy work.

With a calm and pure devotion we hail Thee and recognise Thee as the sole reality of our being.

February 11, 1914

AS soon as one rises above the perception of contingencies, as soon as one's consciousness is identified with Thy supreme consciousness and one enters thus into that omniscience which I cannot define except as absolute Knowledge, how easy and even a little childish seem all those problems about what should or should not be done, about all the resolutions to be taken.

From the standpoint of the eternal work, the one thing important is to become conscious of Thee, to identify oneself with Thee and to maintain that conscious identification constantly. But as to what best use can be made of our physical organism, Thy mode of manifestation upon earth, it is quite enough, when Thou alone art conscious within us, to turn the gaze to the body in order to know beyond all doubt what is the best thing it can do, what activity will most fully utilise all its energies.

And without attaching much importance to that activity, that altogether relative utilisation, one can take without any difficulty, any inner debate, decisions which, to the outer consciousness appear the boldest and most dangerous.

How simple everything is for him who sees all things from the height of Thy eternity!

I hail Thee, O Lord, with a joyful and trusting devotion. May the peace of Thy divine love be with all beings.

February 12, 1914

WHEN, conscious with Thy supreme consciousness, one considers all earthly circumstances, one sees their complete relativity and says, "To do this thing or that, after all that is not of much importance; yet a particular mode of action will be the best utilisation of a certain faculty, a certain temperament. All actions, whatever they may be, even the most contradictory in appearance, can be an expression of Thy law to the extent that they are infused with the consciousness of that law, which is not a law of practical application that can be translated into principles or rules in the ordinary human consciousness but a law of attitude, of a constant and prevailing consciousness, something that cannot be expressed in formulas but may be lived."

But as soon as one falls back into the ordinary consciousness, nothing should be treated lightly and with indifference, the least circumstances, the smallest acts have a great importance and should be seriously considered; for we must try at every moment to do that which will make the identification of our consciousness with the eternal consciousness easy, and avoid carefully all that could be an obstacle to this identification. It is then that the rules of conduct having as their foundation perfect personal disinterestedness should find their full value.

With peace in my heart, with light in my mind, the hope born of certitude in all my being, I greet Thee, O Lord, divine Master of eternal love.

Thou art the reason of our existence and our goal.

February 13, 1914

IN the silence of an intense concentration I would unite my consciousness with Thy absolute consciousness, I would identify myself with Thee, O sovereign Lord of our being, divine Master of love, so that Thy law may become clear and perceptible to us and we may live only by it and for it.

How beautiful, grand, simple and calm everything is in the hours when my thought takes its flight to Thee and unites with Thee! And from the day it becomes possible for us to keep this supreme clear-sightedness constantly, with what an airy and yet sure step we shall walk through life above all obstacles and unhesitatingly! For,—this I know through experience—all doubt, all hesitation ceases the very moment one is conscious of Thy law; and if one perceives clearly the extreme relativity of all human action, one knows at the same time, with exactitude and precision, which action is the least relative in regard to one's body and one's own way of acting . . . and all obstacles *really* vanish as if by magic. All our efforts, O Lord, will henceforth be bent on an ever more constant realisation of this marvellous state.

May the peace of Thy certitude awaken in every heart!

*February 14, 1914**

PEACE, peace upon all the earth!

May all escape from the ordinary consciousness and be delivered from the attachment for material things; may they awake to the knowledge of Thy divine presence, unite themselves with Thy supreme consciousness and taste the plenitude of peace that springs from it.

Lord, Thou art the sovereign Master of our being. Thy law is our law, and with all our strength we aspire to identify our consciousness with Thy eternal consciousness, that we may accomplish Thy sublime work in each thing and at every moment.

Lord, deliver us from all care for contingencies, deliver us from the ordinary outlook on things. Grant that we may henceforth see only with Thy eyes and act only by Thy will. Transform us into living torches of Thy divine love.

With reverence, with devotion, in a joyful consecration of my whole being I give myself, O Lord, to the fulfilment of Thy law.

Peace, peace upon all the earth!

*February 15, 1914**

O THOU, sole Reality, Light of our light and Life of our life, Love supreme, Saviour of the world, grant that more and more I may be perfectly awakened into the awareness of Thy constant presence. Let all my acts conform to Thy law; let there be no difference between my will and Thine. Extricate me from the illusory consciousness of my mind, from its world of fantasies; let me identify my consciousness with the Absolute Consciousness, for that art Thou.

Give me constancy in the will to attain the end, give me firmness and energy and the courage which shakes off all torpor and lassitude.

Give me the peace of perfect disinterestedness, the peace that makes Thy presence felt and Thy intervention effective, the peace that is ever victorious over all bad will and every obscurity.

Grant, I implore Thee, that all in my being may be identified with Thee. May I be nothing else any more than a flame of love utterly awakened to a supreme realisation of Thee.

February 16, 1914

O SUPREME, sole Reality, true Consciousness, permanent Oneness, sovereign repose of perfect light, with what an intensity I aspire to be conscious of only Thee, to be only Thyself. This incessant whirl of unreal personalities, this multiplicity, this complexity, this excessive inextricable confusion of conflicting thoughts, struggling tendencies, battling desires, seems to me more and more frightful. I must emerge from this raging sea, land on Thy serene and peaceful shore. Give me the energy of an indefatigable swimmer. I would conquer Thee however great may be the effort needed for that. . . . O Lord, ignorance must be vanquished, illusion dispelled, this sorrowful universe must come out of its hideous nightmare, end its terrible dream, and awaken at last to the consciousness of Thy sole Reality.

O immutable Peace, deliver men from ignorance; may Thy plenary and pure Light reign everywhere!

February 17, 1914

O LORD, how ardently my aspiration rises to Thee: give us the full consciousness of Thy law, the constant perception of Thy will, so that our decision may be Thy decision and our life solely consecrated to Thy service and as perfect an expression as possible of Thy inspiration.

O Lord, dispel all darkness, all blindness; may every one enjoy the calm certitude that Thy divine illumination brings!

February 19, 1914

O LORD, be ever present in my thought! Not that I ask this of Thee, for I know that Thy Presence is constant and sovereign, I know that all we see and all that escapes our sight is just what it is only through Thy marvellous intervention, because of Thy divine law of love; but I say this and repeat it, I implore, in order to escape from forgetfulness and negligence.

Oh! to become Thy living love so powerfully as to transfigure and illumine all things, so completely as to awaken peace and benevolent satisfaction in all.

Oh, to become Thy divine love, pure and clear-sighted, to be that always and everywhere! . . .

February 20, 1914

THE only thing that is important, the one thing that counts, is the will to be identified more and more completely with Thee, to unite our consciousness with Thy absolute Consciousness, to be more and more the peaceful, calm, disinterested, strong servitor of Thy sovereign law, Thy loving Will.

O Lord, give me the peace of perfect disinterestedness, the peace which makes Thy Presence effective, Thy intervention efficacious, the Peace ever triumphant over all bad will, all obscurity.

Lord, very humbly I pray to Thee that I may be equal to my task, that nothing in me, conscious or unconscious, may betray Thee by neglecting to serve Thy sacred mission.

In a silent devotion, I bow to Thee. . . .

February 21, 1914

EVERY day, every moment should be an occasion for a new and completer consecration, and not one of those enthusiastic and flurried consecrations, over-active, full of illusions about the work, but a deep and silent consecration which is not necessarily visible but penetrates and transfigures all action. Our mind, solitary and peaceful, should always repose in Thee and from that pure summit have the exact perception of realities, of the sole and eternal Reality behind all unstable and fleeting appearances.

O Lord, my heart is purified of all uneasiness and anguish; it is steady and calm and sees Thee in all things; and whatever our outer actions may be, whatever the circumstances the future has in store for us, I know that Thou alone livest, that Thou alone art real in Thy immutable permanence and it is in Thee that we live. . . .

May there be peace upon all the earth.

February 22, 1914

WHEN I was a child of about thirteen, for nearly a year every night as soon as I had gone to bed it seemed to me that I went out of my body and rose straight up above the house, then above the city, very high above. Then I used to see myself clad in a magnificent golden robe, much longer than myself; and as I rose higher, the robe would stretch, spreading out in a circle around me to form a kind of immense roof over the city. Then I would see men, women, children, old men, the sick, the unfortunate coming out from every side; they would gather under the outspread robe, begging for help, telling of their miseries, their suffering, their hardships. In reply, the robe, supple and alive, would extend towards each one of them individually, and as soon as they had touched it, they were comforted or healed, and went back into their bodies happier and stronger than they had come out of them. Nothing seemed more beautiful to me, nothing could make me happier; and all the activities of the day seemed dull and colourless and without any real life, beside this activity of the night which was the true life for me. Often while I was rising up in this way, I used to see at my left an old man, silent and still, who looked at me with kindly affection and encouraged me by his presence. This old man, dressed in a long dark purple robe, was the personification — as I came to know later — of him who is called the Man of Sorrows.

Now that deep experience, that almost inexpressible reality, is translated in my mind by other ideas which I may describe in this way:

Many a time in the day and night it seems to me that I am, or rather my consciousness is, concentrated entirely in my heart which is no longer an organ, not even a feeling, but the divine Love, impersonal, eternal; and being this Love I feel myself living at the centre of each thing upon the entire earth, and at the same time I seem to stretch out immense, infinite arms and envelop with a boundless tenderness all beings, clasped, gathered, nestled on my breast that is vaster than the universe. . . . Words are poor and clumsy, O divine Master, and mental transcriptions are always childish. . . . But my aspiration to Thee is constant, and truly speaking, it is very often Thou and Thou alone who livest in this body, this imperfect means of manifesting Thee.

May all beings be happy in the peace of Thy illumination!

February 23, 1914

GRANT O Lord, that we may be more and more conscious of Thy law, that is, be one with it, so that we may foster its manifestation in all things.

Lord, grant that I may become master of my vagabond thought, that living in Thee I may see life only through Thee, and the illusion of material reality may come to an end and be replaced by a perception more in conformity with Thy eternal reality.

Let me live constantly in Thy divine Love, so that it may live in me and through me.

Grant that I may be an efficient and clear-sighted collaborator and that everything within me may foster the plenitude of Thy manifestation.

I know all my imperfections, my difficulties, my weaknesses, I feel all my ignorance, but I put my full trust in Thee and bow down before Thee in silent devotion.

February 25-26, 1914

HE who wants to serve Thee worthily should not be attached to anything, not even to those activities which enable him to commune more consciously with Thee. . . . But if as a result of the totality of circumstances, material things still take a greater place in life than usual, one must know how not to become absorbed by them, how to keep in one's inmost heart the clear vision of Thy presence and live constantly in that serene peace which nothing can disturb. . . .

Oh, to do everything seeing only Thee everywhere and thus soar above the act that has been carried out, without letting any chain that holds us prisoners to the earth burden our flight. . . .

O Lord, grant that the offering I make to Thee of my being may be integral and effective.

With a respectful and loving devotion I bow down before Thee, O ineffable Essence, inconceivable Reality, Nameless One.

February 27, 1914

O LORD, I sense the infinite happiness which is the portion of those whose life is entirely consecrated to Thee. And this does not depend upon outer circumstances but on one's own state of being and its greater or lesser degree of illumination. A perfect consecration to Thy law cannot but bring about modifications in the totality of circumstances, yet it is not these which make possible and express this perfect consecration. I mean that it is not under certain circumstances, always the same for all, that Thy law is manifested; for every one this manifestation is different according to his temperament, that is, according to the mission which for the moment is assigned to him in physical life.

But what is unchangeable and universal is the happy peace, the luminous and immutable serenity of all those who are solely consecrated to Thee, who no longer have any darkness, ignorance, egoistic attachment or bad will in them.

Oh, may all awake to this divine peace.

March 1, 1914

IT is in one's own self that all the obstacles lie, it is in one's own self that all the difficulties are found, it is in one's own self that there is all the darkness and ignorance. Were we to travel throughout the earth, were we to go and bury ourselves in some solitude, break with all our habits, lead the most ascetic life, yet if some bond of illusion held back our consciousness far from Thy absolute Consciousness, if some egoistic attachment cut us off from the integral communion with Thy divine Love, we would be no nearer Thee despite all outer circumstances. Can any circumstances be considered more or less favourable? I doubt it; it is the idea we have about them which enables us to profit much or little by the lessons they give us.

O Lord, I implore Thee! Grant that I may be perfectly conscious and master of all that constitutes this personality, so that I may be delivered from myself and Thou alone mayst live and act through these multiple elements.

To live in Love, by Love, for Love, indissolubly united to Thy highest manifestation. . . .

Always more light, more beauty, more truth!

March 3, 1914

AS the day of departure draws near, I enter into a kind of self-communion; I turn with a fond solemnity towards all those thousand little nothings around us which have silently, for so many years, played their role of faithful friends; I thank them gratefully for all the charm they were able to give to the outer side of our life; I wish that if they are destined to pass into other hands than ours for any length of time, these hands may be gentle to them and know all the respect that is due to what Thy divine Love, O Lord, has brought out from the dark conscience of chaos.

Then I turn towards the future and my gaze becomes more solemn still. What it holds in store for us I do not know nor care to know; outer circumstances have no importance at all; my only wish is that this may be for us the beginning of a new inner period in which, more detached from material things, we could be more conscious of Thy law and more one-pointedly consecrated to its manifestation; that it may be a period of greater light, greater love, of a more perfect dedication to Thy cause.

In a silent adoration I contemplate Thee. . . .

March 4, 1914

IT is likely to be the last time for a long while that I am writing at this table, in this calm room all charged with Thy Presence. For the next three days I shall probably not be able to write. . . . In an indrawn state I contemplate this turning page, vanishing into the dream of the past and look at the new page all full potentially of the dream of the future. . . . And yet how trifling this seems, how childish and unimportant, when seen in the light of Thy eternity. The only thing that is important is to obey Thy law with love and joy.

O Lord, grant that everything in us may adore and serve Thee.

May Peace be with all!

Geneva, March 6, 1914

AFTER having suffered acutely from their suffering, I turned towards Thee, trying to heal it by infusing into it a little of that divine Love which is the source of all peace and all happiness. We must not run away from suffering, we must not love and cultivate it either, we must learn how to go deep down into it sufficiently to turn it into a lever powerful enough for us to force open the doors of the eternal consciousness and enter the serenity of Thy unchanging Oneness.

Surely this sentimental and physical attachment which causes an agonizing wrench when bodies are separated, is childish from a certain point of view, when we contemplate the impermanence of outer forms and the reality of Thy essential Oneness; but, on the other hand, is not this attachment, this personal affection, an unconscious effort in men to realise outwardly, as far as possible, that fundamental oneness towards which they always move without even being aware of it? And precisely because of that, is not the suffering that separation brings one of the most effective means of transcending this outer consciousness, of replacing this superficial attachment by the integral realisation of Thy eternal Oneness?

This is what I wished for them all; this is what I ardently willed for them, and that is why, assured of Thy victory, certain of Thy triumph, I confided their grief to Thee that by illuminating it Thou mayst heal it.

O Lord, grant that all this beauty of affection and tenderness may be transformed into glorious knowledge.

Grant that the best may emerge from everything and Thy happy Peace reign over the earth.

*On board the “Kaga Maru”,
March 7, 1914*

THOU wert with us yesterday as the most marvellous of protections; Thou didst permit Thy law to triumph even in the most external manifestation. Violence was answered by calm, brutality by the strength of sweetness; and where an irreparable disaster would have occurred, Thy power was glorified. O Lord, with what fervent gratitude did I greet Thy Presence. It was for me the sure sign that we would have the strength to act, to think, to live in Thy name and for Thee; not only in intention and will, but effectively in an integral realisation.

This morning my prayer rises to Thee, always with the same aspiration: to live Thy love, to radiate Thy love, with such potency and effectiveness that all may feel fortified, regenerated and illumined by our contact. To have power to heal life, to relieve suffering, to generate peace and calm confidence, to efface anguish and replace it by the sense of the one true happiness, the happiness that is founded in Thee and never fades. . . . O Lord, O marvellous Friend, O all-powerful Master, penetrate all our being, transfigure it till Thou alone livest in us and through us!

*March 8, 1914**

IN front of this calm sunrise which turned all within me into silence and peace, at the moment when I grew conscious of Thee and Thou alone wast living in me, O Lord, it seemed to me that I adopted all the inhabitants of this ship, and enveloped them in an equal love, and that so in each one of them something of Thy consciousness would awake. Not often had I felt so strongly Thy divine power and Thy invincible light, and once again total was my confidence and unmixed my joyful surrender.

O Thou who relievest all suffering and dispersest all ignorance, O Thou the supreme healer, be constantly present on this boat in the heart of those whom it shelters that once again Thy glory may be manifested!

*March 9, 1914**

THOSE who live for Thee and in Thee may change their physical surroundings, their habits, climate, "milieu", but everywhere they find the same atmosphere; they carry that atmosphere in themselves, in their thought constantly fixed on Thee. Everywhere they feel at home, for everywhere they are in Thy house. No longer do they marvel at the novelty, unexpectedness, picturesqueness of things and countries; for them, it is Thy Presence that is manifest in all and Thy unchangeable splendour, which never leaves them, is apparent in the least grain of sand. The whole earth chants Thy praises; in spite of the obscurity, misery, ignorance, through it all, it is still the glory of Thy love which we perceive and with which we can commune ceaselessly everywhere.

O Lord, my sweet Master, all this I constantly experience on this boat which seems to me a marvellous abode of peace, a temple sailing in Thy honour over the waves of the subconscious passivity which we have to conquer and awaken to the consciousness of Thy divine Presence.

Blessed was the day when I came to know Thee, O Ineffable Eternity.

Blessed among all days be that day when the earth at last awakened shall know Thee and shall live only for Thee.

March 10, 1914

IN the silence of the night Thy Peace reigned over all things, in the silence of my heart Thy Peace reigns always; and when these two silences were united, Thy Peace was so powerful that no disturbance of any kind could resist it. Then I thought of all those who were watching over the boat to safeguard and protect our course, and in gratefulness I wanted to make Thy Peace spring up and live in their hearts; then I thought of all those who, confident and free from care, slept the sleep of conscience, and with solicitude for their miseries, pity for their latent suffering which would arise in them when they awoke, I wanted that a little of Thy Peace might live in their hearts and awaken in them the life of the spirit, the light that dispels ignorance. Then I thought of all the inhabitants of this vast sea, both visible and invisible, and I willed that Thy Peace might spread over them. Then I thought of those we had left far behind and whose affection goes with us, and with a great tenderness I wanted Thy conscious and lasting Peace for them, the plenitude of Thy Peace as far as they could receive it. Then I thought of all those towards whom we are going, who are troubled by childish preoccupations and fight in ignorance and egoism for petty rivalries of interest; and ardently, in a great aspiration, I asked for them the full light of Thy Peace. Then I thought of all those we know, all those we do not know, all the life in the making, all that has changed its form, all that is not yet in form, and for all these,

even as for all that I cannot think about, for all that is present to my memory and for all that I forget, in a deep contemplation and mute adoration I implored Thy Peace.

March 12, 1914

O LORD, my one aspiration is to know Thee and serve Thee better every day. What do outer circumstances matter? They seem to me each day more vain and illusory, and I take less and less interest in what is going to happen to us in the outer life; but more and more am I intensely interested in the one thing which seems important to me: to know Thee better in order to serve Thee better. All outer events must converge upon this goal and this goal alone; and for that all depends upon the attitude we have towards them. To seek Thee constantly in all things, to want to manifest Thee ever better in every circumstance, in this attitude lies supreme Peace, perfect serenity, true contentment. In it life blossoms, widens, expands so magnificently in such majestic waves that no storm can any longer disturb it.

O Lord, Thou art our safeguard, our only happiness, Thou art our resplendent light, our pure love, our hope and our strength. Thou art our life, the reality of our being!

In a reverent and joyful adoration I bow to Thee.

March 13, 1914

HOW many different levels there are in consciousness! This word should be reserved for what is illumined in a being by Thy Presence, is identified with Thee and partakes of Thy absolute Consciousness, for that which has knowledge, that which is “perfectly awakened”, as the Buddha says.

Outside this state there are infinite grades of consciousness, going right down to complete darkness, the veritable unconsciousness which may be a domain yet untouched by the light of Thy divine Love (but this seems improbable in physical substance), or which is, for some kind of reason of ignorance, outside our individual range of perception.

This is, however, only a way of speaking, and a very incomplete one; for when the being becomes aware of Thy presence and is identified with Thy consciousness, it is conscious in all things and everywhere. But the fleeting duration of this supreme consciousness can be explained only by the complexity of the elements of the being, by their unequal illumination and by the fact that they enter into activity successively. It is, moreover, because of this successive activity that they can gradually become aware of themselves as a result of their experiences, both objective and subjective (which are really one and the same), that is, discover Thee in their unfathomable essence.

The subconscious is the intermediate zone between precise perception and ignorance, total darkness; it is

probable that most beings, even human beings, live constantly in this subconscious; few emerge from it. This is the conquest that is to be made; for to be conscious in the true sense of the word is to be Thyself integrally; and is not this the very definition of the work to be accomplished, the mission to be fulfilled upon earth?

Deliver us, O Lord, from darkness; grant that we may become perfectly awake. . . .

Sweet Master of Love, grant that all my consciousness may be concentrated in Thee so that I may live only by love and light and that love and light may radiate through me and awaken in all on our journey; may this physical journey be like a symbol of our action and may we leave everywhere a trace of Thee like a trail of light and love.

O divine Master, eternal Teacher, Thou livest in all things, in all beings, and Thy love bursts upon the sight of even the most ignorant. Grant that all may become aware of it in the depths of their being and that hatred may disappear for ever from their hearts.

My ardent gratitude rises to Thee like a tireless chant.

March 14, 1914

IN the immutable solitude of the desert there is something of Thy majestic presence, and I understand why one of the best means of finding Thee has always been to withdraw into these immense stretches of sand.

But for one who knows Thee, Thou art everywhere, in all things, and none of them seems more suitable than another for manifesting Thee; for all things that exist — and many others that yet do not — are necessary to express Thee. Each thing, by virtue of Thy divine intervention of love, is an effort of life towards Thee; and as soon as our eyes are unsealed, we perceive this effort constantly.

O Lord, my heart is athirst for Thee and my thought seeks for Thee constantly. In a mute adoration I bow to Thee.

March 15, 1914

MY thought is filled with Thee, my heart is full, all my being is filled with Thy Presence, and peace grows ever deeper, giving rise to that happiness, so special, so unmixed, of a calm serenity, which seems vast as the universe, deep as the unfathomable depths which lead to Thee.

Oh, these silent and pure nights when my heart overflows and unites with Thy divine Love to penetrate all things, embrace all life, illumine and regenerate all thought, purify all feeling, awaken in every being the consciousness of Thy marvellous Presence and of the ineffable peace that flows from it!

Grant, O Lord, that this consciousness and peace may constantly grow within us, so that we may be more and more the faithful intermediaries of Thy divine and absolute law.

March 17, 1914

WHEN physical conditions are a little difficult and some discomfort follows, if one knows how to surrender completely before Thy will, caring little for life or death, health or illness, the integral being enters immediately into harmony with Thy law of love and life, and all physical indisposition ceases giving place to a calm well-being, deep and peaceful.

I have noticed that when one enters into an activity that necessitates great physical endurance, what tires one most is anticipating beforehand all the difficulties to which one will be exposed. It is much wiser to see at every moment only the difficulty of the present instant; in this way the effort becomes much easier for it is always proportionate to the amount of strength, the resistance at one's disposal. The body is a marvellous tool, it is our mind that does not know how to use it and, instead of fostering its suppleness, its plasticity, it brings a certain fixity into it which comes from preconceived ideas and unfavourable suggestions.

But the supreme science, O Lord, is to unite with Thee, to trust in Thee, to live in Thee, to be Thyself; and then nothing is any longer impossible to a man who manifests Thy omnipotence.

Lord, my aspiration rises to Thee like a silent canticle, a mute adoration, and Thy divine Love illuminates my heart.

O divine Master, I bow to Thee!

March 18, 1914

THOU art perfect knowledge, absolute consciousness. He who unites with Thee is omniscient—while the union lasts. But even before attaining this stage, he who has given himself to Thee in all the sincerity of his being, with all his conscious will, he who has resolved to make every effort to help in the manifestation and triumph of Thy divine law of Love in himself and the whole field of his influence, sees all things in his life change, and all circumstances begin to express Thy law and assist his consecration; for him it is the best, the very best that always happens; and if in his intelligence there is still some obscurity, some ignorant desire which at times prevents him from becoming aware of it immediately, he recognises sooner or later that a beneficent power seemed to protect him even from himself and secure for him conditions most favourable to his blossoming and transfiguration, his integral conversion and utilisation.

As soon as one becomes conscious and convinced of this, one can no longer worry about future circumstances or the turn events take; it is with perfect serenity that one does at every moment what one thinks best, convinced that the best too is sure to come from it, even if it is not the result which we, with our limited reasoning, expected from it.

That is why, Lord, our heart is light, our thought in repose. That is why we turn to Thee in all confidence and say peacefully:

May Thy will be done, in it true harmony is realised.

March 19, 1914

O LORD, eternal Teacher, Thou whom we can neither name nor understand, but whom we want to realise more and more at every moment, enlighten our intelligence, illumine our hearts, transfigure our consciousness; may everyone awaken to the true life, flee from egoism and its train of sorrow and anguish, and take refuge in Thy divine and pure Love, source of all peace and all happiness. My heart so full of Thee seems to expand into infinity and my intelligence, all illumined with Thy Presence, shines like the purest diamond. Thou art the wonderful magician, he who transfigures all things, from ugliness brings forth beauty, from darkness light, from the mud clear water, from ignorance knowledge and from egoism goodness.

In Thee, by Thee, for Thee we live and Thy law is the supreme master of our life.

May Thy will be done in every place, may Thy peace reign upon all the earth.

March 20, 1914

THOU art consciousness and light, Thou art peace in the depth of all things, the divine love that transfigures, the knowledge that triumphs over darkness. To feel Thee and aspire to Thee one should have emerged from the immense sea of the subconscious, one should have begun to crystallise, to grow distinct so as to know oneself and then give oneself as that alone which is its own master can do. And what effort and struggle it takes to attain this crystallisation, to emerge from the amorphous state of the environment; and how much more effort and struggle yet to give oneself, to surrender once the individuality has been formed.

Few beings consent willingly to make this effort; so life with its brutal unforeseen events obliges men to make it unintentionally, for they cannot do otherwise. And little by little Thy work is accomplished despite all obstacles.

March 21, 1914

EVERY morning my aspiration rises ardently to Thee, and in the silence of my satisfied heart I ask that Thy law of Love may be expressed, that Thy will may manifest. And in anticipation I adhere with joy and serenity to those circumstances which will express this law and this will.

Oh, why be restless and want that for oneself things should turn out in one way and not another! Why decide that a particular set of circumstances will be the expression of the best possibilities and then launch into a bitter struggle so that these possibilities may be realised! Why not use all one's energy solely to will in the calm of inner confidence that Thy law may triumph everywhere and always over all difficulties, all darkness, all egoism! How the horizon widens as soon as one learns to take this attitude; how all anxiety vanishes giving place to a constant illumination, to the omnipotence of disinterestedness! To will what Thou willest, O Lord, is to live constantly in communion with Thee, to be delivered from all contingencies, to escape all narrowness, to fill one's lungs with pure and wholesome air, to get rid of all useless weariness, be relieved of all cumbrous loads, so as to run briskly towards the only goal worth attaining: the triumph of Thy divine Law!

O Lord, with what joy and trust I greet Thee this morning! . . .

March 22, 1914

O LORD, divine Master of Love, enlighten their consciousness and their hearts. They have made an effort to reach out towards Thee but because of their ignorance their prayers probably did not rise to Thee, and their false conceptions have barred the way to their aspiration. Yet in Thy mercy Thou dost turn all goodwill to account and a flash of sincerity is enough for Thy divine light to use it to illumine the intelligence, for Thy sublime love to penetrate into all hearts and fill them with that pure and lofty benevolence which is one of the best expressions of Thy law. What I willed for them, with Thy will, in moments when I could be in true communion with Thee — grant that they may have received it on the day when, striving to forget all outer contingencies, they turned to their noblest thought, their best feelings.

May the supreme serenity of Thy sublime Presence awake in them.

March 23, 1914

AS I see it, the ideal state is that in which, constantly conscious with Thy Consciousness, one knows at every moment, spontaneously, without any reflection being necessary, exactly what should be done to best express Thy law. That state I know, for I have experienced it at certain moments, but very often the knowledge of the “how” is veiled by a mist of ignorance and one must call in reflection which is not always a good counsellor — let alone all that one does at every instant without having any time for reflection, on the spur of the moment. How far does it conform with or oppose Thy law? That depends upon the state of the subconscious, on what is active in it at that time. Once the deed is done, if it has any importance, if one can look at it, analyse it, understand it, it serves as a lesson, enables one to become aware of one’s motive of action and hence of something in the subconscious which still governs the being and has to be mastered.

Every action on earth is bound to have a good and a bad side. Even the actions which best express the most divine law of Love carry in them something of the disorder and darkness inherent in the world as it is today. Some people, those who are called pessimists, perceive almost exclusively the dark side of everything. The optimists, on the other hand, see only the side of beauty and harmony. And if it is foolish and ignorant to be an unwitting optimist, is it not making a happy conquest to become a willing optimist? In the eyes of pessimists, whatever one

does will always be bad, ignorant or egoistic; how could one satisfy them? It is an impossible task.

There is only one recourse; to unite as perfectly as possible with the highest and purest light that one can conceive, to identify one's consciousness as completely as possible with the absolute Consciousness, to strive to receive all inspirations from that Consciousness alone so as to foster as best one can its manifestation upon earth, and, trusting in its power, to regard all events with serenity.

Since everything is necessarily mixed in the present manifestation, the wisest thing is to do one's best, striving towards an ever higher light and to resign oneself to the fact that absolute perfection is for the moment unrealisable.

And yet how ardently must we always aspire for that inaccessible perfection! . . .

March 24, 1914

T

HE result of all my reflections of yesterday is the finding that the only disturbance I experience comes from my fear of not having been or of not being perfectly identified with Thy law. And this disturbance comes precisely from the fact that the identification is not complete; for if it were, I could not ask myself whether it is so and, on the other hand, as I know from experience, all disturbance would become impossible for me.

But in face of an error or blunder, the true thought to have is not to say to oneself, "I should have done better, I should have done this instead of that", but rather "I was not sufficiently identified with the eternal Consciousness, I must strive to realise better this definitive and integral union."

Yesterday afternoon, during those long hours of silent contemplation, I understood at last what is meant by true identification with the object of one's thought. I touched this realisation, as it were, not by achieving a mental state, but simply through steadiness and control of thought. I understood that I would need long, very long hours of contemplation to be able to perfect this realisation. This is one of the things I expect from the journey to India, if indeed Thou dost consider it useful for Thy service, Lord.

My progress is slow, very slow, but I hope that in compensation it may be lasting and free from all fluctuation.

Grant that I may accomplish my mission, that I may help in Thy integral manifestation.

*March 25, 1914**

SILENT and unseen as always, but all-powerful, Thy action has made itself felt and, in these souls that seemed to be so closed, a perception of Thy divine light is awake. I knew well that none could invoke Thy presence in vain and if in the sincerity of our hearts we commune with Thee through no matter what organism, body or human collectivity, this organism in spite of its ignorance finds its unconsciousness wholly transformed. But when in one or several elements there is the conscious transformation, when the flame that smoulders under the ashes leaps out suddenly illumining all the being, then with joy we salute Thy sovereign action, testify once more to Thy invincible puissance and can hope that a new possibility of true happiness has been added to the others in mankind.

O Lord, an ardent thanksgiving mounts from me towards Thee expressing the gratitude of this sorrowing humanity which Thou illuminest, transformest and gloriest and givest to it the peace of Knowledge.

March 28, 1914

FROM the time we started and every day more and more, in all things we can see Thy divine intervention, everywhere Thy law is expressed, and I need all my inner conviction to feel that this is perfectly natural, so that I do not pass from wonder to wonder.

At no moment do I feel that I am living outside Thee and never have the horizons appeared vaster to me and the depths at once more luminous and unfathomable. Grant, O Divine Teacher, that we may know and accomplish our mission upon earth better and better, more and more, that we may make full use of all the energies that are in us, and Thy sovereign Presence become manifest ever more perfectly in the silent depths of our soul, in all our thoughts, all our feelings, all our actions.

I find it almost strange to speak to Thee, so much is it Thou who livest in me, thinkest and lovest.

Pondicherry, March 29, 1914

O THOU whom we must know, understand, realise, absolute Consciousness, eternal Law, Thou who guidest and illuminest us, who movest and inspirest us, grant that these weak souls may be strengthened and those who fear be reassured. To Thee I entrust them, even as I entrust to Thee our entire destiny.

March 30, 1914

IN the presence of those who are integrally Thy servitors, those who have attained the perfect consciousness of Thy presence, I become aware that I am still far, very far from what I yearn to realise; and I know that the highest I can conceive, the noblest and purest is still dark and ignorant beside what I should conceive. But this perception, far from being depressing, stimulates and strengthens the aspiration, the energy, the will to triumph over all obstacles so as to be at last identified with Thy law and Thy work.

Gradually the horizon becomes distinct, the path grows clear, and we move towards a greater and greater certitude.

It matters little that there are thousands of beings plunged in the densest ignorance, He whom we saw yesterday is on earth; his presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, and Thy reign shall be indeed established upon earth.

O Lord, Divine Builder of this marvel, my heart overflows with joy and gratitude when I think of it, and my hope has no bounds.

My adoration is beyond all words, my reverence is silent.

April 1, 1914

I FEEL we have entered the very heart of Thy sanctuary and grown aware of Thy very will. A great joy, a deep peace reign in me, and yet all my inner constructions have vanished like a vain dream and I find myself now, before Thy immensity, without a frame or system, like a being not yet individualised. All the past in its external form seems ridiculously arbitrary to me, and yet I know it was useful in its own time.

But now all is changed: a new stage has begun.

April 2, 1914

EVERY day, when I want to write, I am interrupted, as though the new period opening now before us were a period of expansion rather than of concentration. It is in the activity of each moment that we must serve Thee and identify ourselves with Thee rather than in deep and silent contemplation or in meditation, written or unwritten.

But my heart does not tire of singing a hymn to Thee and my thought is constantly filled with Thee.

April 3, 1914

IT seems to me that I am being born to a new life and all the methods, the habits of the past can no longer be of any use. It seems to me that what I thought were results is nothing more than a preparation. I feel as though I have done nothing yet, as though I have not lived the spiritual life, only entered the path that leads to it, it seems to me that I know nothing, that I am incapable of formulating anything, that all experience is yet to begin. It is as though I were stripped of my entire past, of its errors as well as its conquests, as though all that has vanished and made room for a new-born child whose whole existence is yet to be lived, who has no Karma, no experience to learn from, but no error either which has to be set right. My head is empty of all knowledge and all certitude, but also of all vain thought. I feel that if I learn how to surrender without any resistance to this state, if I do not try to know or understand, if I consent to be completely like an ignorant and candid child, some new possibility will open before me. I know that I must now definitively give myself up and be like an absolutely blank page on which Thy thought, Thy will, O Lord, can be inscribed freely without danger of any deformation.

An immense gratitude rises from my heart, it seems to me that I have at last reached the threshold I sought so much.

Grant, O Lord, that I may be sufficiently pure, impersonal, animated with Thy divine love to be able to cross it definitively.

Oh, to belong to Thee without any darkness, without any restriction!

April 4, 1914

O LORD, my adoration rises ardently to Thee, all my being is an aspiration, a flame consecrated to Thee.

Lord, Lord, my sweet Master, it is Thou who livest and wildest in me!

This body is Thy instrument; this will is Thy servant; this intelligence is Thy tool; and the whole being is only Thyself.

April 7, 1914

WHAT kind of courage is mine that I always try to avoid the fight? What kind of energy is mine, that I am instinctively frightened of the new effort to be made and try, without being aware of it, to go to sleep passively, relying upon the results of previous efforts? In order to act, I have to be compelled and my mute contemplation is partly made of laziness. . . . All this is becoming more and more clearly apparent to me. All that I have done till now seems to me to be nothing. The poverty and limitations of the instrument I put at Thy service, Lord, are evident to me, and I laugh a little sorrowfully at the idea that at times I could have a good opinion of my being, its efforts and their results. This threshold of the true life that I always think I have reached is like a hope bestowed upon me but never a tangible realisation; it is the toy promised to a child, the reward held out for a moment before the weak.

When shall I become a truly strong being, made entirely of courage, energy, valour and calm perseverance; when shall I have forgotten my own person completely enough to be nothing but an instrument moulded solely by the forces it has to manifest? When will my consciousness of unity be no longer tinged with any inertia; when will my feeling of divine love be no longer mixed with any weakness?

O Lord, all thought seems dead within me, now that I have asked these questions. I search for my conscious mind and I do not find it; I search for my individuality and

I cannot discover it anywhere; I search for my personal will and it is not there. I search for Thee, and Thou art silent. . . . Silence, silence. . . .

Now I seem to hear Thy voice: "Never hast thou known how to die integrally. Always something in thee has wanted to know, to witness, to understand. Surrender completely, learn how to disappear, break the last barrier that separates thee from me; accomplish unreservedly thy act of surrender." Alas, O Lord, for a long time have I wanted it, but I could not. Now wilt Thou give me the power to do so?

O Lord, my sweet eternal Master, break this resistance which fills me with anguish . . . deliver me from myself!

April 8, 1914

LORD, my thought is calm and my heart ingathered; I turn towards Thee with a profound devotion and a boundless trust: I know that Thy love is all-powerful and that Thy justice will reign over the earth; I know that the hour is near when the last veil will be rent and all iniquity disappear to give place to an era of peace and harmonious effort.

O Lord, with thought rapt within and the heart at peace, I approach Thee and all my being is filled with Thy divine Presence; grant that I may see Thee alone in all things and that all may be resplendent with Thy divine Light. Oh, may all hatred be appeased, all rancour effaced, all fears dispelled, all suspicions destroyed, all malevolence overcome, and in this city, in this country, upon this earth, may all hearts feel vibrating within them that sublime love, source of all transfiguration.

O Lord, how ardently do I call and implore Thy love! Grant that my aspiration may be intense enough to awaken the same aspiration everywhere: oh, may goodness, justice and peace reign as supreme masters, may ignorant egoism be overcome, darkness be suddenly illuminated by Thy pure Light; may the blind see, the deaf hear, may Thy law be proclaimed in every place and, in a constantly progressive union, in an ever more perfect harmony, may all, like one single being, stretch out their arms towards Thee to identify themselves with Thee and manifest Thee upon earth.

O Lord, with thought rapt within, the heart radiant
with sunshine, I give myself to Thee without reservation,
and the “self” disappears in Thee!

*April 10, 1914**

SUDDENLY the veil was rent, the horizon was disclosed — and before the clear vision my whole being threw itself at Thy feet in a great outburst of gratitude. Yet in spite of this deep and integral joy all was calm, all was peaceful with the peace of eternity.

I seem to have no more limits; there is no longer the perception of the body, no sensations, no feelings, no thoughts — a clear, pure, tranquil immensity penetrated with love and light, filled with an unspeakable beatitude is all that is there and that alone seems now to be myself, and this “myself” is so little the former “I”, selfish and limited, that I cannot tell if it is I or Thou, O Lord, sublime Master of our destinies.

It is as though all were energy, courage, force, will, infinite sweetness, incomparable compassion. . . .

Even more forcibly than during these last days the past is dead and as though buried under the rays of a new life. The last glance that I have just thrown backward as I read a few pages of this book definitely convinced me of this death, and lightened of a great weight I present myself before Thee, O my divine Master, with all the simplicity, all the nudity of a child. . . . And still the one only thing I perceive is that calm and pure immensity. . . .

Lord, Thou hast answered my prayer, Thou hast granted me what I have asked from Thee; the “I” has disappeared, there is only a docile instrument put at Thy service, a centre of concentration and manifestation of Thy infinite and eternal rays; Thou hast taken my life and

made it Thine; Thou hast taken my will and hast united it to Thine; Thou hast taken my love and identified it with Thine; Thou hast taken my thought and replaced it by Thy absolute consciousness.

The body, marvelling, bows its forehead in the dust in mute and submissive adoration.

And nothing else exists but Thou alone in the splendour of Thy immutable peace.

Karikal, April 13, 1914

EVERYTHING works together to prevent me from remaining a creature of habits, and in this new state, in the midst of these circumstances, so complex and unstable, I have never before so completely lived Thy immutable peace or rather the "I" has never before disappeared so completely that Thy divine peace alone is alive there. All is beautiful, harmonious and calm, all is full of Thee. Thou shinest in the dazzling sun, Thou art felt in the gentle passing breeze, Thou dost manifest Thyself in all hearts and live in all beings. There is not an animal, a plant that does not speak to me of Thee and Thy name is written upon everything I see.

O my sweet Lord, hast Thou at last granted that I may belong entirely to Thee and that my consciousness may be definitively united with Thine? What have I done to be worthy of so glorious a happiness? Nothing except to desire it, to want it with constancy — that is very little.

But, O Lord, since now it is Thy will and not mine that lives in me, Thou wilt be able to make this happiness profitable to all; and its very purpose will be to enable the greatest possible number of beings to perceive Thee.

Oh, may all know Thee, love Thee, serve Thee; may all receive the supreme consecration!

O Love, divine Love, spread abroad in the world, regenerate life, enlighten the intelligence, break the barriers of egoism, scatter the obstacles of ignorance, shine resplendent as sovereign Master of the earth.

*Pondicherry, April 17, 1914**

O LORD, O almighty Master, sole Reality, grant that no error, no obscurity, no fatal ignorance may creep into my heart and my thought.

In action, the personality is the inevitable and indispensable intermediary of Thy will and Thy forces.

The stronger, the more complex, powerful, individualised and conscious is the personality, the more powerfully and usefully can the instrument serve. But, by reason of the very character of personality, it easily tends to be drawn into the fatal illusion of its separate existence and become little by little a screen between Thee and that on which Thou willest to act. Not at the beginning, in the manifestation, but in the transmission of the return; that is to say, instead of being, as a faithful servant, an intermediary who brings back to Thee exactly what is Thy due — the forces sent forth in reply to Thy action, — there is a tendency in the personality to want to keep for itself a part of the forces, with this idea: “It is I who have done this or that, I who am thanked. . . .” Pernicious illusion, obscure falsehood, now are you discovered and unmasked. That is the maleficent canker corroding the fruit of the action, falsifying all its results.

O Lord, O my sweet Master, sole Reality, dispel this feeling of the “I”. I have now understood that so long as there will be a manifested universe, the “I” will remain necessary for Thy manifestation; to dissolve, or even to diminish or weaken the “I”, is to deprive Thee of the means of manifestation, in whole or part. But what must

be radically and definitively suppressed is the illusory thought, the illusory feeling, the illusory sensation of the separate “I”. At no moment, in no circumstances must we forget that our “I” has no reality outside Thee.

O my sweet Master, my divine Lord, tear out from my heart this illusion so that Thy servant may become pure and faithful and faithfully and integrally bring back to Thee all that is Thy due. In silence let me contemplate and understand this supreme ignorance and dispel it for ever. Chase the shadow from my heart, and let Thy light reign in it, its uncontested sovereign.

April 18, 1914

YESTERDAY morning the last veil was almost rent, the last stronghold of the blind and ignorant personality seemed to be on the point of yielding; for the first time I thought I had understood what true impersonal service was, and the obstacle separating me from the integral realisation seemed very fragile to me, and on the point of disappearing definitively. But the necessity of my outer duties tore me away from this beneficent and happy contemplation, and when I was obliged to return to the outer consciousness the veil closed again and now seems to me darker than ever. Why this fall into the unconsciousness of night after so great a light? . . .

O Lord, Lord, wilt Thou not then let me escape at last from ignorance and become one with Thee? Now that I have known and seen so well what the work upon the earth must be, could I not realise it? Am I then riveted to ignorance and illusion? . . .

Why, why this night after so great and pure a light?
All my being is tense in a call of anguish!

O Lord, take pity on me!

April 19, 1914

THERE is a great difference between being in the midst of active work, of external action, while keeping one's thought constantly fixed on Thee, and entering into that perfect union with Thee which leads to what I have called "absolute Consciousness, true Omniscience, Knowledge". When one acts, though with the thought fixed on Thee, one is like a blind man walking on the road with a sense of direction, but knowing nothing about the path he is following and how, precisely, one must walk so as to neglect nothing. In the other case, on the contrary, there is the clear vision in full light, the utilisation of the least occasion, the plenitude of action, the maximum result. And if the first attitude is indispensable before acquiring the other, yet at no moment must one cease working, making an effort to attain perfect communion.

But my heart is in peace, my thought free from impatience, and I entrust myself to Thy will with the smiling confidence of a child.

May Thy peace reign over all. . . .

April 20, 1914

AFTER having hoped so much, after having believed that my outer being was at last to become an instrument adapted to Thy purpose, after feeling hopeful that I would at last be delivered from this obscure and cumbersome "self", I feel I am as far from the goal as before, as ignorant, as egoistic as I was before this great expectation. And the path stretches out once again, interminable across the fields of unconsciousness. The sublime door has closed again and I find myself still on the threshold of the sanctuary without being able to enter within. But I have learnt to look at everything with a smile and a tranquil heart. I ask only this of Thee, O my divine Master, not to let me make any mistakes; even if the instrument is still condemned for a time to unconsciousness, grant that it may let itself be guided faithfully and docilely by Thy divine law.

I bow to Thee, O Lord, with a deep and pure devotion.
Oh! be the sovereign Master of all hearts.

April 23, 1914

ALL rules have vanished, the regularity of the discipline is gone, all effort has ceased; not by my own will nor, I believe, through negligence, but because circumstances are working together to bring this about. It seems that this inner will, always alert, like a steersman holding the rudder, has evaporated or fallen asleep, and my being is only something peacefully surrendered which lets itself be carried along by the stream. Till now, it seems to me, the course has always been in a straight line, and I would keep the hope that it is Thou, O Lord, who guidest the stream; but surely if I have erred at times through too great a rigidity, a lack of suppleness and spontaneity, it could very well be that now I err through the opposite excess. I have come to accept peacefully the state I am in and to tell myself that Thou wilt bestow upon me the true Consciousness, the absolute Consciousness when Thou thinkest it best.

I look at all this changing world as a game unfolding itself, and I take part in this game with the same energy and conviction with which I would if I believed it real and important. All this is very new. But what is certain is that never before were my mind and heart in so complete a repose. What will come out of that, I do not know. But I trust in Thee, O Lord; Thou knowest the best way of using and developing Thy instrument. . . .

April 28, 1914

THOU art the Master of the world; Thy law unfolds before us with precision, and as I thought or rather as Thou didst make me understand it before we left Paris, it is the best — what could best serve Thy work in the world — that has happened.

In beatitude I communed with Thy puissance dominating over darkness and error, shining like a marvellous and eternal dawn above the mud of hypocritical force and its apparent success. Everything has been brought to light, we have taken one more step towards the full light of sincerity, and this full light will be the first stage of Thy reign upon earth.

O Thou inconceivable splendour, Thou conqueror of all ignorance, victor over all egoism, Thou who dost illumine all hearts and enlighten all minds, Thou who art Knowledge and Love and Being, let me live constantly in the consciousness of Thy unity, let me always conform to Thy Will.

With reverent and silent devotion I bow to Thee as the sovereign Lord of the world.

May 2, 1914

BEYOND all human conceptions, even the most marvellous, beyond all human feelings, even the most sublime, beyond the most magnificent aspirations and the purest flights, beyond Love, Knowledge and the Oneness of Being, I would enter into constant communion with Thee, O Lord. Free from all shackles I shall be Thyself; it will be Thou who wilt see the world through this body; it will be Thou who wilt act in the world through this instrument.

In me is the calm serenity of perfect certitude.

May 3, 1914

O DIVINE Love, supreme Knowledge, perfect Oneness, at every moment of the day I call to Thee so as to be nothing but Thou alone!

May this instrument serve Thee, conscious of being an instrument, and may all my consciousness, merged in Thine, contemplate all things with Thy divine vision.

O Lord, Lord, grant that Thy sovereign Power may manifest; grant that Thy work may be accomplished and Thy servitor be consecrated solely to Thy service.

May the “I” disappear for evermore, may only the instrument remain.

May 4, 1914

To be merged both in Thee and in Thy work . . . to be no longer a limited individuality . . . to become the infinitude of Thy forces manifesting through one point . . . to be freed from all shackles and all limitations . . . to rise above all restrictive thought . . . to act while remaining outside the action . . . to act with and for individuals while seeing only Oneness, the Oneness of Thy Love, Thy Knowledge, Thy Being . . . O my divine Master, eternal Teacher, Sole Reality, dispel all darkness in this aggregate Thou hast formed for Thy service, Thy manifestation in the world. Realise in it that supreme consciousness which will awaken the same consciousness everywhere.

Oh, no longer to see appearances which incessantly change; always to contemplate in everything and everywhere only Thy immutable Oneness!

O Lord, all my being cries to Thee in an irresistible call; wilt Thou not grant that I may become Thyself in my integral consciousness, since in truth I am Thou and Thou art I?

May 9, 1914

JUST at the moment when I was feeling the imperious need of resuming these notes regularly so as to come out of this overwhelming mental inertia, my physical organism suffered a defeat such as it had not known for several years and during a few days all the forces of my body failed me; I saw in this a sign that I had made a mistake, that my spiritual energy had weakened, my vision of the omnipotent Oneness had been clouded, that some wrong suggestion had managed to disturb me in some way, and I bowed down before Thee, O Lord, my sweet Master, with humility, conscious that I was not yet ready for a perfect identification with Thee. Something in this aggregate which constitutes the instrument I can put at Thy service is still obscure and obtuse; something does not respond as it should to Thy forces, deforms and darkens their manifestation. . . .

A great problem came up before me and illness covered it with its veil and prevented me from solving it. Now that I am living once more in the feeling of Thy Oneness, the problem no longer seems to have any sense and I do not understand it very well any more.

It seems to me I have left something far behind me, it seems to me that I am slowly awakening to a new life. I would it were not an illusion and this deep and smiling peace had returned forever.

O my divine Master, my love aspires to Thee more intensely than ever; let me be Thy living Love in the world and nothing but that! May all egoism, all limitation, all

darkness disappear; may my consciousness be identified with Thine so that Thou alone mayst be the will acting through this fragile and transient instrument.

O my sweet Master, how ardently my love aspires to Thee. . . .

Grant that I may be nothing but Thy Divine Love and that in every being this Love may awake, powerful and victorious.

Let me be a vast mantle of love enveloping all the earth, entering all hearts, murmuring in every ear Thy divine message of hope and peace.

O my divine Master, how ardently I aspire for Thee! Break these chains of darkness and error; dispel this ignorance, liberate, liberate me, make me see Thy light. . . .

Break, break these chains. . . . I want to understand and I want to be. That is to say, this “I” must be Thy “I” and there must be only one single “I” in the world.

O Lord, grant my prayer, my supplication rises ardently to Thee.

May 10, 1914

IT is Thy sweet joy, O Lord, that fills my heart; it is Thy silent peace that reigns over my mind. All is repose, force, concentration, light and serenity; and all this is without any limit, without any division; is it only the earth or rather the whole universe that lives in me, I do not know; but it is Thou, O Lord, who dwellest in this consciousness and givest it life; it is Thou who seest, knowest, actest. It is Thou alone whom I see everywhere, or rather there is no longer any "I", all is one and this Oneness is Thou.

Glory to Thee, O Lord, Master of the world, Thou shinest resplendent in all things!

May 12, 1914*

MORE and more it seems to me that we are in one of those periods of activity in which the fruit of past efforts becomes apparent,—a period in which we act according to Thy law in the measure in which it is the sovereign controller of our being, without having even the leisure to become conscious of the law.

This morning passing by a rapid experience from depth to depth, I was able, once again, as always, to identify my consciousness with Thine and to live no longer in aught but Thee;—indeed, it was Thou alone that wast living, but immediately Thy will pulled my consciousness towards the exterior, towards the work to be done, and Thou saidst to me, “Be the instrument of which I have need.” And is not this the last renunciation, to renounce identification with Thee, to renounce the sweet and pure joy of no longer distinguishing between Thee and me, the joy of knowing at each moment, not only with the intellect but by an integral experience, that Thou art the unique Reality and that all the rest is but appearance and illusion. That the exterior being should be the docile instrument which does not even need to be conscious of the will which moves it, is not doubtful; but why must I be almost entirely identified with the instrument and why should not the “I” be entirely merged in Thee and live Thy full and absolute consciousness?

I ask, but I am not anxious about it. I know that all is according to Thy will, and with a pure adoration I trust myself joyously to Thy will. I shall be what Thou

wouldst have me be, O Lord, conscient or inconscient, a simple instrument as is the body or a supreme knowledge as art Thou. O the sweet and peaceful joy when one can say “All is good” and feel Thee at work in the world through all the elements which lend themselves to that transmission.

Thou art the sovereign Master of all, Thou art the Inaccessible, the Unknowable, the eternal and sublime Reality.

O marvellous Unity, I disappear in Thee.

May 13, 1914

THIS somnolence of my thought, O Lord, Thou wilt shake off so that I may have the knowledge and understand the experience Thou hast given to my being. When something in me questions Thee, always Thou repliest, and when it is necessary for me to know something, Thou teachest it to me, whether directly or indirectly.

I see more and more that all impatient revolt, all haste would be useless; everything is slowly organised so that I may serve Thee as I should. What is my place in this service? For a long time I have stopped asking myself this. What does it matter? Is it necessary to know whether one is at the centre or on the circumference? Provided that entirely consecrated to Thee, living only for Thee and by Thee, I carry out better and better the task Thou givest me, all the rest has no importance at all. I would say more: provided Thy work is accomplished in the world as well and as completely as it can be, does it matter which individual or group realises this work?

O my sweet Master, in peace, serenity, equanimity, I give myself to Thee and merge in Thee, my thought calm and tranquil, my heart smiling; Thy work will be done, I know, and Thy victory is certain.

O my sweet Master, grant to all the sovereign boon of Thy illumination!

May 15, 1914

AS on reaching a summit, one discovers a vast horizon, so, O Lord, when one's consciousness is identified with that intermediate domain between Thy Unity and the manifested world, one participates both in Thy Infinitude and in the realisation of the world. It is as though one were at a centre where the consciousness, wholly steeped in Thy effective Power, could direct the ray of Thy forces upon the lowly instrument moving among its brother instruments. From the height of these transcendent regions the unity of physical substance is clearly visible, and yet the body which serves as a particular instrument in the material field seems specially precise and distinct like a stronger point amidst this whole, at once multiple and one, in which the forces circulate evenly.

This perception has not left me since yesterday. It has settled in as something definitive, and all the outer activity which apparently continues as usual, has become mechanical like a marvellously articulated and animated toy moved by the consciousness from the height of its seat which though no longer individual is still universal, that is, which is not yet completely merged in Thy Oneness. All the laws of individual manifestation have become clear to me, but in so synthetical, so global, so simultaneous a way, that it is impossible to express this in our ordinary language.

May 16, 1914

I WAS interrupted yesterday just when I was trying to formulate the experience I had. And now everything seems changed. That precise knowledge, that clear-sightedness has given place to a great love for Thee, O Lord, which has seized my whole being from the outer organism to the deepest consciousness, and all lies prostrate at Thy feet in an ardent aspiration for a definitive identification with Thee, an absorption in Thee. I implored Thee with all the energy I could summon. And once again, just when it seemed to me that my consciousness was going to disappear in Thine, just when all my being was nothing but a pure crystal reflecting Thy Presence, someone came and interrupted my concentration.

Such is, indeed, the symbol of the existence Thou givest me as my share, in which outer usefulness, the work for all, holds a much greater place even than the supreme realisation. All the circumstances of my life seem always to tell me on Thy behalf: "It is not through supreme concentration that thou wilt realise oneness, it is by spreading out in all." May Thy will be done, O Lord.

Now I understand clearly that union with Thee is not an aim to be pursued, so far as this present individuality is concerned; it is an accomplished fact since a long time. And that is why Thou seemest to tell me always: "Do not delight in the ecstatic contemplation of this union; accomplish the mission I have entrusted to thee upon earth."

And the individual work to be carried on simultaneously with the collective work is to become aware and take possession of all the activities and parts of the being, the definitive establishment of consciousness in the highest point, making possible both the prescribed action and the constant communion with Thee. The joys of perfect union cannot come until what has to be done is done.

First, union must be preached to all, afterwards work; but for those who have realised the union, every moment of their life must be an integral expression of Thy will through them.

May 17, 1914

O LORD, deliver me from the mental influences which weigh upon me, so that, completely free, I may soar towards Thee.

O Thou, Universal Being, Supreme Unity in perceptible form, through an irresistible aspiration I nestled within Thy heart, then I was Thy heart itself, and I knew then that Thy heart is no other than the Child who plays and creates the worlds. Thou didst tell me, "One day thou wilt be my head but for the moment turn thy gaze towards the earth." And on the earth now I am the joyful child who plays.

These were the two sentences I wrote yesterday by a kind of absolute necessity. The first, as though the power of the prayer would not be complete unless it were traced on paper. The second, as though the stability of the experience could not be had unless I unburdened my mind of it by noting it down in writing.

May 18, 1914

THOU art the sole Reality, O Lord, Thou art Omnipotence and Eternity. And he who is united with Thee in the depths of his being becomes Thy Reality in its eternal and immutable omnipotence. But for others the command is, even while remaining in contact with Thee, to turn their eyes and activity towards the earth; such is the mission Thou hast given them. Here begins the difficulty, for everything depends upon the perfection of the various states of their being and, even after attaining the sublime identification, they must still work at perfecting the instrument which will manifest Thy divine Will. This is where the task becomes arduous. Everything seems to me mediocre, insufficient, neutral, almost inert in the present instrument which Thou makest me call "myself"; and the more I am united with Thee, the more do I realise the mediocrity of its faculties and its manifestation. Everything in it seems to me an incorrigible approximation. And if that cannot disturb me in any way, it is because the true self is lying at Thy feet or nestling in Thy heart or conscious with Thy eternal and immutable Consciousness, and looks at the whole manifestation with a smile of patient and understanding benevolence.

May 19, 1914

THIS mental being which throughout my individual existence had the power to set all my faculties working: deep devotion for Thee, infinite compassion for men, ardent aspiration for knowledge, effort for self-perfection — seems to have fallen into a deep sleep and no longer sets anything at all in movement. All the individual faculties slumber and the consciousness is not yet fully awake in the transcendent states; that is, its wakefulness in them is intermittent and in between there is sleep. Something in this being aspires for solitude and absolute silence for a little while, so as to come out of this unsatisfactory transition; and something else knows that it is Thy will that this instrument be consecrated to the service of all, even if this must apparently be harmful to its self-perfecting.

Something in this being tells Thee, O Lord:

“I know nothing,
I am nothing,
I can do nothing,
I am in the darkness of unconsciousness.”

And something else knows that it is Thyself and thus the supreme perfection.

What is going to come out of that? How will such a state come to an end? Whether it is inertia or true patience, I do not know; but without haste or desire I lie at Thy feet and wait. . . .

May 20, 1914

FROM the height of that summit which is the identification with Thy divine infinite Love, Thou didst turn my eyes to this complex body which has to serve Thee as Thy instrument. And Thou didst tell me, "It is myself; dost thou not see my light shining in it?" And indeed I saw Thy divine Love, clothed in intelligence, then in strength, constituting this body in its smallest cells and shining so brightly in it that it was nothing but a combination of millions of radiant sparks, all manifesting that they were Thyself.

And now all darkness has disappeared, and Thou alone livest, in different worlds, in different forms but with an identical life, immutable and eternal.

This divine world of Thy immutable domain of pure love and indivisible unity must be brought into close communion with the divine world of all the other domains, right down to the most material in which Thou art the centre and very constitution of each atom. To establish a bond of perfect consciousness between all these successive divine worlds is the only way to live constantly, invariably in Thee, accomplishing integrally the mission Thou hast entrusted to the entire being in all its states of consciousness and all its modes of activity.

O my sweet Master, Thou hast caused a new veil to be rent, another veil of my ignorance and, without leaving my blissful place in Thy eternal heart, I am at the same time in the imperceptible but infinite heart of each of the atoms constituting my body.

Strengthen this complete and perfect consciousness. Make me enter into all the details of its perfection and grant that, without leaving Thee for a single moment, I may constantly move up and down this infinite ladder, according to the necessity of the work Thou hast prescribed for me.

I am Thine, I am in Thee, Thyself, in the plenitude of eternal bliss.

*May 21, 1914**

OUTSIDE all manifestation, in the immutable silence of Eternity, I am in Thee, O Lord, an unmoving beatitude. In that which, out of Thy puissance and marvellous light, forms the centre and reality of the atoms of matter I find Thee; thus without going out of Thy Presence I can disappear in Thy supreme consciousness or see Thee in the radiant particles of my being. And for the moment that is the plenitude of Thy life and Thy illumination.

I see Thee, I am Thyself, and between these two poles my intense love aspires towards Thee.

*May 22, 1914**

WHEN we have discerned successively what is real from what is unreal in all the states of being and all the worlds of life, when we have arrived at the perfect and integral certitude of the sole Reality, we must turn our gaze from the heights of this supreme consciousness towards the individual aggregate which serves as the immediate instrument for Thy manifestation upon earth, and see in it nothing but Thee, our sole real existence. Thus each atom of this aggregate will be awakened to receive Thy sublime influence; the ignorance and the darkness will disappear not only from the central consciousness of the being but also from its most external mode of expression. It is only by the fulfilment, by the perfection of this labour of transfiguration that there can be manifested the plenitude of Thy Presence, Thy Light and Thy Love.

Lord, Thou makest me understand this truth ever more clearly; lead me step by step on that path. My whole being down to its smallest atom aspires for the perfect knowledge of Thy presence and a complete union with it. Let every obstacle disappear, let Thy divine knowledge replace in every part the darkness of the ignorance. Even as Thou hast illumined the central consciousness, the will in the being, enlighten too this outermost substance. And let the whole individuality, from its first origin and essence to its last projection and most material body, be unified in a perfect realisation and a complete manifestation of Thy sole Reality.

Nothing is in the universe but Thy Life, Thy Light,
Thy Love.

Let everything become resplendent and transfigured
by the knowledge of Thy Truth.

Thy divine love floods my being; Thy supreme light
is shining in every cell; all exults because it knows Thee
and because it is one with Thee.

May 23, 1914

O LORD, Thou of whom I would be constantly conscious and whom I would realise in the smallest cells of my being, Thou whom I would know as myself and see manifested in all things, Thou who art the sole reality, the sole cause and aim of existence, grant that my love for Thee may grow ever greater so that I may be all love, Thy love itself, and that, being Thy love, I may unite integrally with Thee. May this love grow more and more intense, complete, luminous, powerful; may this love become an irresistible urge towards Thee, the invincible means of manifesting Thee. May everything in this being become pure, profound, disinterested, divine love—from the unfathomable depths to the outermost substance. May the God with form who manifests in this aggregate be entirely moulded from Thy complete and sublime love, the love which is at once the source and the realisation of all knowledge; may thought be clarified, organised, enlightened, transformed by Thy love; may all the life-forces, solely impregnated by Thy love and moulded from it, draw from it irresistible purity and constant energy, power and rectitude. May this weakened intermediary being, take advantage of its weakness to reconstitute itself with elements entirely moulded from Thy love, and may this body, now a burning brazier, radiate Thy divine, impersonal, sublime and calm love from every pore. . . . May the brain be reconstituted by Thy love. Lastly, may Thy love overflow, flood, penetrate, transfigure, regenerate, animate all things, with the

power, the splendour, the sweetness and force which are its very own. In Thy love is peace, in Thy love is joy, in Thy love is Thy servitor's sovereign lever of work.

Thy love is vaster than the universe and more lasting than all the ages; it is infinite, eternal, it is Thyself. And it is Thyself I want to be and that I am, for such is Thy law, such is Thy will.

May 24, 1914

O MY sweet Master, let me not be submerged by outer things. They have no interest, no savour for me. If I busy myself with them, it is because I feel that such is Thy will and the work must be accomplished integrally, down to the least details of the action and substance. But it is quite enough to turn one's attention to them and infuse Thy forces into them as much as possible. They must not be allowed to take precedence of the true realities in one's consciousness.

O my sweet Master, I aspire for Thee, for the knowledge of what Thou art, for identification with Thee. I ask for a greater love, growing always purer, always vaster, always more intense and I find myself as it were submerged in Matter; is this Thy reply? As Thou hast Thyself accepted to be thus submerged in Matter so as to awaken it gradually to consciousness, is this the result of a more perfect identification with Thee? Is this not Thy answer to me: "If thou wouldst learn to love truly, this is how thou shouldst love . . ." . . . in darkness and unconsciousness?

O my Lord, my sweet Master, Thou knowest that I belong to Thee and that always I want what Thou willest; but do not let any doubt about what Thou willest arise in me. Enlighten me in some way in the immutable peace of the heart. Let me be submerged in darkness if that is necessary, but at least let me know that it is Thou who willest it.

Lord, in response, I hear singing within my heart the hymn of gladness of Thy divine and permanent Presence.

May 25, 1914

O DIVINE Master of love and purity, grant that in its least stages, its smallest activities, this instrument which wants to serve Thee worthily may be purified of all egotism, all error, all obscurity, so that nothing in it may impair, deform or stop Thy action. How many little recesses lie yet in shadow, far from the full light of Thy illumination: for these I ask the supreme happiness of this illumination.

Oh, to be the pure flawless crystal which lets Thy divine ray pass without obscuring, colouring or distorting it! — not from a desire for perfection but so that Thy work may be done as perfectly as possible.

And when I ask Thee this, the “I” which speaks to Thee is the entire Earth, aspiring to be this pure diamond, a perfect reflector of Thy supreme light. All the hearts of men beat within my heart, all their thoughts vibrate in my thought, the slightest aspiration of a docile animal or a modest plant unites with my formidable aspiration, and all this rises towards Thee, for the conquest of Thy love and light, scaling the summits of Being to attain Thee, ravish Thee from Thy motionless beatitude and make Thee penetrate the darkness of suffering to transform it into divine Joy, into sovereign Peace. And this violence is made of an infinite love which gives itself and a trustful serenity which smiles with the certitude of Thy perfect Unity.

O my sweet Master, Thou art the Triumpher and the Triumph, the Victor and the Victory!

*May 26, 1914**

ON the surface is the storm, the sea is in turmoil, waves clash and leap one on another and break with a mighty uproar. But all the time, under this water in fury, are vast smiling expanses, peaceful and motionless. They look upon the surface agitation as an indispensable act; for matter has to be vigorously churned if it is to become capable of manifesting entirely the divine light. Behind the troubled appearance, behind the struggle and anguish of the conflict, the consciousness remains firm at its post; observing all the movements of the outer being, it intervenes only to rectify direction and position, so as not to allow the play to become too dramatic. This intervention is now firm and a little severe, now ironical, a call to order or a mockery, full always of a strong, gentle, peaceful and smiling benevolence.

In the silence I beheld Thy infinite and eternal Beatitude.

Then softly a prayer rises towards Thee from what is still in the shadow and the struggle: O sweet Master, O supreme Giver of illumination and purity, grant that all substance and every activity may be no more anything other than a constant manifestation of Thy divine Love and Thy sovereign Serenity . . .

And in my heart is the song of gladness of Thy sublime magnificence.

May 27, 1914

IN each one of the domains of the being, the consciousness must be awakened to the perfect existence, knowledge and bliss. These three worlds or modes of the Divine are found in the physical reality as well as in the states of force and light and those of impersonality and infinitude, of eternity. When one enters with full consciousness into the higher states, to live this existence, light and bliss is easy, almost inevitable. But what is very important, as well as very difficult, is to awaken the being to this triple divine consciousness in the most material worlds. This is the first point. Then one must succeed in finding the centre of all the divine worlds (probably in the intermediate world), whence one can unite the consciousness of these divine worlds, synthetise them, and act simultaneously and with full awareness in all domains.

I know that it is a very long way from these incomplete and imperfect explanations to the sublime reality which manifests Thee, O Lord. Thy splendour, Thy power and Thy magnificence, Thy incommensurable love are above all explanation and comment. But my intellect needs to represent things to itself at least a little schematically, in order to allow the most material states of the being to enter as completely as possible into harmony with Thy Will.

Yet it is in the deep silence of my mute and total adoration that I best understand Thee. For then who can say what loves, what is loved, and what is the power of loving in itself? All three are but one in an infinite bliss.

O give to everyone, Lord, the boon of that incomparable bliss.

May 28, 1914

THOU settest in motion, Thou stirrest and churnest the innumerable elements of this world, so that, from their primal darkness, their primeval chaos, they may awaken to consciousness and the full light of knowledge. And Thou usest Thy supreme love to churn all these elements in this way. And it is from Thy infinite, unfathomable heart that these inexhaustible torrents of love spring forth. Thy heart is my dwelling-place, Thy heart is the reality of my being. In Thy heart I have nestled and I have become Thy heart.

Peace, peace upon all beings.

May 29, 1914

O MY sweet Lord, those who are in Thy head, that is, to speak more intellectually, those who have identified their consciousness with the absolute Consciousness, those who have become Thy supreme Knowledge, can no longer have any love for Thee, since they are Thyself. They enjoy that infinite bliss characteristic of all awareness of Thy supreme Essence, but the devotion of the adorer who turns with ecstasy to that which is higher and above him can no longer exist. So, to him whose mission upon earth is to manifest Thy love, Thou teachest to have this pure and infinite love for all the manifested universe; the love which at first was made of adoration and admiration is transformed into a love all made of compassion and devotedness.

Oh, the divine splendour of Thy eternal Unity!

Oh, the infinite sweetness of Thy Beatitude!

Oh, the sovereign majesty of Thy Knowledge!

Thou art the Inconceivable, the Marvellous One!

May 31, 1914

WHEN the sun set in the indrawn contemplation of the calm twilight, all my being prostrated itself before Thee, O Lord, in mute adoration and complete self-giving. Then I was the whole earth and the whole earth prostrated itself before Thee, imploring the benediction of Thy illumination, the beatitude of Thy love. Oh, the kneeling earth that supplicates to Thee, then is ingathered in the silence of the night, waiting in both patience and anxiety for the illumination so ardently desired. If there is a sweetness in being Thy divine love at work in the world, there is as great a sweetness in being the infinite aspiration which rises towards that infinite love. And to be able to change thus, to be successively, almost simultaneously, what receives and what gives, what transfigures and what is transfigured, to be identified with the painful darkness as with the all-powerful splendour and, in this double identification, to discover the secret of Thy sovereign unity, is this not a way of expressing, of accomplishing Thy supreme will? . . .

O my sweet Master, my heart is a flaming chapel, and Thou art seated there permanently like the sublimest of idols; so it is that Thy form appears to me, clothed in magnificence, in the midst of the flames consuming my heart for Thee, and at the same time, in my head, I see Thee, know Thee as the Inconceivable, the Unknowable, the Formless; and in this double perception, this double knowledge, lies the plenitude of contentment.

June 1, 1914

O VICTORIOUS power of divine Love, Thou art the sovereign Master of this universe, Thou art its creator and its saviour, Thou hast permitted it to emerge from chaos, and now Thou leadest it to its eternal goal.

There is not a thing so humble but in it I see Thee resplendent, not a being apparently so hostile to Thy will but I feel Thee live in it and act and radiate.

O my sweet Master, essence of this love, I am Thy heart, and the torrents of Thy love pass through the entirety of my being and flow out to awaken Thy love in all things or rather to awaken all things to the consciousness of Thy love which animates all.

All those who do not recognise Thee, all those who do not know Thee, all those who try to turn away from Thy sweet and divine law, I take into my arms of love, I cradle them in my heart of love and offer them to Thy divine flames, so that penetrated by Thy miraculous effluence, they may be converted in Thy beatitude.

O Love, resplendent Love, Thou penetratest, Thou transfigurest all.

June 2, 1914

IN a silent contemplation, in a mute adoration, uniting myself with all this dark and painful substance, I hail Thee, O Lord, as the divine saviour; I bless Thy love as the supreme liberator, I offer thanks for its countless boons, and I give myself fully to Thee so that Thou mayst complete Thy work of perfectioning. Then identifying myself with Thy love, I am nothing but Thy inexhaustible love; I penetrate all things; living within the heart of each atom I kindle therein the fire which purifies and transfigures, the fire that never burns out, the messenger flame of Thy beatitudes, realiser of all perfections.

Then this very love grows silently contemplative, and turning to Thee, O unknowable Splendour, awaits in ecstasy Thy New Manifestation . . .

June 3, 1914

Now that the whole being is more and more deeply plunged into material activity, into the physical realisation which includes such a multitude of details to be thought of and regulated, I call to Thee, O Lord, so that my consciousness, turned thus outwards, may constantly keep this communion with Thee, which is the source of all peace, all strength, all bliss.

O my sweet Master, accomplish all the work Thyself through this individual being in its integrality. Or rather, do not let anything in this individual being forget at any moment that it is only an instrument, an illusion made real for Thy intervention in it, and that Thou alone art and actest.

Oh, the benediction of Thy immutable Presence . . .

June 4, 1914

O THOU who triumphest over all obstacles, Thou shalt be in us the victory over all that would be an obstacle to the accomplishment of Thy divine law. Thou wilt dispel the darkness of ignorance and the black smoke of egoistic ill-will; Thou wilt dissolve all wrong suggestions and strengthen in us a pure and clear vision and the perspicacity which does not let itself be deceived by disruptive thoughts and conflicting wills for disorder.

O my sweet Master, Thy infinite love is the reality of our being; who can struggle against its all-powerful action? It penetrates everything, it passes through every obstacle, whether it be the inertia of a heavy ignorance or the resistance of an uncomprehending ill-will. O my sweet Master, through and by this love, Thou shinest resplendent in all things, and this splendour of Thine, ever-increasing in its force, shall radiate its action over all the earth and become perceptible to every consciousness.

Who can resist Thy divine power?

Thou art the sole and supreme Reality.

My being is ingathered in a mute adoration and everything disappears that is not Thou.

June 9, 1914

LORD, I am before Thee like an offering aflame in the blazing fire of the divine union. . . .

And what is thus before Thee is all the stones of this house and all it contains, all those who cross its threshold and all who see it, all who are connected with it in any way and from one to another the whole earth.

From this centre, this burning hearth which is now and shall be more and more permeated with Thy light and with Thy love, Thy forces will radiate over all the earth, visibly and invisibly in the hearts of all and in their thoughts . . .

Such is the assurance Thou givest me in answer to my aspiration for Thee.

An immense wave of love descends over all things and penetrates all things.

Peace, peace upon all the earth, victory, plenitude, wonder . . .

O beloved children, unhappy and ignorant, O thou, rebellious and violent Nature, open your hearts, calm your forces, for here comes the sweet omnipotence of Love, here is the pure radiance of the light that penetrates you. This human hour, this earthly hour is beautiful over all other hours. Let each and all know it and rejoice in the plenitude that is given.

O sorrowful hearts and careworn brows, foolish obscurity and ignorant ill-will, let your anguish be calmed and effaced.

Lo, the splendour of the new word arrives:
“Here am I.”

June 11, 1914

EVERY morning, O Lord, an innumerable salutation rises towards Thee, a salutation from all the states of being and from all the multitude of their elements. And it is a daily consecration of all things to the All, a call from ignorance and egoism to Thy light and love. And Thy answer comes constant and is integrally perceived: All is light, all is love, ignorance and egoism are but vain phantoms, they can be dissolved.

And over all things spreads Thy sovereign peace, Thy fecund calmness.

June 12, 1914

O MY sweet Master, eternal splendour, I can only unite with Thee in silence and peace, saying that Thy Will may be done in every detail as in the whole. Take possession of Thy kingdom, master all that revolts against Thee, heal the souls who do not know Thee and the intellects that do not want to submit and be consecrated to Thee. Awaken our slumbering energies, stimulate our courage, enlighten us, O Lord, show us the Way.

My heart is overflowing with a sovereign peace, my thought is calm and silent.

At the core of all that is, of all that will be, of all that is not, is Thy divine and unchanging smile.

June 13, 1914

FIRST of all, knowledge must be conquered, that is, one must learn to know Thee, to be united with Thee, and all means are good and may be used to attain this goal. But it would be a great mistake to believe that all is done when this goal is attained. All is done in principle, the victory is gained in theory, and those whose motive is only an egoistic aspiration for their own salvation may feel satisfied and live only in and for this communion, without caring at all for Thy manifestation.

But those whom Thou hast appointed as Thy representatives upon earth cannot rest content with the result so obtained. To know Thee first and before all else, yes; but once Thy knowledge is acquired there remains all the work of Thy manifestation; and then there intervene the quality, force, complexity and perfection of this manifestation. Very often those who have known Thee, dazzled and rapt in ecstasy by this knowledge, have been content to see Thee for themselves and express Thee somehow or other in their outermost being. He who wants to be perfect in Thy manifestation cannot be satisfied with that; he must manifest Thee on all the planes, in all the states of being and thus turn the knowledge he has acquired to the best account for the whole universe.

Before the immensity of this programme, the entire being exults and sings a hymn of gladness to Thee.

All nature in full conscious activity, all vibrant with
Thy sovereign forces, responds to their inspiration and
wants to be illumined and transfigured by them . . .

Thou art the Master of the world, the sole Reality.

June 14, 1914

IT is a veritable work of creation we have to do: to create activities, new modes of being so that this Force, unknown to the earth till today, may manifest in its plenitude. To this travail I am consecrated, O Lord, for this is what Thou wantest of me. But since Thou hast appointed me for this work, Thou must give me the means, that is, the knowledge necessary for its realisation. We shall unite our efforts: the entire individual being will concentrate in a constant call for the knowledge of the mode of manifestation of this Force, and Thou, supreme centre of the being, Thou wilt emanate the Force fully so that it may penetrate, transfigure and overcome all obstacles. It is a pact Thou hast signed with the worlds of individual life. Thou hast made a promise, Thou hast sent into these worlds those who can and that which can fulfil this promise. This now demands Thy integral help so that what has been promised may be realised.

In us must take place the union of the two wills and two currents, so that from their contact may spring forth the illuminating spark.

And since this *must* be done, *this will be done.*

June 15, 1914

“**L**I E cradled in my heart and do not worry: what has to be done will be done. And it is just when thou doest it unknowingly that it is done best” . . .

I am in Thy heart, Lord, and nothing can take me away from it. And it is from the unfathomable depths of this heart, in the smiling peace of its beatitude, that I look at all the outer forms of Thy manifestation struggling and endeavouring to understand Thee better, manifest Thee better.

If the hour has come, as Thou lettest me know, for the new forms of Thy realisation, these forms will inevitably be born. Something in the being senses it but does not yet know; so it makes an effort to adapt itself, to prove equal to what Thou askest of it. But what is conscious of Thee and lives in Thy force knows that this new form is only an infinitesimal progress in the infinite progression of Thy manifestation, and looks at every form with the serenity of eternal plenitude.

And in this serenity is the very omnipotence of realisation.

One must know how to soar in an immutable confidence; in the sure flight is perfect knowledge.

June 16, 1914

LIKE a sun Thy splendour descends upon the earth and Thy rays will illumine the world. All those elements which are pure enough, plastic enough, sufficiently receptive to manifest the very splendour of the central fire-nucleus are grouping themselves together. This grouping is not arbitrary and does not depend on the will or aspiration of one element or another, it depends on what it is, it is independent of any individual decision. Thy splendour wants to radiate; what is capable of manifesting it manifests it, and these elements gather together to reconstitute as perfectly as possible in this world of division the divine Centre which has to be manifested.

In the wonder of this contemplation all the cells of the being exult; and, seeing That which Is, the integral substance passes into an ecstasy. How can this substance be now distinguished from Thyself? It is Thou — completely, entirely, intensely — in a perfect identification, Thou.

June 17, 1914

ALL that has been conceived and realised so far is mediocre, banal, insufficient beside what ought to be. The perfections of the past no longer have any force now. A new puissance is needed to transform the new powers and to subject them to Thy divine will. "Ask and this shall be", is Thy constant answer. And now, O Lord, Thou must create in this being a constant aspiration, uninterrupted, intense, passionate, in an immutable serenity. Silence, peace are there: there must also be the persistence of the intensity. Oh, Thy heart sings a hallelujah of gladness as if what Thou willest were on the way to its fulfilment. . . . Destroy all these elements, that from their ashes may emerge new elements adapted to the new manifestation.

Oh, the immensity of Thy luminous Peace!

Oh, the omnipotence of Thy sovereign Love!

And beyond all that we can imagine, the ineffable splendour of what we feel to be coming. Give us the Thought, give us the Word, give us the Force.

Enter the arena of the world, O new-born Unknown One!

June 18, 1914

ALWAYS the same Will is at work. The Force is there awaiting the possibility to manifest: we must discover the new form which will make the new manifestation possible. And Thou, only Thou, O Lord, can grant us this knowledge. It is for us with our whole being to make the effort, to ask, to aspire. But it is for Thee to answer with the Illumination, the Knowledge and the Power.

Oh, the canticle of joy of Thy victorious Presence . . .

June 19, 1914

FILL our hearts with the delight of Thy love. Flood our minds with the splendour of Thy light. Grant that we may effectuate Thy Victory!

June 20, 1914

THOU must accomplish the work of transfiguration, Thou must teach us the path to be followed and Thou must give us the power to follow it to the very end. . . .

O Thou source of all love and all light, Thou whom we cannot know in Thyself but can manifest ever more completely and perfectly, Thou whom we cannot conceive but can approach in profound silence, to complete Thy incommensurable boons Thou must come to our help until we have gained Thy victory. . . .

Let that true love be born which soothes all suffering; establish that immutable peace wherein resides true power; give us the sovereign knowledge which dispels all darkness. . . .

From the infinite depths to this most external body, in its smallest elements, Thou dost move and live and vibrate and set all in motion, and the whole being is now only a single block, infinitely multiple yet absolutely coherent, animated by one tremendous vibration: Thou.

June 21, 1914

To be at once a passive and perfectly pure mirror, turned simultaneously without and within, to the results of the manifestation and the sources of this manifestation, so that the consequences may be placed before the guiding will, and to be also the realising activity of that will, this, more or less, is what a human being ought to be. . . . To combine these two attitudes of passive receptivity and realising activity is precisely the most difficult of all things. And that is what Thou expectest of us, O Lord, and as Thou dost expect it of us, there is no doubt that Thou wilt give us the means of realising it.

For what must be will be, more splendidly yet than we can imagine.

Oh, may Thy love grow wider and wider in the manifestation, ever more sublime, ever deeper, ever vaster. . . .

June 22, 1914

WHAT has to be will be, what has to be done will be done. . . .

What a calm assurance Thou hast put into my being, O Lord. Who or what will manifest Thee? Who can say it yet? . . . In all things that strive towards a new, ever higher and completer expression, Thou art present. But the centre of the light is still not manifested, for the centre of manifestation is not yet perfectly adapted.

O divine Master, that which has to be will be and it will perhaps be very different from what all expect. . . .

But how is it possible to express certain silent secrets?
The force is here; in it is the self.

When and how will this force spring forth? When Thou findest the instrument ready.

Oh, the sweetness of Thy calm assurance, the power of Thy Peace! . . .

June 23, 1914

T HOU art the sovereign power of transformation, why shouldst Thou not act on all who are brought into contact with Thee through our mediation? We lack faith in Thy power: always we think that men should in their conscious thought want this integral transformation for it to come about; we forget that it is Thou who willest in them and that Thou canst will in such a way that all their being is illumined by it. . . . We doubt Thy power, O Lord, and thus become bad intermediaries for it and veil the major part of its transforming force.

Oh, give us the faith which we lack; give us the certificate of detail which is wanting in us. Deliver us from the ordinary way of thinking and judging; grant that we may live in the consciousness of Thy infinite love and see it at work at every moment and that by our consciousness of it we may bring it into touch with the most material states of being. . . .

O Lord, deliver us from all ignorance, give us true faith.

June 24, 1914

FROM the point of view of the manifestation, the work to be carried forward upon earth, a hierarchy is needed — but in this world which is still in disorder, can it be established unarbitrarily, that is, in perfect conformity with Thy law? . . . The witness being, calm, indifferent, smiling, looks upon the play, the comedy which is unfolding itself, and awaits circumstances with serenity, knowing that they are nothing but a very imperfect translation of what should be.

But the religious being turns to Thee, O Lord, in a great aspiration of love, and implores Thy help so that it may be *the best* that shall be realised, so that as many obstacles as possible may be overcome, all possible obscurities dispelled, all possible egoistic ill-will vanquished. It is not *the best* possible in circumstances of the present disorder which must happen — for that always happens — it is these circumstances themselves which, through a greater effort than ever yet was made, must be transfigured, so that a “best”, new in quality, new in quantity, an altogether exceptional “best” may be manifested.

So let it be.

*

It is always wrong to want to evaluate the future or even to foresee it by the thought we have about it, for this thought is the present, it is in its very impersonality the translation of present relations which are necessarily

not the future relations between all the elements of the terrestrial problem. Deducing future circumstances from present ones is a mental activity of the nature of reasoning, even if the deduction takes place in the subconscious and is translated in the being into the form of intuition; but reasoning is a human faculty, that is, it is individual; its inspirations do not come from the infinite, the unlimited, the Divine. It is only in the Omniscience, only when one is at once What knows, what is to be known and the power of knowing that one can become conscious of all relations, past, present and future; but in this state there is no longer a past, present or future, *all is* eternally. The order of manifestation of all these relations does not solely depend upon the supreme impulsion, the divine Law, it depends also upon the resistance put up against this law by the most external world; from the combination of the two there comes forth the manifestation and so far as it is at present possible for me to know, this combination is in a way undetermined. This is what makes the play, the unexpectedness of the play.

June 25, 1914

WHAT wisdom is there in wanting to be like this or like that? Why torment oneself thus? Art Thou not the supreme worker? Is it not our duty to be Thy docile instruments and, when Thou puttest the instrument aside for a time, will it complain that Thou abandonest it because Thou dost not make it work? Will it not be able to enjoy calm and repose after having enjoyed activity and struggle?

One must be always vigilant, attentive to the least call, so as not to be asleep or inert when Thou givest the signal for action, whether with the mind, the feelings or the body; but one must not confuse this constant state of expectation and devoted goodwill with an anxious and uneasy agitation, a fear of not being this or that and of displeasing Thee, that is, of not conforming with what Thou expectest of us.

Thy heart is the supreme shelter, that wherein all care is soothed. Oh, leave it wide open, this heart, so that all those who are tormented may find there a sovereign refuge! . . .

Pierce this darkness, let light flash forth;
Still this tumult, establish peace;
Calm this violence, let love reign;
Become the warrior, triumphant over obstacles;
Win the victory.

June 26, 1914

HAIL to Thee, O Lord, Master of the world. Give us the power to do the work without being attached to it and to develop the capacities of individual manifestation without living in the illusion of personality. Strengthen our vision of reality; make firm our perception of unity; deliver us from all ignorance, all darkness.

We do not ask for the perfection of the instrument, knowing that in the world of relativities all perfection is relative: this instrument, fashioned for action in this world, must, in order to be able to act, belong to this world; but the consciousness that animates it should be identified with Thine, it should be the universal and eternal consciousness animating the varied multitude of bodies.

O Lord, grant that we may rise above the ordinary forms of manifestation so that Thou mayst find the tools necessary for Thy new manifestation.

Do not let us lose sight of the goal; grant that we may always be united with Thy force, the force which the earth does not yet know and which Thou hast given us the mission to reveal to it.

In a deep meditation, all the states of manifestation consecrate themselves to Thy manifestation.

June 27, 1914

MY being is happy with what Thou givest it; what Thou wantest from it, it will do, without weakness, without vain modesty and without futile ambition. What does it matter which place one occupies, what mission Thou entrustest? . . . Does not all lie in the fact of being entirely Thine, as perfectly as one can be, without the least care of any kind?

In this deep and steadfast confidence that Thy work will be done and that Thou hast created and appointed those who have to accomplish it, why strain one's energy uselessly and want what is already realised? Thou hast given me, O Lord, the sovereign peace of this confidence; Thou hast granted me the incomparable boon of living in Thy love, by Thy love, of being Thy love ever more and more; and in this love is complete and unchanging beatitude.

I address but one prayer to Thee, which I know to be granted in advance: Always increase the number of elements, atoms or universes, capable of living integrally in and by Thy love.

Peace, peace upon all the earth. . . .

June 28, 1914

ALL Nature hails Thee, O Lord, and with arms lifted and hands outstretched she implores Thee. Not that she doubts Thy infinite generosity and thinks she must ask in order to have; but that is her way of bowing to Thee and giving herself to Thee, for is this giving anything else than being ready to receive? She delights in thus offering a prayer to Thee though she knows that this prayer is superfluous. But it is an ardent and happy adoration. And the feeling of devotion is thus satisfied without in any way hurting the intellectual consciousness which knows Thee to be one with everything and present in everything.

But all the veils must vanish and the light become complete in all hearts.

O Lord, in spite of the work, in it, give us that perfect calm of the spirit which makes possible the divine identification, the integral knowledge.

My love for Thee, O Lord, is Thyself and yet my love bows down before Thee in deep devotion.

June 29, 1914

GIVE joy, peace and happiness to them all. . . . If they suffer, illumine their suffering and make it a means of transfiguration; grant them the beatitude of Thy love and the peace of Thy unity; may their hearts feel vibrating within them Thy eternal Presence. They are all in me, O Lord, I am in them all, and since instead of an “I”, there is now only Thy sovereign love, they are all in Thy love and will be transfigured by it.

O Lord, my sweet Master, unknowable splendour, give them joy, peace, beatitude.

June 30, 1914

EACH activity in its own field accomplishing its particular mission, without disorder, without confusion, one enveloping the other, and all graded hierarchically around a single centre: Thy will. . . . What is most lacking in all beings is clarity and order; each element, each state of being, instead of fulfilling its function in harmony with all the others, wants to be the whole in itself, perfectly autonomous and independent. And there lies the ignorant error of all the universe, a global error repeated in millions and millions of forms. But under the pretext that these activities are separate and in disorder, to want to suppress them so as to let only Thy single Will subsist, which in its solitude would no longer have any reason to exist, would be an undertaking as absurd as it is unrealisable. It is easier, indeed, to suppress than to organise; but harmonious order is a realisation far superior to suppression. And even if the final aim were a return to Non-Being, the return would seem possible to me only through a highest perfection of the being. . . .

O my sweet Master, grant to them that they may feel Thy infinite tenderness and in the calm repose that it brings, be able to see and realise the supreme order of Thy law.

Let Thy will which is all love manifest, let Thy peace manifest.

July 1, 1914

WE hail Thee, O Lord, with adoration and with joy, and give ourselves to Thee in a gift constantly renewed, so that Thy will may be accomplished upon earth and in all the places of this universe.

When we turn towards Thee the thought is mute but the heart exults; for Thou shinest resplendent in all things, and the least grain of sand may be an occasion for worship.

We bow down before Thee, we unite with Thee, O Lord, in a love that is limitless and full of an inexpressible beatitude.

Oh, grant this sovereign joy to all.

July 4, 1914

O SOVEREIGN Force, O victorious Power, Purity, Beauty, supreme Love, grant that this being in its integrality, this body in all its totality may draw near to Thee solemnly and offer to Thee in a complete and humble surrender this means of manifestation abandoned perfectly to Thy Will, if not perfectly ready for this realisation. . . .

With the calm and strong certitude that Thou wilt one day accomplish the expected miracle and manifest in its fullness Thy sublime splendour, we turn to Thee in a profound rapture, and silently implore Thee. . . .

Immensity, Infinitude, Wonder. . . . Thou alone art and Thou shiniest resplendent in all things. The hour of Thy fulfilment is near. All Nature is ingathered in a solemn concentration.

Thou answerest her ardent call.

July 5, 1914

ALL that belongs to the outer, lower being which is still obscure, prostrates itself before Thee in a mute and fervent adoration, calling with all its strength Thy purifying action which will make it fit to manifest Thee fully.

And in this adoration is found perfect silence and perfect beatitude.

Thou repliest mercifully to the call: "What has to be done will be done. The necessary instruments will be prepared. Strive in the calm of certitude."

July 6, 1914

WHAT plenitude in the perception! The entire individual being, modest, humble, surrendered, adoring, calm and smiling, feeling one with all beings, unable to make any difference of value, in perfect solidarity with all things, is kneeling down before Thee together with them all; and at the same time the formidable omnipotence of *Thy Force which is here*, ready for the manifestation, waiting, building the propitious hour, the favourable opportunity: the incomparable splendour of Thy victorious sovereignty.

The Force is here. Rejoice, O you who are waiting and hoping: the new manifestation is sure, the new manifestation is at hand.

The Force is here.

All nature exults and sings in gladness, all nature is at a festival: *The Force is here*.

Arise and live; arise and be illuminated; arise and battle for the transfiguration of all:

The Force is here.

July 7, 1914

P EACE, peace upon all the earth. . . .

Not the peace of an inconscient sleep or a self-satisfied inertia; not the peace of a self-forgetful ignorance and a dark, heavy indifference, but the peace of the omnipotent force, the peace of perfect communion, the peace of integral awakening, of the disappearance of all limitation and all darkness. . . .

Why torment oneself and suffer, why this bitter struggle and painful revolt, why this vain violence, why this inconscient, heavy sleep? Awake without fear, appease your conflicts, silence your disputes, open your eyes and your hearts: the Force is there; it is there, divinely pure, luminous, powerful; it is there as a boundless love, a sovereign power, an indisputable reality, an unmixed peace, an uninterrupted beatitude, the Supreme Benediction; it is self-existence, the endless bliss of infinite knowledge . . . and it is something more which cannot yet be told, but which is already at work in the higher worlds beyond thought as the power of sovereign transfiguration, and also in the inconscient depths of Matter as the Irresistible Healer. . . .

Listen, listen, O thou who wouldst know.

Look, thou who wouldst see, contemplate and live:

The Force is here.

July 8, 1914

O DIVINE Force, supreme Illuminator, hearken to our prayer, move not away from us, do not withdraw, help us to fight the good fight, make firm our strength for the struggle, give us the force to conquer!

O my sweet Master, Thou whom I adore without being able to know Thee, Thou who I am without being able to realise Thee, my entire conscious individuality prostrates itself before Thee and implores, in the name of the workers in their struggle, and of the earth in her agony, in the name of suffering humanity and of striving Nature; O my sweet Master, O marvellous Unknowable, O Dispenser of all boons, Thou who makest light spring forth in the darkness and strength to arise out of weakness, support our effort, guide our steps, lead us to victory.

July 10, 1914

O THOU who eternally, immutably art, who consentest to Thy becoming in this world that Thou mayst bring into it a new Illumination, a new Impulsion, Thou art here, manifest Thyself more and more completely, always more perfectly; the instrument has given and gives itself to Thee with a fervent adhesion, a total surrender; Thou mayst reduce it to dust or transform it into a sun, it will resist nothing that is Thy Will. In this surrender lies its true strength and its true beatitude.

But why art Thou so considerate with the animality of the body? Is it because it must be given time to adapt itself to the marvellous complexity, the powerful infinity of Thy Force? Is it Thy Will that makes itself gentle and patient, is unwilling to precipitate things, leaves to the elements leisure to adapt themselves? . . . I mean—is it better thus or is it impossible otherwise? Is there here a particular incapacity which Thou dost tolerate with magnanimity or is this a general law which is an inevitable portion of all that has to be transformed? . . .

But it matters little what we think about it, since thus it is; the attitude alone is important: Should we fight, should we accept? And it is Thou who dictatest the attitude, it is Thy Will that determines it at each moment. Why foresee and contrive when it is enough to observe and to give a full adhesion?

The working in the constitution of the physical cells is perceptible: permeated with a considerable amount of

force they seem to expand and to become lighter. But the brain is still heavy and asleep. . . . I unite myself to this body, O divine Master, and cry to Thee: Do not spare me, act with Thy sovereign omnipotence; for in me Thou hast put the will to an entire transfiguration.

July 11, 1914

THE entire physical being would like to be dissolved and reconstituted in an adoration that would have no bounds. O Lord, Thou who comest to touch Matter as the Messenger of the Supreme Power and Supreme Beatitude, Thou createst the conception of what the total realisation can be. And when the being believed it was definitively invested with Thy sublime mandate, Thou withdrawest, making it understand that it was only a promise, a token of what can be. Alas, what an imperfection in Matter it is that we cannot hold Thee! O Lord, use Thy omnipotence, work the miracle of Thy permanent Presence. . . . Why so much consideration? We must triumph or perish! . . .

Victory, victory, victory! We want the victory of Transfiguration!

July 12, 1914

IN all the states of being, in all the modes of activity, in all things, in all the worlds, one can meet Thee and unite with Thee, for Thou art everywhere and always present. He who has met Thee in one activity of his being or in one world of the universe, says "I have found Him" and seeks nothing more; he thinks he has reached the summit of human possibilities. What a mistake! In all the states, in all the modes, in all things, all worlds, all the elements we must discover Thee and unite with Thee and if one element is left aside, however small it may be, the communion cannot be perfect, the realisation cannot be accomplished.

And that is why to have found Thee is but a first step on an infinite ladder. . . .

O sweet Master, sovereign Transfigurator, put an end to all negligence, all lazy indolence, gather together all our energies, make them into an indomitable, irresistible will.

O Light, Love, ineffable Force, all the atoms cry to Thee so that Thou mayst penetrate and transfigure them. . . .

Give to all the supreme delight of the communion.

July 13, 1914

PATIENCE, strength, courage, calm and indomitable energy. . . .

Let the mind learn to be silent, let it not be eager to profit immediately by the forces which come to us from Thee for the integral manifestation. . . .

But why hast thou chosen for the expression of Thy Will the poorest element, the most mediocre, the most imperfect? . . .

July 15, 1914

WHAT, O Lord? . . .

Just as Thou wilt, just as Thou wilt. . . .

This instrument is weak, mediocre; Thou hast taught it that all activities are possible to it, that nothing was radically strange to it in all human activities; but it is in intensity, in perfection only that the Divine begins, and until now Thou hast not granted to it any extraordinary intensity, any real perfection. . . . Everything is in a state of promise, a promise not individual but collective; nothing is completely realised.

Why, O Lord?

Thou hast placed in my heart a peace so total that it seems to be almost indifference and in an immensity of calm serenity it says:

Just as Thou wilt, just as Thou wilt. . . .

July 16, 1914

SALUTATION of my silent and humble adoration. . . .

I bow down before Thy glory, for it dominates me
with all its splendour. . . .

Oh, let me dissolve at Thy feet, melt into Thee!

July 17, 1914

EARTHLY realisations easily take on a great importance in our eyes, for they are proportionate to our external being with this limited form which makes us men. But what is an earthly realisation beside Thee, before Thee? However perfect, complete, divine it may be, it is nothing but an indiscernible moment in Thy eternity; and the results obtained by it, however powerful and marvellous they may be, are nothing but an imperceptible atom in the infinite march to Thee. This is what Thy workers must never forget, otherwise they will become unfit to serve Thee. . . .

O my sweet Master, what childishness to think oneself responsible for anything at all and want to individualise Thy supreme and divine Will! Is it not enough to unite with Thy heart and live there permanently? Then Thou takest all the responsibilities and Thy will works without even our needing to know it. . . . Only a realisation independent of all outer circumstances, free from all attachment and all understanding, however high, is a true realisation, a valuable realisation. And the only such realisation is to unite with Thee integrally, closely, definitively. As for the care of Thy transitory, momentary manifestation in a fugitive existence and in a transient world, it is Thou who must be responsible for it and do what is necessary for it to exist, if Thou thinkest it good.

O my sweet Master, sovereign Lord, Thou hast taken away all my cares and left me only the Beatitude, the supreme ecstasy of Thy divine Communion.

July 18, 1914

TWO things remain unshakable despite all storm-winds, even the most violent: the will that all may be happy with the true happiness—Thine, and the ardent desire to unite perfectly and be identified with Thee. . . . All the rest is perhaps still the result of an effort and a pretension, this is spontaneous, unshakable; and just when it seems that the ground is giving way and everything breaking down, this appears luminous, pure and calm, piercing through the clouds, dispelling the shadows, emerging still greater and stronger from the ruins, carrying in itself Thy infinite Peace and Beatitude.

July 19, 1914

O LORD, Thou art the omnipotent Master of Thy own manifestation; grant to these instruments that they may escape from frames too narrow, from limits too fixed and mediocre. All the riches of human possibility are needed to translate even one atom of Thy infinite Force. . . . Open the doors that are closed, make the sealed fountains spring forth, that the floods of Thy eloquence and Thy beauty may overspread the world. Let there be amplitude and majesty, nobility and grace, charm and grandeur, variety and strength: for it is the will of the Lord to manifest.

O my sweet Master, Thou art the sovereign Ruler of our destinies; Thou art the omnipotent Master of Thy own manifestation.

Thine is all this world, Thine all these creatures and all these atoms. Transfigure them, illumine.

July 21, 1914

THERE was no longer any body, no longer any sensation; only a column of light was there, rising from where the base of the body normally is to where usually is the head, to form there a disk of light like that of the moon; then from there the column continued to rise very far above the head, opening out into an immense sun, dazzling and multicoloured, whence a rain of golden light fell covering all the earth.

Then slowly the column of light came down again forming an oval of living light, awakening and setting into movement — each one in a special way, according to a particular vibratory mode — the centres above the head, in the head, the throat, the heart, in the middle of the stomach, at the base of the spine and still farther down. At the level of the knees, the ascending and descending currents joined and the circulation thus went on uninterruptedly, enveloping the whole being in an immense oval of living light.

Then slowly the consciousness came down again, stage by stage, halting in each world, until the body-consciousness returned. The recovery of the body-consciousness was, if the memory is correct, the ninth stage. At that moment the body was still quite stiff and immobile.

July 22, 1914

THOU art all love, O Lord, and Thy love shines resplendently in the depths of every thought and every heart. Accomplish Thy work of transfiguration: illumine us. Open the still closed doors, widen the horizon, establish strength, unify our beings and make us participate in Thy divine beatitude that we may be able to make all men share in it. Grant that we may conquer the last obstacles, inner and outer, overcome the final difficulties. An ardent and sincere prayer has never risen in vain to Thee; always in Thy munificence Thou answerest every call and Thy mercy is infinite.

O divine Master, let Thy light fall into this chaos and bring forth from it a new world. Accomplish what is now in preparation and create a new humanity which may be the perfect expression of Thy new and sublime Law.

Nothing will stop our impetus; nothing will tire our effort; and, resting upon Thee all our hopes and all our activities, strong in our complete surrender to Thy Supreme Will, we shall march on to the conquest of Thy integral manifestation with the calm certitude of victory over all that would oppose it.

Hail to Thee, Master of the world, who triumphest over all darkness.

July 23, 1914

LORD, Thou art all-powerful: become the fighter, gain the victory. May Thy Love be the sovereign Master of our hearts and Thy Knowledge never leave our thoughts. . . . Do not abandon us to impotence and darkness; break every limit, shatter every chain, dispel every illusion.

Our aspiration rises to Thee in ardent prayer.

July 25, 1914

AT the rising of the sun I sang the praise of this world in which it is possible not only to desire Thee but to know Thee and even to become Thee. And I was astonished that there should be some who so ardently aspire to leave this universe and enter another world of perfection.

Thou hast placed such contentment in my heart that it has become impossible for me not to feel satisfied in all circumstances, inner or outer. And yet something in my being always aspires for more beauty, for more light, for more knowledge, for more love—in a word, for a more conscious, a more constant relation with Thee. . . . But this too depends upon Thy will, and when it is Thy will, Thou shalt grant me the entire transfiguration.

July 27, 1914

HUMBLY, quietly, my prayer rises to Thee, O sweet Master, Thou who acceptest without argument and without censure all that is offered to Thee, Thou who givest Thyself and makest Thyself known to all, without asking whether they are worthy of it or not, Thou who findest nothing too weak, too small, too modest, too inadequate to manifest Thee. . . .

Let me lay myself at Thy feet, let me melt into Thy heart and disappear in Thee, let me be annihilated in Thy beatitude, or rather let me be only Thy servant, claiming nothing more. I desire, I aspire for nothing else. To be only *Thy* servant is all I ask.

July 31, 1914

IT seems to me that Thou wouldst make me taste successively all the experiences which are ordinarily put at the summit of a Yoga as its culmination and the proof of its perfect accomplishment. The experience is striking, intense, complete; it carries within it the knowledge of all its effects, all its consequences; it is conscious, willed, the result of methodical effort and not of unexpected chance; and yet it is *always single of its kind*, like milestones set along a route which are separated from each other by a long ribbon of road; and, moreover, these milestones which mark the infinite ascent are never alike; they are always new and seem to have no connection one with the other. . . . Will a time come when Thou wilt make this being capable of synthetising all these countless experiences so as to draw from them a new realisation, more complete and more beautiful than all achieved so far? I do not know. But Thou hast taught me not to regret an exceptional state when it disappears any more than I desire it before it comes. I see in the disappearance no longer the sign of an instability in the progress made, but the evidence of a march which goes deliberately forward without stopping any longer than is indispensable for the various stages of the road.

Each time Thou teachest me yet a little better that the means of manifestation is limited only because we think it so, and that it can effectively partake of Thy infinitude; each time something of Thy immensity makes itself kin to the instrument which is its dwelling-place, flinging wide the doors which open on boundless horizons.

August 2, 1914

WHAT are these powerful gods whose hour of manifestation upon earth has come, if not the varied and perfected modes of Thy infinite activity, O Thou Master of all things, Being and Non-Being and What is beyond, Marvellous Unknowable One, our sovereign Lord? . . .

What are these manifold brilliant intellectual activities, these countless sunbeams illumining, conceiving and fashioning all forms, if not one of the modes of being of Thy infinite Will, one of the means of Thy manifestation, O Thou Master of our destinies, sole unthinkable Reality, sovereign Lord of all that is and all that is not yet. . . .

And all these mental powers, all these vital energies, and all these material elements, what are they if not Thyself in Thy outermost form, Thy ultimate modes of expression, of realisation, O Thou whom we adore devotedly and who escapest us on every side even while penetrating, animating and guiding us, Thou whom we cannot understand or define or name, Thou whom we cannot seize or embrace or conceive, and who art yet realised in our smallest acts. . . .

And all this enormous universe is only an atom of Thy eternal Will.

In the immensity of Thy effective Presence all things blossom!

August 3, 1914

ALL the being, this morning, is mute adoration and the immensity of Thy love fills its soul. . . .

The preparation and the work, the work and the preparation alternate and interpenetrate to such an extent that sometimes it becomes difficult to distinguish them; and their combination constitutes Thy divine life upon earth. What one must be, what one must do: the perfecting of Thy instrument and its utilisation go together; sometimes Thou wantest it to enrich itself and grow, to open all its doors on infinite horizons, to unite with the god it can manifest, to develop its power of conscious relation with the various worlds, and sometimes Thou wantest that, losing so to speak all consciousness of itself, it may be nothing but Thy force in action. And in the two is found the supreme law of communion with Thy will.

All the being, this morning, is mute adoration and the immensity of Thy love fills its soul.

August 4, 1914

O LORD, O eternal Master!

Men, driven by the conflict of forces, are performing a sublime sacrifice, they are offering their lives in a bloodstained holocaust. . . .

O Lord, O eternal Master, grant that all this may not be in vain, grant that the inexhaustible torrents of Thy divine Force may spread over the earth and penetrate its troubled atmosphere, the struggling energies, the violent chaos of battling elements; grant that the pure light of Thy Knowledge and the inexhaustible love of Thy Benediction may fill men's hearts, penetrate their souls, illumine their consciousness and, out of this obscurity, out of this sombre, terrible and potent darkness, bring forth the splendour of Thy majestic Presence!

My being is laid before Thee in a holocaust conscious and complete, that their unconscious holocaust may by it be made effective.

Accept the offering, answer our call: *Come!*

August 5, 1914

O ETERNAL Master, Thou art in all things like a vivifying breath, a sweet peace, a sun of luminous love piercing the clouds of darkness.

Grant that we may be Thy vivifying breath, Thy sweet peace, Thy luminous love upon the earth amidst our ignorant and sorrowful human brothers.

O divine Master, accept the offering of all myself as a holocaust that Thy work may be accomplished and the time may not pass by in vain.

In a serene ecstasy I give myself to Thee, that Thou mayst once again become the Master of what is Thine, the possessor of Thyself in each one of the countless atoms and in the consciousness that is synthetic and one.

O divine Master, accept this offering, this complete holocaust that the time may not have come in vain.

My whole being is transformed into a living flame, a flame of sacrifice of pure love.

Become once again the king of Thy kingdom, deliver the earth from the heavy weight which is crushing it, the weight of its own inert, ignorant, and obscure ill will.

O my sweet Master, my being is ablaze with the ardent flame of the sacrifice of love: accept my offering that the obstacle may be overcome.

August 6, 1914

WHAT then are the defects, the blemishes that prevent the offering from being complete enough for Thee to welcome it, the holocaust from seeming to Thee worthy to be received? . . . There are still some limitations in this being, but wilt Thou not shatter them?

O Lord, we know that it is an hour of great gravity for the earth: those who can be Thy intermediaries to it to make a greater harmony arise from the conflict and from its dark ugliness a diviner beauty, must be ready for the work. O Lord, O eternal Master, we entreat Thee, answer our endeavour, enlighten it, show us the way, give us the strength to break down all inner resistance and overcome every obstacle.

O my sweet Master, I prostrate myself at Thy feet; my entire being cries to Thee in an ardent supplication. . . . “Deliver me from the incapacity of the personal being.”

August 8, 1914

MY pen is silent. . . . So absorbing is this material world! Why must we let it take so much place in our consciousness? Is it an incapacity in us? Is it Thy Will?

O my sweet Master, I would live only in Thee but Thou hast told me that I must live *for* Thee, and in thus living for Thee our consciousness turns towards external fields and we seem to go far from Thee.

I know this is not altogether true; but there is a resistance still in the being which refuses to yield, there is a door which remains closed, a certain door of luminous intelligence which no effort has been able till now to open, and this terribly impoverishes Thy manifestation.

When wilt Thou decide that the hour has come for all this resistance to disappear?

Monstrous forces have swooped down upon the earth like a hurricane, forces dark and violent and powerful and blind. Give us strength, O Lord, to illumine them. Thy splendour must break out everywhere in them and transfigure their action: their devastating passage must leave behind it a divine sowing. . . .

O my divine Master, do not reject my offering. Make me worthy to be wholly Thine in the plenitude of the giving and the fullness of the manifestation.

August 9, 1914

LORD, we are before Thee that Thy will may be done. Remove from our thought all obstacles, doubts, all weaknesses, limitations, all that veils our knowledge and obscures our understanding.

I am athirst for Thy consciousness, I am athirst for an integral union with Thee, not in inaction and a flight from physical activity but in a complete, absolute, perfect accomplishment of Thy will.

The splendour of Thy supreme light must spring forth from all the darkness that has swept down upon the earth.

August 11, 1914

O MY sweet Master, enter into all these confused thoughts, all these anguished hearts; kindle there the fire of Thy divine Presence. The shadow of the earth has fallen back upon it, it has been completely shaken by it; but this shadow was hiding Thy immutable sun, and now that it has crashed down upon this poor world, rocking its very foundations and transforming it into a formidable chaos, wilt Thou not once again move upon the chaos and speak Thy will: “Let there be Light”?

O Thou marvellous Unknown One, Thou who hast not yet manifested Thyself, Thou who awaitest the propitious hour and hast sent us upon earth to prepare Thy ways, all the elements of this being cry to Thee, “May Thy will be done” and give themselves to Thee in a supreme, unconquerable urge. . . .

Envelop this sorrowful earth with the strong arms of Thy mercy, permeate it with the beneficent outpourings of Thy infinite love.

I am the powerful arms of Thy mercy.

I am the vast bosom of Thy boundless love. . . . My arms have enfolded the sorrowful earth and press it tenderly to my generous heart; and slowly a kiss of supreme benediction is laid upon this struggling atom: the kiss of the Mother which soothes and heals. . . .

August 13, 1914

THE being stands before Thee, with arms lifted, palms open, in an ardent aspiration.

O sweet Master, it is a Love more wonderful and formidable than any manifested so far which the earth needs; it is for this Love that it yearns. . . . Who will be capable and worthy of being its intermediary to it? Who? That matters little; but it must be done. O Lord, answer my call, accept the offering of my being despite its little worth and its limitations: Come.

More, always more; may the regenerating streams roll over the earth in beneficent waves. Transfigure and illumine. Work this supreme miracle so long awaited, and break all ignorant egoisms; awaken Thy sublime flame in every heart. Do not let us become benumbed in a tranquil serenity. We ought not to take any rest before Thy new and sovereign Love is manifested.

Listen to our prayer; answer our call: Come!

August 16, 1914

FOR three days I waited in an ardent prayer, hoping to see the new things . . . and all the obstacles surged up to veil, retard, deform Thy manifestation. And now we do not seem any nearer the goal than before.

O my sweet Master, why hast Thou told me to leave the blessed place in Thy heart and return to earth to attempt a realisation which everything seems to prove impossible? . . . What dost Thou expect of me that Thou hast torn me away from my divine and wonderful contemplation and plunged me again into this dark, struggling universe? When Thy force descends towards the earth in order to manifest, each one of the great Asuric beings who have resolved to be Thy servitors but preserved their nature's characteristic of domination and self-will, wants to pull it down for itself alone and distribute it to others afterwards; it always thinks it should be the sole or at least the supreme intermediary, and that the contact of all others with Thy Power cannot and should not be made except through its mediation. This unfortunate meanness is more or less conscious, but it is always there, delaying things indefinitely. If even for the greatest it is impossible in the integral manifestation to escape these lamentable limitations, why, O Lord, impose upon me the calvary of this constraint? . . . If Thou willest that it be thus, Thou shouldst rend the last veil and Thy splendour come in all its purity and transfigure the world!

Accomplish this miracle or else let me withdraw into Thee.

August 17, 1914

ALL errors, all prejudices, all misunderstandings must vanish in this whirlwind of destruction that is carrying away the past. . . . The light must become perfectly pure, free from all limitation, so that Thou canst manifest Thyself fully within it. Lord, Thou hast the Power and Thou wilt realise this supreme miracle. . . .

Into this consciousness Thou hast put the certitude of victory!

August 18, 1914

LET me turn to Thee in a profound and silent contemplation; let me place this integral being and its multiple activities at Thy feet as an offering; let me stop all the play of these forces, unify all these consciousnesses, so that one alone may persist, the one which is able to hear Thy command and understand it; let me plunge again into Thee as in a sovereignly beneficent sea, that which purifies from all ignorance. I feel as if I have gone down very deep into an unfathomable abyss of doubt and darkness, as if I am exiled from Thy eternal splendour; but I know that in this descent is the possibility of a higher ascent which will enable me to span a vaster horizon and draw a little nearer to Thy infinite heavens. Thy light is there, steady and guiding, shining without intermission in the depths of the abyss as in the luminous splendours; and a serene confidence, a calm indifference, a tranquil certitude dwell permanently in my consciousness. . . . I am like a boat which has long enjoyed the delights of the port and, despite the dark storm-laden clouds which hide the sun, unfurls its sails to launch forth into the great unknown, towards shores unheard of, towards new lands.

I am Thine, Lord, without any restriction or preference; may Thy will be done in all its rigorous plenitude; all my being adheres to it with a joyous acceptance and a calm serenity.

I have no longer any idea about the future: it is Thou who wilt awaken the new conception more closely answering Thy law.

In a most perfect surrender and a most entire trust I wait: Thy voice showing me Thy path.

August 20, 1914

To see the goal from a new angle which may usefully light up the others, we should constantly renew the experience of the inner discovery and return to the extreme limit of consciousness without at any time postulating beforehand what the end of our journey will be.

But instinctively the mind remembers the impression that it received from one or from some of the former contacts of our consciousness with the ultimate centre, and tells itself: "That is what one finds at the end of the road." It does not realise that the "That" which is in its thought is only one of countless ways of translating the goal or even of travestying it, nor does it perceive that the intellectual conception should follow the experience and not precede it.

To retrace the path in all innocence as though one had never before travelled it, is the true purity, the perfect sincerity — the sincerity that brings an uninterrupted progress, growth, an integral perfectioning.

Despite myself, in the silence of all thought, that is, of all conscious formulas, something in my being, deeper than words, turns to Thee, O ineffable Lord, in an ardent aspiration, giving Thee in offering all its activities, all its elements, all its modes of being, and imploring for all these the supreme illumination.

. . . O Thou, whom I cannot think, but whom with certitude I know!

August 21, 1914

O LORD, Lord, the whole earth is in an upheaval; it groans and suffers, it is in agony . . . all this suffering that has descended upon it must not be in vain; grant that all this bloodshed may produce a swifter germination of the seeds of beauty and light and love which must blossom and cover the earth with their rich harvest. Out of the depths of this abyssm of darkness the whole being of the earth cries to Thee that Thou mayst give it air and light; it is stifling, wilt Thou not come to its aid?

O Lord, what must we do to triumph?

Hear us, for we must conquer at any price. Break down every resistance: appear!

August 24, 1914

LORD, it is in a heart-felt gratitude that I draw near to Thee. Thou hast given me the first words of the knowledge I so longed for, and with this knowledge has come effectivity, the true power in each field of realisation.

It is only a beginning, it is not an accomplishment; but the road opens, visible and straight, there is nothing to do but to follow it; the veil is rent in answer to the humble but all-powerful effort of the dark days. Grant, O Lord, that the path may be thus lit up for all, and that after having seen clearly into ourselves there may not be any new difficulties for the knowledge to become conscious in others. Despite everything, a human being, no matter how great, is limited, at least for a long time, by the very fact that he is human and because, even when he is in contact with immensity, this immensity is translated in his outer consciousness from the angle of his own personality. It is very difficult for him not to have a perspective partially obliterated as it were by his own viewpoint. But these last obstacles must be overcome, definitively broken down, so that they may no longer be able to rise again. The road must be entirely free and the knowledge that has been glimpsed become firmly established. Thy grace is with us, Lord, and it never leaves us, even when appearances are dark; night is sometimes necessary to prepare more perfect dawns. But perhaps this time Thou hast placed us in the presence of the Dawn that does not pass away. . . .

Receive the offerings of our ardent gratitude and our integral surrender.

I knew that this notebook would end with the closing of one phase of my spiritual life. That is indeed what is happening.

The light has come, the road has opened; with a grateful bow to the laborious past, we shall move swiftly forward on the new way opened wide by Thee before us.

On the threshold of this new field of a vaster and more conscious realisation, we bow before Thee, O Lord, in an integral surrender and adoration. We give ourselves to Thee without reservation.

Once again it is Thou who livest in us, and Thou alone. Thou hast once more become the King of Thy kingdom, but a kingdom vaster and more perfect, a kingdom more worthy of Thy rule.

August 25, 1914

O LORD, let Thy Will be done, Thy work be accomplished. Fortify our devotion, increase our surrender, give us light upon the path. We erect Thee within us as our supreme Master that Thou mayst become supreme Master of all the earth.

Our speech is still ignorant: enlighten it.

Our aspiration is still imperfect: purify it.

Our action is still powerless: make it effective.

O Lord, the earth groans and suffers; chaos has made this world its abode.

The darkness is so deep that Thou alone canst dispel it. Come, manifest Thyself, that Thy work may be accomplished.

August 26, 1914

O MY sweet Master, O Lord of Felicity, all these worlds of felicity interpenetrating and completing one another are an immensity difficult to perceive in their totality. Give us the knowledge of these laws, give us the power to awaken the earth to an understanding and perception of the aim so blindly pursued.

In all things Thou art the happiness without alloy, a blessed felicity . . . but the felicity is perfect only when it is integral, from the most external manifestations down into the most unfathomable depths.

O Lord, Thou hast placed me on a threshold of wonder; confirm me in this knowledge. Establish me in that centre of consciousness whence all my activities will be an unmixed expression of Thy law.

In a potent and mute adoration, I wait.

*August 27, 1914**

TO be the divine love, love powerful, infinite, unfathomable, in every activity, in all the worlds of being — it is for this I cry to Thee, O Lord. Let me be consumed with this love divine, love powerful, infinite, unfathomable, in every activity, in all the worlds of being! Transmute me into that burning brazier so that all the atmosphere of earth may be purified with its flame.

Oh, to be Thy Love infinitely. . . .

August 28, 1914

O LORD, O eternal Master, my thought lies mute and powerless before Thee but my heart calls to Thee; awaken all my being that it may be for Thee, entirely, the needed instrument, the perfect servitor.

Oh, to be infinitely Thou, Thou in all things, Thou everywhere, Thou always, the absolute silence, the absolute movement . . .

To be nothing other than the One, all-containing, contained in all—free from every limitation and from all blindness.

O Supreme Triumphant, triumph over every obstacle.

August 29, 1914

WHAT would be the use of man if he were not created to throw a bridge between That which *is* eternally but is unmanifested and that which is manifested, between all the transcendences and splendours of the divine life and all the dark and sorrowful ignorance of the material world? Man is the link between What must be and what is; he is the footbridge thrown across the abyss, he is the great cross-shaped X, the quaternary connecting link. His true domicile, the effective seat of his consciousness should be in the intermediary world at the meeting-point of the four arms of the cross, just where all the infinitude of the Unthinkable comes to take a precise form so that it may be projected into the innumerable manifestation. . . .

That centre is a place of supreme love, of perfect consciousness, of pure and total knowledge. There establish, O Lord, those who can, who must and truly want to serve Thee, so that Thy work may be accomplished, the bridge definitively established, and Thy forces poured unwearingly over the world.

*August 31, 1914**

IN this formidable disorder and terrible destruction can be seen a great working, a necessary toil preparing the earth for a new sowing which will rise in marvellous spikes of grain and give to the world the shining harvest of a new race. . . . The vision is clear and precise, the plan of Thy divine law so plainly traced that peace has come back and installed itself in the hearts of the workers. There are no more doubts and hesitations, no longer any anguish or impatience. There is only the grand straight line of the work eternally accomplishing itself in spite of all, against all, despite all contrary appearances and illusory detours. These physical personalities, moments unseizable in the infinite Becoming, know that they will have made humanity take one farther step, infallibly and without care for the inevitable results, whatever be the apparent momentary consequences: they unite themselves with Thee, O Master eternal, they unite themselves with Thee, O Mother universal, and in this double identity with That which is beyond and That which is all the manifestation they taste the infinite joy of the perfect certitude.

Peace, peace in all the world. . . .

War is an appearance,

Turmoil is an illusion,

Peace is there, immutable peace.

Mother, sweet Mother who I am, Thou art at once the destroyer and the builder.

The whole universe lives in Thy breast with all its life innumerable and Thou livest in Thy immensity in the least of its atoms.

And the aspiration of Thy infinitude turns towards That which is not manifested to cry to it for a manifestation ever more complete and more perfect.

All *is*, in one time, in a triple and clairvoyant total Consciousness, the Individual, the Universal, the Infinite.

*September 1, 1914**

O MOTHER Divine, with what fervour, what ardent love I came to Thee in Thy deepest consciousness, in Thy high status of sublime love and perfect felicity, and I nestled so close into Thy arms and loved Thee with so intense a love that I became altogether Thyself. Then in the silence of our mute ecstasy a voice from yet profounder depths arose and the voice said, "Turn towards those who have need of thy love." All the grades of consciousness appeared, all the successive worlds. Some were splendid and luminous, well ordered and clear; there knowledge was resplendent, expression was harmonious and vast, will was potent and invincible. Then the worlds darkened in a multiplicity more and more chaotic, the Energy became violent and the material world obscure and sorrowful. And when in our infinite love we perceived in its entirety the hideous suffering of the world of misery and ignorance, when we saw our children locked in a sombre struggle, flung upon each other by energies that had deviated from their true aim, we willed ardently that the light of Divine Love should be made manifest, a transfiguring force at the centre of these distracted elements. Then, that the will might be yet more powerful and effective, we turned towards Thee, O unthinkable Supreme, and we implored Thy aid. And from the unsounded depths of the Unknown a reply came sublime and formidable and we knew that the earth *was saved*.

September 4, 1914

DARKNESS has descended upon the earth, thick, violent, victorious . . . All is sadness, terror, destruction in the physical world, and the splendour of Thy light of love seems darkened by a veil of mourning. . . .

O sweet Mother, I merge into Thee in an immense love and an intense supplication to the Lord of all things that HE may show us the way, that HE may trace out for us the path of His work, so that we may tread it boldly.

Time presses: the divine powers must come, O Lord, to the help of the agonised earth.

O Mother, sweet Mother, Thou dost clasp all Thy children close to Thy vast breast, and Thy love enfolds them all alike.

I have become the purifying fire of Thy love. O Lord, silent Unthinkable One, accept the holocaust of this brazier of love, that Thy reign may come, Thy light triumph over darkness and death.

Manifest Thy power. From day to day, from hour to hour we implore Thee: "O Lord, manifest Thy power!"

September 5, 1914

“FACE the danger!” Thou saidst to me, “why dost thou wish to turn away thy gaze or flee far away from action, flee from the battle, into the deep contemplation of Truth? It is its integral manifestation which must be realised, its victory over all the obstacles of blind ignorance and dark hostility. Look the danger straight in the face and it will vanish before the Power.”

O Lord, I understood the weakness of this most external nature which is always ready to surrender material things and escape, as a compensation, into a supreme intellectual and spiritual independence. But Thou expectest action from us, and action does not allow such an attitude. It is not enough to triumph in the inner worlds, we must triumph right down to the most material worlds. We must not flee from the difficulty or obstacle, because we have the power to do so by taking refuge in the consciousness where there are no obstacles. . . . We must look the danger straight in the face with faith in Thy Omnipotence, and Thy Omnipotence will triumph.

Give me integrally the heart of the fighter, O Lord, and Thy victory is sure.

“Conquer at any price” should be the present motto. Not because one is attached to the work and its results, not because one needs such an action, not because one is incapable of escaping from all contingencies.

But because Thou hast commanded action from us.
But because the hour of Thy triumph upon earth has
come. But because Thou willest the integral victory.

And in an infinite love for the world . . . let us fight!

September 6, 1914

HIgher, ever higher! Let us never be satisfied with what is achieved, let us not stop at any realisation, let us march always onwards, ceaselessly, energetically, towards an ever completer manifestation, an ever higher and more total consciousness. . . . Yesterday's victory must be only a stepping-stone to the victory of tomorrow, and the power of the day gone by a weakness beside the effectivity to come.

O Mother Divine, Thy march is triumphal and uninterrupted. He who unites with Thee in integral love journeys unceasingly towards ever vaster horizons, towards an ever completer realisation, leaping from peak to peak in the splendour of Thy light, to the conquest of the marvellous secrets of the Unknown and their integral manifestation.

O divine Victor, all the earth sings Thy praises, and all forces will obey Thee.

For the Lord has said: "The hour has come."

And all obstacles will be surmounted.

September 9, 1914

THE world is divided between two opposite forces struggling for supremacy, and both are equally against Thy law, O Lord; for Thou dost not want either mortal stagnation or blind destruction. It is in a constant, progressive and luminous transformation that Thou ex- pressest Thyself; and it is this we must establish upon earth if we want to manifest Thy will.

At times our impatience would like to know immediately the means of this manifestation. But our impatience is futile and receives no answer. For the knowledge will come at the opportune moment, at the moment of action.

Hence it is with the thought at peace and with the realising will calm and strong that we await the sign Thou wilt give us.

September 10, 1914

THY love is like a rising tide, invading the entire being and breaking upon all things. Lord, Thy love will penetrate all hearts and kindle in them the divine flame which never goes out, the divine beauty which does not fade, and, above every contrast and contradiction, it will establish in all that unchanging Bliss which is the supreme good.

Thy light is like a rising tide, invading the entire being and breaking upon all things. Lord, Thy light will penetrate all thoughts and create in them that sovereign clarity which does not waver, the divine clear-sightedness which never errs, and, above every contrast and contradiction, it will establish in all the splendour of Thy knowledge which is the supreme wisdom.

Thy force is like a rising tide, invading the entire being and breaking upon all things. Lord, Thy force will penetrate all life and create in it the effective strength which never fails, the divine power which is invincible, and, above every contrast and contradiction, it will establish in all Thy mastering energy which is the supreme will.

September 13, 1914

WITH fervour I hail Thee, O divine Mother, and in deep affection identify myself with Thee. United with our divine Mother I turn, O Lord, to Thee, and bow to Thee in mute adoration and in an ardent aspiration identify myself with Thee.

Then all becomes a marvellous Silence; Being is absorbed in Non-Being, all is suspended, at rest, motionless.

How shall one express the inexpressible?

September 14, 1914

THERE is no longer an “I”, no longer an individuality, no longer any personal limits. There is only the immense universe, our sublime Mother, burning with an ardent fire of purification in honour of Thee, O Lord, divine Master, sovereign Will, so that this Will may meet with no farther obstacle in the way of its realisation.

A mighty canticle of fervent love and exultation arises to Thee, O Lord, all the earth in an inexpressible ecstasy unites with Thee.

Let Thy potent breath feed the brazier, that it may become ever vaster and more formidable, that all darkness and blind resistance may be absorbed, set ablaze, transfigured into Light in the marvellous purifying flame.

Oh, the peace-giving splendour of Thy purification!

September 16, 1914

HEARKEN to the voice that rises, hearken to the chant
that is lifted up to hail Thy divine Dawn.

Let the supreme Law be fulfilled; whether it be exis-
tence eternal, universal, or re-absorption into Non- Be-
ing matters little. Must one choose between the two?
I cannot; in my consciousness there is no longer any
preference, only one Will persists — Thine, O Ineffable.

And all this universe is now only a chant, ever vaster
and more harmonious, arising to salute Thy divine Dawn.

September 17, 1914

No longer can any impulse to action come from outside or from any particular world. It is Thou, Lord, who settest all things in motion from the depths of the being, it is Thy will which directs, Thy force which acts; and no longer in the limited field of a small individual consciousness but in the universal field of a consciousness which, in every state of being, is united with the whole. And the being has at once the conscious perception of all universal movements in their complexity and even their confusion, and the silent and perfect peace of Thy sovereign immutability.

September 20, 1914

MY pen is mute, for thought is silent, but my heart aspires to Thee, O Lord, uniting Thee with our divine Mother in one love, one veneration. And through Thee the entire being strains towards the Ineffable; beyond Being, beyond the very Silence, that is united with That.

September 22, 1914

O LORD, Thou who art on the threshold of the Unknowable, I greet Thee!

And is it not Thou greeting Thy own self in the Unthinkable Essence of Being, in its immeasurable depths, and even in its most external realisations? For the Being is Thyself, whatever its mode of existence, and the Unthinkable Eternal is also Thyself in Thy essence. And this integral consciousness Thou hast made ours, so that we may be Thyself, not only in fact but consciously and effectively. And thus all is an interchange of salutations full of love and joyous adoration, in an ardent aspiration of our Mother towards Thee and an infinite and powerful response from Thee to our Mother, and finally from the totality of Thyself to all that is not yet manifested, to all the Unknowable which we shall know more and more, better and better, but which will ever remain the Unknowable.

In the absolute silence all is, now and eternally; in the universal manifestation all will be in a perpetual becoming.

In the perfection of consciousness and the integral life, the being sings a canticle of gladness for That which at once is and will be eternally.

Hail to Thee, Master of the world, art Thou not the intermediary between what is and what will be, even while being simultaneously what is and what will be?

O marvellous Immensity, perceptible and indefinable at once, in an integral illumination I bow to Thee.

September 24, 1914

HOW present Thou art in our midst, beloved Mother! It is as if Thou wouldest assure us of Thy complete assistance, as if Thou wouldest show us that the Will which means to manifest through us, has found in us instruments which can realise Its Law, by placing it in complete accordance with Thy present possibilities. The things which seemed most difficult, most improbable, perhaps even most impossible, become wholly realisable, because Thy Presence is our assurance that the material world itself is prepared to manifest the new form of the Will and the Law.

I greet Thee in the joyful plenitude of perfect harmony — Thee, Thy Principle and Thy works.

*September 25, 1914**

O DIVINE and adorable Mother, with Thy help what is there that is impossible? The hour of realisations is near and Thou hast assured us of Thy aid that we may perform integrally the supreme Will.

Thou hast accepted us as fit intermediaries between the unthinkable realities and the relativities of the physical world, and Thy constant presence in our midst is a token of Thy active collaboration.

The Lord has willed and Thou dost execute:
A new Light shall break upon the earth.
A new world shall be born,
And the things that were promised shall be fulfilled.

*September 28, 1914**

MY pen is mute to chant Thy presence, O Lord; yet art Thou like a king who has taken entire possession of his kingdom. Thou art there, organising, putting all in place, developing and increasing every province. Thou awak- enest those that were asleep. Thou makest active those that were sinking towards inertia; Thou art building a harmony out of the whole. A day will come when the har- mony shall be achieved and all the country shall be by its very life the bearer of Thy word and Thy manifestation.

But meanwhile my pen is mute to chant Thy praise.

September 30, 1914

LORD, Thou hast broken down the barriers of thought and the realisation has appeared in all its amplitude. Not to forget any of its aspects, to carry out their accomplishment at the same time, without neglecting any of them, not to allow any limitation, any restriction to come in the way and delay our march, this is what Thou wilt help us to do through Thy supreme intervention. And all those who are Thyselv, manifesting Thee in the perfection of some particular activity, will also be our collaborators, for such is Thy Will.

Our Divine Mother is with us and has promised us identification with the supreme and total consciousness — from the unfathomable depths to the most external world of the senses. And in all these domains Agni assures us of the help of his purifying flame, destroying all obstacles, kindling the energies, stimulating the will, so that the realisation may be hastened. Indra is with us for the perfection of the illumination in our knowledge; and the divine Soma has transformed us in his infinite, sovereign, marvellous love, bringer of the supreme beatitudes. . . .

O divine and sweet Mother, I bow to Thee with a rapt, ineffable tenderness, and with infinite trust.

O splendid Agni, Thou who art so living within me, I call Thee, I invoke Thee that Thou mayst be more living still, that Thy brazier may become more immense, Thy flames higher and more powerful, that the entire being may now be only an ardent burning, a purifying pyre.

O Indra, I venerate and admire Thee, I implore Thee

that Thou mayst unite with me, that Thou mayst definitively break down all the barriers of thought, that Thou mayst bestow upon me the divine knowledge.

*O Thou, Sublime Love, to whom I gave never any other name, but who art so wholly the very substance of my being, Thou whom I feel vibrant and alive in the least of my atoms even as in the infinite universe and beyond, Thou who breathest in every breath, movest in the heart of all activities, art radiant through all that is of good will and hidden behind all sufferings, Thou for whom I cherish a cult without limit which grows ever more intense, permit that I may with more and more reason feel that I am Thyself wholly.

And Thou, O Lord, who art all this made one and much more, O sovereign Master, extreme limit of our thought, who standest for us at the threshold of the Unknown, make rise from that Unthinkable some new splendour, some possibility of a loftier and more integral realisation, that Thy work may be accomplished and the universe take one step farther towards the sublime Identity, the supreme Manifestation.

And now my pen falls mute and I adore Thee in silence.*

*October 5, 1914**

IN the calm silence of Thy contemplation, O Divine Master, Nature is fortified and tempered anew. All principle of individuality is overpassed, she is plunged in Thy infinity that allows oneness to be realised in all domains without confusion, without disorder. The combined harmony of that which persists, that which progresses and that which eternally is, is little by little accomplished in an always more complex, more extended and more lofty equilibrium. And this interchange of the three modes of life allows the plenitude of the manifestation.

Many seek Thee at this hour in anguish and incertitude. May I be their mediator with Thee that Thy light may illumine them, that Thy peace may appease. My being is now only a point of support for Thy action and a centre for Thy consciousness. Where now are the limits, whither have fled the obstacles? Thou art the sovereign Lord of Thy kingdom.

October 6, 1914

O SWEET Mother, Thou shouldst teach me to be integrally and constantly Thyself, entirely consecrated to the giving of an ever more perfect means of expression to That which wills to manifest. . . .

All is calm, serene; there is no more struggle, no more anguish; aspiration itself becomes sovereignly peaceful in its immensity, yet loses nothing of its intensity; and through a curious opposition in the consciousness, like the obverse and reverse sides of a medal, the being perceives at one and the same time, the immutable calm of the infinite Reality in which all is for ever without any possibility of change, and the ardent and rapid march of all that becomes without cessation in an uninterrupted progression . . . And to Thee, O Lord, both are equally true.

*October 7, 1914**

O H, let Light be poured on all the earth and Peace inhabit every heart. . . . Almost all know only the material life heavy, inert, conservative, obscure; their vital forces are so tied to this physical form of existence that, even when left to themselves and outside the body, they are still solely occupied with these material contingencies that are yet so harassing and painful. . . . Those in whom the mental life is awakened are restless, tormented, agitated, arbitrary, despotic. Caught altogether in the whirl of the renewals and transformations of which they dream, they are ready to destroy everything without knowledge of any foundation on which to construct, and with their light made only of blinding flashes they increase yet more the confusion rather than help it to cease.

In all there lacks the unchanging peace of Thy sovereign contemplation and the calm vision of Thy immutable eternity.

And with the infinite gratitude of the individual being to whom Thou hast accorded this surpassing grace, I implore Thee, O Lord, that under cover of the present turmoil, in the very heart of this extreme confusion the miracle may be accomplished and Thy law of supreme serenity and pure unchanging light become visible to the perception of all and govern the earth in a humanity at last awakened to Thy divine consciousness.

O sweet Master, Thou hast heard my prayer, Thou wilt reply to my call.

October 8, 1914

THE joy that is contained in activity is compensated and balanced by the perhaps still greater joy contained in withdrawal from all activity; when the two states alternate in the being or are even simultaneously conscious, the felicity is complete, for then, O Lord, Thy plenitude is realised.

O divine Master, Thou hast granted to me the infinitude of divine contemplation, the perfect calm of Thy Eternity, and through an identification with our divine Mother, the All-Realiser, Thou hast permitted me to participate in her sovereign power to be conscious and active . . .

In the omnipotent bliss of Thy infinitude, I bow to Thee!

October 10, 1914

MAY the offering of my being, constantly renewed and growing more and more integral, be laid before the Supreme Reality, the Unthinkable who cannot be formulated, but who, in time, expresses himself eternally in an ever completer and more perfect manifestation. O Thou whom I cannot name, Thou whose will I perceive in supreme silence and total surrender, let me be the representative of all the earth, so that, united with my consciousness, it may give itself unreservedly to Thee.

Thou art the perfect peace and the marvellous accomplishment; Thou art all that the universe is, immutably, beyond time, and wants to be more and more in the consciousness of time and space. Thou art all that is in the infinite stillness and the divine hope of all that wants to be. . . . Lord, dispense to the world Thy unbelievable boons.

Peace, peace upon all the earth!

October 11, 1914

WHY this persistent feeling so tinged with uneasiness and expectancy? The being, entirely turned to Thee, lives in the beatitude of the divine communion; all is calm, serene, strong, sovereignly peaceful; all is light in widened horizons and, in silent contemplation, my devotion has become intenser yet. What then is this sensation which seems as though grafted upon the being and takes on the appearance of a warning given to a consciousness insufficiently awakened in the domain of Matter?

I ask why, O Lord, and yet I know that if it is necessary for me to understand the reason, Thou hast already told it to me and only my incapacity keeps me from knowing it; or else to know it is neither useful nor even helpful for me, and in this case nothing will reply to my question. . . .

But the peace becomes more sovereign still and in an infinite harmony the being takes on its supreme amplitude.

O Lord, with what fervour I greet Thee!

October 12, 1914

IT was their sorrow and suffering which the physical being was feeling, Lord. When will ignorance dissolve? When will pain cease? O Lord, grant that each element of the universe may become conscious of its principle of being and, without disappearing, be transformed; may the veils of egoistic blindness which hide Thee be removed and mayst Thou appear resplendent in the total manifestation. All this is eternally in Thy absolute silence; but it is through an infinite progression that it manifests in the integral consciousness.

*October 14, 1914**

MOTHER Divine, Thou art with us; every day Thou givest me the assurance and, closely united in an identity that grows more and more total, more and more constant, we turn to the Lord of the Universe and to That which is beyond in a great aspiration towards the new Light. All the earth is in our arms like a sick child who must be cured and for whom one has a special affection because of his very weakness. Cradled on the immensity of the eternal becomings, ourselves those becomings, we contemplate hushed and glad the eternity of the immobile Silence where all is realised in the perfect Consciousness and immutable Existence, miraculous gate of all the unknown that is beyond.

Then is the veil torn, the inexpressible Glory uncovered and, suffused with the ineffable Splendour, we turn back towards the world to bring it the glad tidings.

Lord, Thou hast given me the happiness infinite. What being, what circumstance can have the power to take it away from me?

October 16, 1914

IT is Thy Will that I should be like a channel, always open, always wider, through which Thy forces may pour themselves in abundance on the world. . . . O Lord, let Thy Will be done. Am I not Thy Will and Thy Consciousness in a felicity supreme? . . .

The being grows immeasurably in largeness and becomes vast like the universe.

October 17, 1914

O MOTHER divine, the obstacles shall be overcome,
the enemies appeased; Thou shalt dominate the whole
earth with Thy sovereign love, and every consciousness
shall be illumined with Thy serenity.

This is the promise.

October 23, 1914

O LORD, the entire being is ready and it calls Thee to take possession of what is Thine; of what service can be the instrument if the Master will not use it? And whatever be the mode of manifestation, it shall be well, from the most humble, most obscure, most material, most outwardly limited, to the vastest, most brilliant, most powerful, most intellectual.

The entire being is ready and waits in a passive silence until it is Thy Will to manifest.

*October 25, 1914**

MY aspiration to Thee, O Lord, has taken the form of a beautiful rose, harmonious, full in bloom, rich in fragrance. I stretch it out to Thee with both arms in a gesture of offering and I ask of Thee: If my understanding is limited, widen it; if my knowledge is obscure, enlighten it; if my heart is empty of ardour, set it aflame; if my love is insignificant, make it intense; if my feelings are ignorant and egoistic, give them the full consciousness in the Truth. And the “I” which demands this of Thee, O Lord, is not a little personality lost amidst thousands of others. It is the whole earth that aspires to Thee in a movement full of fervour.

In the perfect silence of my contemplation all widens to infinity, and in the perfect peace of that silence Thou appearest in the resplendent glory of Thy Light.

November 3, 1914

FOR quite a long time, Lord, my pen had fallen silent. . . . Yet hast Thou given me hours of unforgettable illumination, hours in which the union between the most divine Consciousness and the most material grew perfect, hours when the identification of the individual being with the universal Mother and of the universal Mother with Thee was so complete that the individual consciousness could perceive simultaneously its own existence, the life of the entire universe and Thy eternity beyond all change. Beatitude was at its height in an ineffable and infinite peace, the consciousness luminous and immeasurable, complex and yet one, existence all-powerful, master of death. And this is no longer a fleeting state, attained after a long concentration, vanishing as soon as it is born; it is a state that can last long hours full of eternity, hours at once instantaneous and interminable, a state brought about at will, that is to say, one which is permanent, one with which the most external consciousness comes into contact as soon as any occasion allows it, as soon as it is no longer occupied with a definite intellectual or physical task. In all work, constantly, there is the perception of Thy invariable presence in Thy dual form of Non-Being and Being, but as though behind a fine veil woven by the indispensable concentration upon the work that is done; while in the hours of solitude the being is immediately enveloped by a marvellously powerful atmosphere, limpid, calm, divine; it lies merged within it, and then the life of splendour begins again in all its amplitude,

all its complexity, all its sublimity; the physical body is glorified, supple, vigorous, energetic; the mind is superbly active in its calm lucidity, guiding and transmitting the forces of Thy divine Will; and all the being exults in an endless beatitude, a boundless love, a sovereign power, a perfect knowledge, an infinite consciousness. . . . It is Thyself and Thou alone who livest, even in the least atom of the body-substance itself.

Thus the solid foundations of Thy terrestrial work are prepared, the substructure of the immense edifice built; in every corner of the world one of Thy divine stones is laid by the power of conscious and formative thought; and in the hour of realisations the earth, thus prepared, will be ready to receive the sublime temple of Thy new and more complete manifestation.

*November 8, 1914**

FOR the plenitude of Thy Light we invoke Thee, O Lord! Awaken in us the power to express Thee.

All is mute in the being as in a desert crypt; but in the heart of the shadow, in the bosom of the silence burns the lamp that can never be extinguished, the fire of an ardent aspiration to know Thee and totally to live Thee.

The nights follow the days, new dawns unweariedly succeed to past dawns, but always there mounts the scented flame that no storm-wind can force to vacillate. Higher it climbs and higher and one day attains the vault still closed, the last obstacle opposing our union. And so pure, so erect, so proud is the flame that suddenly the obstacle is dissolved.

Then Thou appearest in all Thy splendour, in the dazzling force of Thy infinite glory; at Thy contact the flame changes into a column of light that chases the shadows away for ever.

And the Word leaps forth, a supreme revelation.

November 9, 1914

O LORD, for perfect consciousness we aspire . . .

All the being is gathered into a well-tied sheaf made of various but harmonised flowers. The will was the hand that gathered the flowers and the tie that bound the sheaf and it is the will that now holds it out to Thee like a scented offering. To Thee it is held out unweariedly, without faltering.

November 10, 1914

O LORD, Thy Presence is settled within me like an unshakable rock; and the whole being exults in belonging to Thee without the least reserve, with a wide and complete surrender.

O Consciousness, immobile and serene, Thou watchest at the confines of the world like the sphinx of eternity. And yet to some Thou yieldest Thy secret.

They can become Thy sovereign Will which chooses without preference, executes without desire.

November 15, 1914

THE one important thing is the goal to be reached; the road matters little, and often it is preferable not to know it beforehand. But what we need to know is whether the time for the divine action upon earth has really come, and whether the work conceived in the depths can be realised.

Of this, O Lord, Thou hast given us the assurance, an assurance which has been accompanied by the most powerful promise that Nature, the universal Consciousness can possibly make. . . . Thus we have the certitude that what must be done will be done and that our present individual beings are in reality called upon to collaborate in this glorious victory, this new manifestation. What more do we need to know? Nothing. So it is with the greatest confidence that we can witness the formidable fight, the onslaught of the adverse forces, which, unknowingly, finally serve in the realisation of Thy plan. We would be wrong to feel anxious because it is not given to us to know how it serves Thy plan and by what means Thou wilt triumph over all resistances; for Thy triumph is so perfect that every obstacle, every ill-will, every hatred raised up against Thee is a promise of a still vaster and more complete victory.

From the sum of resistances, one can gauge the scope Thou wouldst give to the action of that among Thy pure forces which is coming to manifest upon earth. What opposes is just that upon which it is the mission of these forces to act; it is the darkest hatred which must be touched and transformed into luminous peace.

If the human individual Thou hast chosen as Thy centre of action and Thy intermediary meets with few obstacles, few misunderstandings and little hatred, it means that Thou hast entrusted to him a limited mission without any intensity. It is in the narrow circle of already prepared men of goodwill that he will act and not upon the chaotic and confused mass of terrestrial substance.

O divine Master, this knowledge which Thou hast given me, let all of us share, so that the peace of conviction may reign in our hearts and we may, in the calm of Thy sovereign certitude, confront with head held high all that, unconsciously attracted to the transfiguration, plunges headlong into blind ignorance, believing it will be able to destroy the Transfiguring Love.

November 16, 1914

THOU art like the wind upon the sea, driving the boat back ashore until it is at last loaded with all the goods necessary for the long voyage. Thou wouldst not have us embark thoughtlessly. Thy servitors must be ready for all eventualities, must be capable of answering all demands, satisfying all needs.

November 17, 1914

ALAS, sublime Mother, how great must be Thy patience! Each time Thy conscious will attempts to manifest itself in order to rectify errors, to hasten the uncertain progress of the individual led astray by his own illusion of knowledge, to trace the sure path and give him the strength to walk steadily upon it without stumbling, almost always he pushes Thee away as a tiresome and short-sighted adviser. He is willing to love Thee in theory with a vague and inconsistent love, but his proud mind refuses to confide in Thee and prefers to wander all by itself rather than advance guided by Thee.

And Thou repliest, ever smiling in Thy unwearying benevolence: "This intellectual faculty which makes man proud and leads him into error is the very same which, once enlightened and purified, can also lead him farther, higher than universal nature, to a direct and conscious communion with our Lord, with That which is beyond all manifestation. This dividing intellect, which makes him stand apart from me, also enables him to scale rapidly the heights he must climb, without letting his progress be enchain'd and delayed by the totality of the universe, which, in its immensity and complexity, cannot effect so swift an ascent."

O Divine Mother, always Thy word comforts and blesses, calms and illumines, and Thy generous hand lifts a fold of the veil hiding the infinite knowledge.

How calm, noble and pure is the splendour of Thy perfect contemplation!

November 20, 1914

O H, I would be before Thee, Lord, always like an absolutely blank page, so that Thy will may be written in me without any difficulty, any mixture.

The very remembrance of past experiences should sometimes be swept away from the thought so as not to obstruct this work of perpetual reconstruction which alone in a world of relativities permits Thy perfect manifestation.

Often one clings to that which was, fearing to lose the result of a precious experience, to give up a vast and high consciousness, to fall back into a lower state.

And yet, what should he fear who is Thine? Can he not walk with joyful soul and illumined brow upon the path Thou tracest for him, whatever it may be, even if this path be altogether incomprehensible to his limited reason?

O Lord, break the old frames of thought, abolish past experiences, dissolve the conscious synthesis if Thou thinkest it necessary, so that Thy work may be accomplished better and better, Thy service upon earth be perfected.

November 21, 1914

O LORD, Thou hast given me Thy Power that Thy Peace and Joy may reign over the world.

And this being is now only an embrace of peace enveloping the whole earth, an ocean of joy breaking over all things.

O you who are full of hatred, rancour shall be effaced from your hearts as the sea effaces an imprint upon the sands.

O you who feed upon vengeance, peace shall pass into your hearts as it enters the soul of a child rocked by its mother.

For the divine and universal Mother has turned her gaze upon the earth and she has blessed it.

December 4, 1914

AFTER long days of silence, entirely occupied by outer work, it is at last given to me to resume these pages and continue with Thee, Lord, this conversation which is so sweet to me. . . .

But Thou hast broken all my habits, for Thou wouldest prepare me for liberation from every mental form. Certain mental forms, more particularly powerful or adapted to the temperament, are sure guides to supreme experiences. But once the experiences are over, Thou wouldest have them free in themselves from bondage to any mental form, however high or pure it may be, so as to be capable of expression in the new, most true form, that is, the one most suitable to the experience.

So Thou didst break all my forms of thought, and I found myself before Thee stripped of all mental constructions, as ignorant about this as a new-born child; and in the darkness of this void lay once again the sovereign peace of something which is not expressed in words but which is. And I wait without impatience and without fear, for Thee to construct once again from the heart of the unfathomable depths the intellectual form which seems to Thee the most suitable for manifesting Thee in this instrument moulded out of surrender and ardent faith.

And before this immense night full of promise, I feel,
more than I have ever felt before, free and vast, in-
finitely. . . .

And in a supreme beatitude I offer Thee thanks, O
Lord, for the marvellous favour Thou hast bestowed
upon me: that of being before Thee like a new-born child.

December 10, 1914

LISEN, O Lord . . . in the silence of deep meditation my prayer rises ardently to Thee.

Is it not a great folly to become identified with one form of thought, one mental construction, however vast and powerful it may be, to the point of making it the living centre of one's being, one's experience and activity? Truth is eternally beyond all that we can think or say of it. To endeavour to find the most suitable expression, the one best adapted to this truth, is of course a useful task, even an indispensable one for the integrality of one's own development and that of all humanity; but one must always feel free in front of this expression, have one's centre of consciousness above it, in the reality which, despite the grandeur, the beauty, the perfection of a mental formula, always eludes every formula. The world is not what we think it to be. The importance of the idea we have of it lies in its effect on our attitude towards action; and this attitude may come from a much deeper, truer, more unchanging inspiration than that resulting from a mental construction, however powerful it may be. To feel in oneself the will to express for men the eternal Truth in a completer, higher, more exact form than all those which have preceded it, is good; but on condition that one does not identify one's "self" with this work to the point of being its slave and losing before it all independence and self-control. It is just an activity and nothing more, whatever may be its importance from the earthly point of view; but

it must not be forgotten that it is relative like all activities and that we should not allow it to disturb our deep peace and that immutable calm which alone lets the divine forces manifest through us without any deformation.

O Lord, my prayer is not formulated, but Thou hear-est it.

December 12, 1914

WE must know at each moment how to lose everything that we may gain everything; we must be able to shed the past like a dead body that we may be reborn into a greater plenitude. . . . It is so that the constant aspiration of the inner being expresses itself; turned to Thee, it wants to reflect Thee in an ever purer mirror; and Thy unchanging Beatitude is translated in it into a propelling force of progress of an incomparable intensity; and this force is transformed in the most external being into a calm and assured will which no obstacle can vanquish.

O divine Master, with what an ardent love I serve Thee! With what a pure, still and infinite joy I am Thyself in all that is and beyond all existence in form.

And the two consciousnesses unite in an unequalled plenitude.

December 15, 1914

O LORD, Thou hast given me peace in power, serenity in action, immutable happiness in the heart of all circumstances.

December 22, 1914

IT is for the Truth, O Lord, that I implore Thee.

Once again make active this mind which fell mute in order to surrender to Thee, give it the knowledge of Thy will.

It welcomed and allowed all possibilities to take form in it; then in order to stop the conflict of their contrary tendencies, it closed the door to these unwelcome visitors, saying: "I don't need to live actively, to know what Thy will is, Lord, provided that I can transmit the ray of Thy eternal light without distorting it." So it was done and the will became submissive, one-pointed, precise and strong. But now Thou wouldest have the mind know, and Thou hast said to it: "Awake and become aware of the Truth." Then the mind has answered with joy, and now it turns to the resplendent sun of sovereign Truth, calling it to itself in order to manifest it.

Thou wouldest break down all barriers, one after another, that the being may take on the integral amplitude of all its possibilities of manifestation.

Let all earthly desires come together in me, O Lord, so that Thou mayst consider them, and Thy will be able to work precisely, clearly, definitively upon the smallest detail as upon the whole.

Thus the advent of the awaited time will be hastened. . . .

All the being exults in intense joy and unequalled plenitude.

January 2, 1915

EVERY idea, however powerful and profound it may be, repeated too often, expressed too constantly, becomes stale, insipid, worthless. . . . The highest concepts thus lose their freshness after a time and the intelligence which delighted in transcendental speculations suddenly feels an imperious need to abandon all reasonings and all its philosophy and contemplate life with the marvelling gaze of a child, so as no longer to remember anything of its past knowledge, were it even a sovereignly divine one. . . .

It is true to say that the divisions of time are purely arbitrary, that the date assigned to the renewal of the year varies according to the latitude, the climate, the customs, and that it is purely conventional. This is the mental attitude which smiles at the childishness of men and wants to let itself be guided by profounder truths. And then suddenly the mind itself feels its powerlessness to translate these truths precisely, and, renouncing all wisdom of this kind, it lets the song of the aspiring heart arise, the heart for which every circumstance is an opportunity for a deeper, vaster and more intense aspiration. . . . The year of the West renews itself: why not profit by it to will with renewed ardour that this symbol should become a reality and the deplorable things of the past give place to things which must exist in all glory?

Always we believe that we can define Thee, can shut Thee up in our mental formulas; but however vast, complex, synthetic they may be, Thou wilt remain always the Inexpressible even for him who knows and lives Thee. . . .

For one can live Thee though one is unable to express Thee, can be Thy infinity and realise it though unable to define or explain Thee; always Thou wilt remain the eternal mystery, worthy of all our wonder; — not only in Thy unthinkable and even unknowable Transcendence but in Thy universal manifestation, in all that we integrally are. And always forms of thought are succeeded by new forms, ever purer, higher and more comprehensive, but never will one of them be considered sufficient to give so much as an idea of what Thou art. And each new fact will be a new problem, more marvellous and mysterious than all that preceded it. Yet, faced with its own ignorance and incapacity, the mental being remains luminous, smiling and calm, even as though it possessed the supreme knowledge — that of its being Thou, innumerable, invariably, infinitely, very simply Thou.

January 11, 1915

MORE than ever before, the aspiration of the mental being rose to Thee with great fervour. . . . The perception of infinity and eternity is always there. But it is as if Thou hadst willed to cut me off from all religious joy, all spiritual ecstasy, in order to plunge me into the most strictly material circumstances. Everywhere, O Lord, is Thy perfect bliss, and nothing can take away from me that grand gift Thou hast made of it to me; in every place and every circumstance it is with me, it is myself as I am Thou. But all this is nothing beside what should be. Thou wantest that from the heart of this heavy and obscure Matter I make the volcano of Thy Love and Light burst forth; Thou wantest that breaking all the old conventions of language there may arise a Word fit to express Thee, a Word never heard before; Thou wouldst that the union between the smallest things below and the vastest, sublimest things above might become integral; and that is why, O Lord, cutting me off from all religious joy and all spiritual ecstasy, depriving me of all freedom to concentrate exclusively upon Thee, Thou saidst to me, "Work like an ordinary man in the midst of ordinary people; learn to be nothing more than they in everything that manifests; participate in all their ways of life; for beyond all that they know, all that they are, thou carriest within thee the torch of the eternal splendour which does not flicker, and by associating with them this is what thou wilt bring in their midst. Dost thou need to enjoy this light, so long as it radiates to all from thee? Is it necessary

for thee to feel my love vibrating in thee, so long as thou givest it? Must thou taste fully the bliss of my presence, so long as thou canst serve as its intermediary to all?"

May Thy will be done, O Lord — done integrally.

It is my happiness and my law.

January 17, 1915

NOW, Lord, things have changed. The time of rest and preparation is over. Thou hast willed that from the passive and contemplative servitor I was, I become an active and realising one; Thou hast willed that joyful acceptance be transformed into joyful battle, and that in a constant and heroic effort against everything which in the world opposes the accomplishment of Thy law in its purest and highest present expression, I find again the same peaceful and unchanging poise which one keeps in a surrender to Thy law as it is now being accomplished, that is, without entering into a direct struggle with all that opposes it, making the best of every circumstance and acting by contagion, example and slow infusion.

In a partial and limited battle, but one that is representative of the great terrestrial struggle, Thou dost put my strength, determination and courage to the test to see if I can truly be Thy servitor. If the result of the battle shows that I am worthy of being the mediator of Thy regenerating action, Thou wilt extend the field of action. And if I always live up to what Thou expectest of me, a day will come, O Lord, when Thou wilt be upon earth, and the whole earth will rise against Thee. But Thou wilt take the earth in Thy arms and the earth will be transformed.

January 18, 1915

LORD, hear my prayer . . .

In me Thou art all-powerful, sovereign Master of my destiny, my life's guide, conqueror of all obstacles, victor over preconceived wills and mental prejudices. Perhaps to be all-powerful in the world outside, Thou needest the instrumentation of my mind, organiser and shaper of the means of action; but if Thou canst make the instrument perfect, how can there be any doubt that the work will be accomplished? All evil shadows which bring contrary suggestions must be driven away very far and, with a complete and unshakable trust in Thy infinite mercy, I address this prayer to Thee:

Transform Thy enemies into friends,
Change the darkness into light.

In this immense heroic struggle, in this sublime struggle of love against hatred, of justice against injustice, of obedience to Thy supreme law against revolt, may I gradually be able to make humanity worthy of a still sublimer peace in which, all internal dissensions having ceased, the whole effort of man may be united for the attainment of a more and more perfect and integral realisation of Thy divine Will and Thy progressive ideal.

January 24, 1915

LORD, I have long remained silent before Thee in one of those inner prostrations full of an ardent adoration which culminate in a supreme identification. . . . And, as always, Thou saidst to me: "Turn thy look towards the earth." And I saw all the roads wide open and radiant with a calm and pure light.

In mute adoration, filled utterly with Thy will, I turned towards the earth.

*February 15, 1915**

O LORD of Truth, thrice have I implored Thy manifestation invoking Thee with deep fervour.

Then, as always, the whole being made its total submission. At that moment the consciousness perceived the individual being mental, vital and physical, covered all over with dust, and this being lay prostrate before Thee, its forehead touching the earth, dust in the dust, and it cried to Thee, "O Lord, this being made of dust prostrates itself before Thee praying to be consumed with the fire of the Truth that it may henceforth manifest only Thee." Then Thou saidst to it, "Arise, thou art pure of all that is dust." And suddenly, in a stroke, all the dust sank from it like a cloak that falls on the earth, and the being appeared erect, always as substantial but resplendent with a dazzling light.

March 3, 1915: On board the Kamo Maru

SOLITUDE, a harsh, intense solitude, and always this strong impression of having been flung headlong into a hell of darkness! Never at any moment of my life, in any circumstances, have I felt myself living in surroundings so entirely opposite to all that I am conscious of as true, so contrary to all that is the essence of my life. Sometimes when the impression and the contrast grow very intense, I cannot prevent my total submission from taking on a hue of melancholy, and the calm and mute converse with the Master within is transformed for a moment into an invocation that almost supplicates, "O Lord, what have I done that Thou hast thrown me thus into the sombre Night?" But immediately the aspiration rises, still more ardent, "Spare this being all weakness; suffer it to be the docile and clear-eyed instrument of Thy work, whatever that work may be."

For the moment the clear-sightedness is lacking; never was the future more veiled. It is as though we were moving towards a high, impenetrable wall, so far as the destiny of individual men is concerned. As for the destinies of nations and of the earth, they appear more distinctly. But of these it is useless to speak: the future will reveal them clearly to all eyes, even of the most blind.

March 4, 1915

ALWAYS the same harsh solitude . . . but it is not painful, on the contrary. In it more clearly than ever, is revealed the pure and infinite love in which the whole earth is immersed. By this love all lives and is animated; the darkest shadows become almost translucent to let its streams flow through, and the intensest pain is transformed into potent bliss.

Each turn of the propeller upon the deep ocean seems to drag me farther away from my true destiny, the one best expressing the divine Will; each passing hour seems to plunge me again deeper into that past with which I had broken, sure of being called to new and vaster realisations; everything seems to draw me back to a state of things totally contrary to the life of my soul which reigns uncontested over outer activities; and, despite the apparent sadness of my own situation, the consciousness is so firmly established in a world which passes beyond personal limitations on every side, that the whole being rejoices in a constant perception of power and love.

In the material actuality, tomorrow lies dark and unreadable; no light, not even the faintest, reveals to my bewildered gaze any indication, any presence of the Divine. But something in the depths of consciousness turns to the Invisible and Sovereign Witness and tells him: "Thou dost plunge me, O Lord, into the thickest darkness; this means that Thou hast established Thy light so firmly in me that Thou knowest it will stand this perilous ordeal. Otherwise wouldst Thou have chosen me for the descent

into the vortex of this hell as Thy torch-bearer? Wouldst Thou have judged my heart strong enough not to fail, my hand firm enough not to tremble? And yet my individual being knows how weak and powerless it is; when Thou dost not manifest Thy Presence, it is more denuded than most people who do not know or care for Thee. In Thee alone lies its strength and ability. If Thou art pleased to make use of it, nothing will be too difficult to accomplish, no task too vast and complex. But if Thou shouldst withdraw, just a poor child is left, capable only of nestling in Thy arms and sleeping there in the sweet dreamless sleep where nothing else exists but Thou.”

March 7, 1915

IT is past, the time of sweet mental silence, so peaceful, so pure, through which could be felt the profound will expressing itself in its all-powerful truth. Now the will is no longer perceived; and the mind once more necessarily active, analyses, classifies, judges, chooses, constantly reacts as a transforming agent upon everything that is imposed on the individuality, grown wide enough to be in contact with a world infinitely vast and complex, a world of mingled light and shadow like all that belongs to the earth. *I am exiled from every spiritual happiness, and of all ordeals this, O Lord, is surely the most painful that Thou canst impose: but most of all the withdrawal of Thy will which seems to be a sign of total disapprobation. Strong is the growing sense of rejection, and it needs all the ardour of an untiring faith to keep the external consciousness thus abandoned to itself from being invaded by an irremediable sorrow. . . .

*But it refuses to despair, it refuses to believe that the misfortune is irreparable; it waits with humility in an obscure and hidden effort and struggle for the breath of Thy perfect joy to penetrate it again. And perhaps each of its modest and secret victories is a true help brought to the earth. . . .

*If it were possible to come definitively out of this external consciousness, to take refuge in the divine consciousness! But that Thou hast forbidden and still and always Thou forbidst it. No flight out of the world! The burden of its darkness and ugliness must be borne to the

end even if all divine succour seems to be withdrawn. I must remain in the bosom of the Night and walk on without compass, without beacon-light, without inner guide.

I will not even implore Thy mercy; for what Thou willst for me, I too will. All my energy is in tension solely to advance, always to advance step after step, despite the depth of the darkness, despite the obstacles of the way, and whatever comes, O Lord, it is with a fervent and unchanging love that Thy decision will be welcomed. Even if Thou findest the instrument unfit to serve Thee, the instrument belongs to itself no more, it is Thine; Thou canst destroy or magnify it, it exists not in itself, it wills nothing, it can do nothing without Thee.

*March 8, 1915**

FOR the most part the condition is one of calm and profound indifference; the being feels neither desire nor repulsion, neither enthusiasm nor depression, neither joy nor sorrow. It regards life as a spectacle in which it takes only a very small part; it perceives its actions and reactions, conflicts and forces as things that at once belong to its own existence which overflows the small personality on every side and yet to that personality are altogether foreign and remote.

But from time to time a great breath passes, a great breath of sorrow, of anguished isolation, of spiritual destitution,—one might almost say, the despairing appeal of Earth abandoned by the Divine. It is a pang as silent as it is cruel, a sorrow submissive, without revolt, without any desire to avoid or pass out of it and full of an infinite sweetness in which suffering and felicity are closely wedded, something infinitely vast, great and deep, too great, too deep perhaps to be understood by men—something that holds in it the seed of To-morrow. . . .

Lunel: April 19, 1915

AN imperious need has forced me to return to this confidant of my seekings and the efforts of my soul.

All external circumstances have changed, giving a flat lie to the dream of the ideal which sought expression even in material activities. The hour has not yet come for joyful realisations in outer physical things. The physical being is plunged once again into the dull, monotonous night from which it wanted to withdraw too hastily; and Thy realised will, O Lord of Truth, has come to tell the constructing mind: "You don't think this is true, and yet it is." The mind has readily recognised that it was mistaken and has surrendered completely to all that Thou willest. The vital being is quiet and satisfied in all circumstances. All feeling dwells in an equal and pure peace; the whole being is flooded with Thy vast, eternal light; Thy love penetrates and animates it. And yet the impression that outer facts are a falsehood has not been effaced, and the body, despite its indisputable goodwill, is so profoundly shaken that it cannot manage to regain its equilibrium and health.

The entire earthly life of this being, from its very beginning to the present moment, gives it the impression of an unreal dream, very remote from it, having almost no further contact with it; all this outer mechanism is now only a machine which it moves, for such is the will of its central Reality, but it is no longer interested in it, perhaps sometimes even less than the neighbouring mechanism or even the unknown mechanism that will be the product

of the earth of tomorrow. But this earth itself is strange to it, and as it is not aware of anything else except the Eternal Silence, all life that has form appears remote and almost unreal to it; it seems strange to it that anyone could desire anything since it does not exist, or prefer one thing to another since neither is there. But at the same time it does not see why it should object to any action whatever it may be, since all actions are equally unreal, and it does not feel the necessity to flee from a world which does not exist and cannot be a burden, since its existence is so nonexistent.

All this gives the feeling of a sort of void full of light, peace, immensity, eluding all form and all definition. It is the Nought, but a Nought which is real and can last eternally, for it *is*, even while having the perfect immensity of that which is not. . . . Poor words which try to say what silence itself cannot express.

The condition thus trying to define itself in awkward terms gradually settled in some weeks ago, and every passing day establishes it more definitively, more deeply, more irremediably so to speak. Without having wanted it, sought for it or desired it, the being sinks deeper and deeper into it, also gradually losing consciousness of itself in a Consciousness which is no longer individual and whose immobility is inexpressible — a Consciousness from which it is no longer possible to distinguish oneself.

May 24, 1915

ONE day, O Lord, Thou didst teach my mind that it could act fully as an instrument of manifestation of Thy divine truth, as an intermediary of Thy eternal will, without being limited in its realising constructions by the narrow field of possibilities of the external being. Till then this mind, except very rarely, was in the habit of coming out of its mute ecstasy, its silent contemplation before Thy ineffable infinity, only to concentrate its effort on the centre of action represented by the external being; and this was a sort of bondage within too narrow a frame; there was a contradiction between the powers of mental realisation and the instrument through which they were striving to make their way out; the most immediate result was the wastage and limitation of mental energies, which not finding any satisfaction in activity, quite naturally returned to merge into Thy eternity.

Suddenly Thou didst put an end to this disorder; Thou didst liberate the mind from its last fetters; Thou didst teach it to be freely active through all forms and no longer exclusively through those it considered till then as its own, that is, as its natural means of expression.

The vital being had already realised this liberation long ago and knew how to enjoy the plenitude of sensations and emotions in all forms capable of manifesting life. But the mental being had not yet learnt how to animate, organise and illuminate consciously all lives without distinction. Thou didst break down all barriers, Thou didst open to it the doors of Thy infinite manifestation.

Within a few days the new conquest was established, affirmed. And what Thou expectest from the centre of consciousness represented at present upon earth by my whole being, grew clear before it: To be the life in all material forms, the thought organising and using this life in all forms, the love widening, enlightening, intensifying, uniting all the varied elements of this thought, and thus, through a total identification with the manifested world, to be able to intervene with full power in its transformations.

On the other hand, by a perfect surrender to the Supreme Principle, to become aware of the Truth and the eternal Will that manifests it. Through this identification having become the faithful servant and sure intermediary of the divine Will, and uniting this conscious identification with the Principle to the conscious identification with its becoming, to mould and model consciously the love, mind and life of the becoming in accordance with the Law of Truth of the Principle.

This is how the individual being can be the conscious mediator between the absolute Truth and the manifested universe and intervene in the slow, uncertain march of the Yoga of Nature in order to give it the swiftness, intensity and sureness of the divine Yoga.

This is how in certain periods the entire terrestrial life seems to cross miraculously over stages which at other times would require thousands of years to traverse.

At present, O Lord, the state of perfect and conscious

surrender to Thy eternal will is, as far as I can tell, constant, invariable behind every act, every movement of the mind, the vital or the body. This imperturbable calm, this deep, peaceful, unchanging bliss, which never leave me — are they not a proof of this?

Passive or receptive identification with life, thought and love in all manifested forms is an accomplished fact, apparently the inevitable consequence of surrender to pure Truth.

But the moments when consciousness becomes effectively the life animating and moulding all material forms, the intelligence organising life, and the love illuminating the intelligence, in an active and fully conscious way, at once in the totality and the least detail, with a sense of infinite plenitude and precise powers — these moments are still intermittent though growing more and more frequent and lasting.

It is in these moments that the two consciousnesses are simultaneous and fuse into a single, almost indescribable, ineffable consciousness in which are united Immutable Eternity and Eternal Movement. It is in these moments that the present work begins to be accomplished.

Marsillargues: July 31, 1915

SHOULD I, playing the role of a servant, an instrument, turn to Thee, O Lord, and address a hymn of adoration to Thee? Should I, identifying myself with Thee in the eternal Reality and infinite Bliss, speak to men of the peace and joy they do not know? . . . The two attitudes are simultaneous, the two consciousnesses parallel, and in this close and indissoluble union lies Plenitude.

The heavens are definitively conquered, and nothing and nobody could have the power of wresting them from me. But the conquest of the earth is still to be made; it is being carried on in the very heart of the turmoil; and even when achieved, it will still be only a relative one; the victories in this world are but stages leading progressively to still more glorious victories; and what Thy Will makes my mind conceive of as the goal to be attained, the conquest to be realised, is only one element of Thy eternal plan; but in perfect union I am this plan and this Will, and I taste the supreme bliss of the infinite, even while playing ardently, with precision and energy, in the world of division, the special part Thou hast entrusted to me.

Thy power in me is like a living spring, strong and abundant, rumbling behind the rocks, gathering its energies to break down the obstacles and gush out freely in the open, pouring its waters over the plain to fertilise it. When will the hour of this emergence come? When the moment arrives, it will burst forth, and time is nothing in Eternity. But what words can describe the

immensity of joy brought by this inner accumulation, this deep concentration, of all the forces that are submissive to the manifestation of Thy Will of tomorrow, preparing to break over the world, drowning in their sovereign flood all that still persists in wanting to be the expression of Thy will of yesterday, so as to take possession of the earth in Thy Name and offer it to Thee as a completer image of Thyself.

Thou hast said that the earth would die, and it will die to its old ignorance.

Thou hast said that the earth would live, and it will live in the renewal of Thy Power.

What words will ever tell the splendour of Thy Law and the magnificence of Thy Glory? What words will express the perfection of Thy Consciousness and the infinite bliss of Thy Love?

What words will sing Thy ineffable Peace and celebrate the majesty of Thy Silence and the grandeur of Thy all-powerful Truth?

The entire manifested universe cannot suffice to speak Thy splendour and tell Thy marvels, and in the eternity of time this is what it is trying to do more and more, better and better, eternally.

Paris: November 2, 1915

(After a few moments spent in arranging familiar objects)

AS a strong breeze passes over the sea and crowns with foam its countless waves, so a great breath passed over the memory and awoke the multitude of its remembrances. Intense, complex, crowded, the past lived again in a flash, having lost nothing of its savour, its richness.

Then was the whole being lifted up in a great surge of adoration, and gathering all its memories like an abundant harvest, it placed them at Thy feet, O Lord, as an offering.

For throughout its life, without knowing it or with some presentiment of it, it was Thou whom it was seeking; in all its passions, all its enthusiasms, all its hopes and disillusionments, all its sufferings and all its joys, it was Thou whom it ardently wanted. And now that it has found Thee, now that it possesses Thee in a supreme Peace and Felicity, it wonders that it should have needed so many sensations, emotions, experiences to discover Thee.

But all this, which was a struggle, a turmoil, a perpetual effort, has become through the sovereign grace of Thy conscious Presence, a priceless fortune which the being rejoices to offer as its gift to Thee. The purifying flame of Thy illumination has turned it into jewels of price laid down as a living holocaust on the altar of my heart.

Errors have become stepping-stones, the blind gropings conquests. Thy glory transforms defeats into victories of eternity, and all the shadows have fled before Thy radiant light.

It is Thou who wert the motive and the goal; Thou art the worker and the work.

The personal existence is a canticle, perpetually renewed, which the universe offers up to Thy inconceivable Splendour.

November 7, 1915. 3 a.m.

WITHOUT any external sign, any special circumstance, the moments passed by so majestically, in so solemn an inner silence, a calm so deep and vast, that my tears began to flow profusely. For the last two days the earth seems to have been going through a decisive crisis; it seems that the great formidable contest between material resistances and spiritual powers is nearing its conclusion, or, in any case, that some element of capital importance has made or is going to make its appearance in the play.

How little do individual beings count at such times! They are like wisps of straw carried away by the passing breeze, whirling for a moment above the ground, only to be flung back upon it again and reduced to dust. And individual beings who thus feel so insecure, so stripped of importance, suffer and groan in painful agony. For them the waiting itself is a perpetual menace, everything speaks of danger and destruction. . . .

But what grandeur, what sovereign beauty lie in the depth of this outer anguish all formed of narrow egoism; what splendour dwells within this waiting, grown sacred through deep contemplation, when the walls of personal blindness have fallen and the individual consciousness has taken its flight into immensity to unite with Thy eternal consciousness.

This sorrowful world kneels before Thee, O Lord, in mute supplication; Matter, tortured, takes shelter at Thy feet, its last and only refuge; and imploring Thee thus,

it adores Thee, Thee whom it neither knows nor understands! Its prayer rises like the cry of one in a last agony; what is disappearing feels vaguely the possibility of living once again in Thee; the earth awaits Thy decree in a grandiose prostration. Listen, listen: its voice implores and supplicates to Thee. . . . What will be Thy decree, what is Thy sentence? O Lord of Truth, this individual world blesses Thy truth which it does not yet know, but which it calls, and to which it adheres with all the joyful energy of its living forces.

Death has passed, vast and solemn, and all was hushed in a religious silence while it was passing by.

A superhuman beauty has appeared upon earth.

Something more marvellous than the most marvellous bliss has brought a foretaste of its Presence.

*November 26, 1915**

THE entire consciousness immersed in divine contemplation, the whole being enjoyed a supreme and vast felicity.

Then was the physical body seized, first in its lower members and next the whole of it, by a sacred trembling which made all personal limits fall away little by little even in the most material sensation. The being grew in greatness progressively, methodically, breaking down every barrier, shattering every obstacle, that it might contain and manifest a force and a power which increased ceaselessly in immensity and intensity. It was as a progressive dilatation of the cells until there was a complete identification with the earth: the body of the awakened consciousness was the terrestrial globe moving harmoniously in ethereal space. And the consciousness knew that its global body was thus moving in the arms of the universal Being, and it gave itself, it abandoned itself to It in an ecstasy of peaceful bliss. Then it felt that its body was absorbed in the body of the universe and one with it; the consciousness became the consciousness of the universe, immobile in its totality, moving infinitely in its internal complexity. The consciousness of the universe sprang towards the Divine in an ardent aspiration, a perfect surrender, and it saw in the splendour of the immaculate Light the radiant Being standing on a many-headed serpent whose body coiled infinitely around the universe. The Being in an eternal gesture of triumph mastered and created at one and the same time the serpent and the universe that issued from

him; erect on the serpent he dominated it with all his victorious might, and the same gesture that crushed the hydra enveloping the universe gave it eternal birth. Then the consciousness became this Being and perceived that its form was changing once more; it was absorbed into something which was no longer a form and yet contained all forms, something which, immutable, sees,—the Eye, the Witness. And what It sees, is. Then this last vestige of form disappeared and the consciousness itself was absorbed into the Unutterable, the Ineffable.

The return towards the consciousness of the individual body took place very slowly in a constant and invariable splendour of Light and Power and Felicity and Adoration, by successive gradations, but directly, without passing again through the universal and terrestrial forms. And it was as if the modest corporeal form had become the direct and immediate vesture, without any intermediary, of the supreme and eternal Witness.¹

¹ This is a letter which the Mother sent to Sri Aurobindo and to which he answered on 31-12-1915 as follows:

The experience you have described is Vedic in the real sense, though not one which would easily be recognised by the modern systems of Yoga which call themselves Vedic. It is the union of the “Earth” of the Veda and Purana with the divine Principle, an earth which is said to be above our earth, that is to say, the physical being and consciousness of which the world and the body are only images. But the modern Yogas hardly recognise the possibility of a material union with the Divine.

January 15, 1916

O THOU whom I may call my God, Thou who art the personal form of the Transcendent Eternal, the Cause, Source and Reality of my individual being, Thou who hast through the centuries and millenniums slowly and subtly kneaded this Matter, so that one day it could become consciously identified with Thee, and be nothing but Thee; O Thou who hast appeared to me in all Thy divine splendour — this individual being in all its complexity offers itself to Thee in an act of supreme adoration; it aspires in its entirety to be identified with Thee, to be Thyself, eternally Thou, merged for ever in Thy Reality. But is it ready for that? Is Thy work fully accomplished? Is there in it no longer any shadow, ignorance, or limitation? Canst Thou at last definitively take possession of it and, in the sublimest, most integral transformation free it forever from the world of Ignorance and make it live in the world of Truth?

Or rather Thou art myself divested of all error and limitation. Have I become integrally this true self in all the atoms of my being? Wilt Thou bring about an overwhelming transformation, or will it still be a slow action in which cell after cell must be wrested from its darkness and its limits? . . .

Thou art the Sovereign, ready to take possession of Thy kingdom; dost Thou not find Thy kingdom yet ready enough for Thee to link it definitively to Thyself and become integrated with it?

Will the great miracle of the integral Divine Life in the individual at last be accomplished?

January 22, 1916

THOU hast taken entire possession of this miserable instrument and if it is not yet perfected enough for Thee to complete its transformation, its transmutation, Thou art at work in each one of its cells to knead it and make it supple and enlighten it, and in the whole being, to arrange, organise and harmonise it. Everything is in movement, everything is changing; Thy divine action makes itself felt as an ineffable spring of a purifying fire that circulates through all the atoms. And this flowing spring has brought into the being an ecstasy more marvellous than any it had ever felt before: thus to Thy action there answers the aspiration of that on which Thou workest and the aspiration is all the more ardent because the instrument has seen itself as it really is in all its infirmity.

O Lord, I implore Thee, hasten the blessed day when the divine miracle will be accomplished, hasten the day of the realisation of the Divine upon earth.

January 23, 1916

O THOU divine inhabitant of this gross form, Thou seest that it is a mass of limitations: wilt Thou not break all these limitations so that it may participate in Thy infinity? Thou seest that it is full of obscurities: wilt Thou not dissolve this darkness with Thy resplendent light so that it may participate in Thy brightness? Thou seest it burdened with ignorant impurities: wilt Thou not consume all these impurities with Thy devouring fire of love, so that the being in its integrality may now become one in all consciousness with Thee?

Dost Thou not find that this sombre and sorrowful experience of egoistic separativity has lasted long enough for the earth and humanity? Has not the hour struck in the universe for this phase of development to be replaced by another, dominated by the pure and vast consciousness of Thy Unity?

Unceasingly, at every moment, my invocation rises to Thee, and I call Thee: Lord, O Lord, take possession of Thy kingdom, illumine it with Thy eternal Presence, put an end to the cruel error in which it lives believing itself separate from Thee, while in its reality and essence it is Thyself.

Break, break down the last resistances, consume the last impurities, blast this being if need be, but let it be transfigured!

Tokio: June 7, 1916

LONG months have gone by in which nothing could be said, for it was a period of transition, of passing from one equilibrium to another, vaster and more complete. The outer circumstances were manifold and new, as if the being needed to accumulate many perceptions and observations in order to give a more extensive and complex base to its experience. But, being entirely plunged within this experience, it did not have the necessary perspective to see it as a whole, to know what it was and above all where it was leading.

Suddenly, on the fifth of June the veil was rent, and there was light in my consciousness.

When I contemplated Thee in Thy individual form, O Lord of eternity, and implored Thee to take possession of Thy kingdom of the flesh, Thou didst set again into motion, into activity this vital form, which, for the necessity of development and unification, had been living for years in a passivity that was receptive and harmonious but alien to all active manifestation of Thy will.

This return to activity meant a completely new adaptation of the vital instrument, for its natural tendency is always to resume action with its old habits and methods. This period of adaptation was long, painful, sometimes obscure, though behind, the perception of Thy Presence and perfect surrender to Thy Law were immutable and quite strongly conscious for any disturbance to shake the being.

Gradually the vital being grew accustomed to find

harmony in the intensest action as it had in passive surrender. And once this harmony was sufficiently established, there was light again in all the parts of the being, and the consciousness of what had happened became complete.

Now in the heart of action the vital being has discovered the perception of Infinity and Eternity. It can perceive Thy Supreme Beauty and live it in all sensations and all forms. Even in its every sensation, extended, active, fully developed to feel contrary sensations at the same time, always it perceives Thee.

It is not unaware, however, that this is only one stage, and it bows before Thee in a profound adoration and tells Thee: "Lord, Thou hast taken up Thy instrument again and willed to use it for action. The instrument knows its imperfection and impurity and implores Thy mercy to perfect and purify it, so that, day by day, through a progressive disappearance of all its preferences and limitations, it may be able to manifest Thee more integrally."

November 28, 1916

THOU madest me read these childish babblings once again, for they are awkward attempts at expression of a mind still in its infancy and all this seemed to me far, very remote, clad in the charm and purity of the experiences of a candid and enthusiastic childhood. And yet, before Thee, O eternal Lord, I have not grown any older and have not made any progress; the expression of today will not be better than that of those early days. The mind is still as poor and clumsy as before. And what could it have to express that is so remarkable? No sensational experience: all experiences now seem simple and natural. No powerful or exceptional new idea, none of those ideas which fill one with the joy of discovery: all ideas, whatever form they may take, now seem like old acquaintances one greets amicably in passing, but from whom one expects nothing new. No scrupulous and detailed psychological analysis, exposing some yet unexplored inner recess: internal complications no longer exist in themselves; they are faithful and impartial reflections of all the surrounding psychological movements; and to describe what is going on in the being would be at once as complicated and monotonous as to describe the world in its almost exclusively subconscious gropings and wanderings.

Poverty, poverty! Thou hast placed me in an arid and bare desert and yet this desert is sweet to me as everything that comes from Thee, O Lord. In this dull and wan greyness, in this dim ashen light, I taste the savour of the infinite spaces: the pure breeze of the open seas,

the powerful breath of the free heights constantly fill my heart and penetrate my life; all barriers have fallen, within and around me, and I feel like a bird opening its wings for an unrestrained flight. But the bird remains perched upon a rock, its wings outspread against the grey, fleecy sky, awaiting, in order to soar upwards, the coming of something it expects without knowing what it is. As it no longer has any chains to check its flight, it no longer dreams of flying away. Conscious of its freedom, it does not enjoy it, and remains like the others, among the others, perched on the ground in the midst of the dark and dense fog.

December 4, 1916

SINCE Thou hast permitted it, O Lord, I have once again begun to come to Thee daily, freeing myself for a few brief moments from an activity of which I know the complete relativity, even while I am engaged in it. Thou hadst plunged me back into action and the ordinary consciousness, and now Thou grantest me the possibility of regularly taking my flight again to Thee, to soar awhile in the immutable Silence and eternal Consciousness.

Thou hast willed, O Lord, that the being should grow wider and richer. It could not do so without entering once again, at least partially and temporarily, into ignorance and obscurity.

This ignorance and obscurity it comes now to lay at Thy feet as the most humble of ordeals. I shall not ask Thee to bestow upon me continuously the Consciousness Thou grantest me in these moments of peaceful and pure communion. I shall ask Thee only to make these moments still more peaceful and pure, to fortify and enlighten the consciousness more and more, so that it may return to its daily task with renewed strength and knowledge.

Thou reminst me through these brief moments of ecstatic identification that Thou hast granted me the power of consciously uniting with Thee. And the divine musical harmony captures the entire being.

But the sounds gather in the head as behind a veil and not a word flows from the pen today. . . .

December 5, 1916

THOU hast granted me the grace of Thy repose in which all individual limits are dissolved, in which one is in all and, more clearly still, all is in oneself. But the mind, merged in this divine ecstasy, cannot yet find any power of expression.

(Factual notation of the experience)

“Turn towards the earth.” The usual injunction was heard in the silence of the immutable identification. Then the consciousness became that of the One in all. “Everywhere and in all those in whom thou canst see the One, there will awake the consciousness of this identity with the Divine. Look. . . .” It was a Japanese street brilliantly illuminated by gay lanterns picturesquely adorned with vivid colours. And as gradually what was conscious moved on down the street, the Divine appeared, visible in everyone and everything. One of the lightly-built houses became transparent, revealing a woman seated on a tatami in a sumptuous violet kimono embroidered with gold and bright colours. The woman was beautiful and must have been between thirty-five and forty. She was playing a golden samisen. At her feet lay a little child. And in the woman too the Divine was visible.

December 7, 1916

LORD, I could in truth say that I have neither Yoga nor any virtues, for I am completely divested of that which constitutes the glory of all those who want to serve Thee. Apparently my life is as ordinary and banal as can be; and inwardly what is it? Nothing but a calm tranquillity without any variation or surprises; the calm of a something which has realised and no longer seeks itself, which no longer expects anything from life and things, which acts without reckoning upon any profit, knowing perfectly that this action does not belong to it in any way, either in its impulsion or in its result; which wills, being aware that the supreme Will alone wills in it; a calm all made of an incontestable certitude, an objectless knowledge, a causeless joy, a self-existent state of consciousness which no longer belongs to time. It is an immobility moving in the domain of external life, yet without belonging to it or seeking to escape from it. I hope for nothing, expect nothing, desire nothing, aspire for nothing and, above all, I am nothing; and yet happiness, a calm, unmixed happiness, a happiness unaware of itself, which does not need to look at its own being, has come to dwell in the house of this body. This happiness is Thou, O Lord, and this calm is Thou, Lord, for these are not human faculties and men's senses can neither appreciate nor enjoy them. Thus it is Thou, O Lord, who dwellest in this body, and that is why this corporeal abode seems so poor and drab for so marvellous an occupant.

December 8, 1916

THIS was our conversation today morning, O Lord:

Thou didst wake up the vital being with the magic wand of Thy impulsion and say to it: "Awake, bend the bow of thy will, for soon the hour of action will come." Suddenly awakened, the vital being rose up, stretched itself and shook off the dust of its long torpidity; from the elasticity of its members it realised that it was still vigorous and fit for action. And with an ardent faith it answered the sovereign call: "Here I am, what dost Thou want of me, O Lord?" But before another word could be pronounced, the mind intervened in its turn and, having bowed down to the Master as a mark of obedience, spoke to him thus: "Thou knowest, O Lord, that I am surrendered to Thee and that I try my best to be a faithful and pure intermediary of Thy supreme Will. But when I turn my gaze to the earth, I see that however great men may be, their field of action is always terribly restricted. A man, who in his mind and even in his vital being is as vast as the universe or at least as vast as the earth, as soon as he begins to act, becomes enclosed in the narrow bounds of a material action, very limited in its field and results. Whether he be the founder of a religion or a political reformer, he who acts becomes a petty little stone in the general edifice, a grain of sand in the immense dune of human activities. So I do not see any realisable action worthy of the whole being's concentrating on it and making it its purpose of existence. The vital being delights in adventure; but should it be allowed to fling

itself into some lamentable adventure unworthy of an instrument conscious of Thy Presence?" — "Fear nothing," was the reply. "The vital being will not be allowed to set itself in motion, it will not be asked of thee to contribute all the effort of thy organising faculties, except when the action proposed is vast and complete enough to fully and usefully employ all the qualities of the being. What exactly this action will be, thou wilt know when it comes to thee. But I am warning thee even now so that thou mayst be prepared not to reject it. I also warn both thee and the vital being that the time for the small, quiet, uniform and peaceful life will be over. There will be effort, danger, the unforeseen, insecurity, but also intensity. Thou wert made for this role. After having accepted for long years to forget it completely, because the time had not come and thou too wert not ready, wake up now to the consciousness that this is indeed thy true role, that it was for this thou wert created."

The vital being was the first to awake to consciousness and, with the enthusiasm natural to it, exclaimed: "I am ready, O Lord, Thou mayst rely upon me!" The mind, weaker and more timid, though more docile too, added: "What Thou willest, I will. Thou knowest well, O Lord, that I belong entirely to Thee. But shall I be able to prove equal to the task, shall I have the power of organising what the vital being has the capacity to realise?" — "It is to prepare thee for this that I am working at the moment; this is why thou art undergoing a discipline of plasticity

and enrichment. Do not worry about anything: power comes with the need. Not because thou hast been confined, even as the vital being, to very small activities at a time when this was useful, to allow things which had to be prepared the time for preparation — not because of this, I say, art thou incapable of living outside these smallnesses in a field of action consonant with thy true stature. I have appointed thee from all eternity to be my exceptional representative upon the earth, not only invisibly, in a hidden way, but also openly before the eyes of all men. And what thou wert created to be, thou wilt be.”

As always, Lord, when the voice of the depths fell silent, Thy sublime and all-powerful benediction enveloped me completely.

And for a moment the Master and the instrument were but one: the Unique, eternal, infinite.

December 9, 1916

IT is now, a long while after having come out of my contemplation, that I realise what it was.

Once again this evening I entered that state in which the consciousness is scattered in a multitude of different elements, centres of consciousness both individual and collective, to carry out a certain action there or rather as many actions as these elements comprise.

By flashes one point or another suddenly appears distinctly, then fades away giving place to another. Each element of consciousness that acts is clearly conscious of its action; but a consciousness of the whole seems to be both impossible because of the extreme complexity it would entail and useless for the accomplishment of the work itself.

December 10, 1916

CERTAIN apparent weaknesses are sometimes more useful to Thee for Thy work, O Lord, than too evident a perfection. A manifest perfection seems to be the possible prerogative only of one who has withdrawn both from the world and from work in the world. But for him whom Thou hast chosen as one of Thy workers upon earth, I see clearly that certain weaknesses, imperfections (provided they are only apparent and not real), are in Thy eyes more useful, and hence more perfect than perfection itself. And to renounce perfection in its apparent form is part of an integral renunciation of the ignorance of the separate self.

Is that why, O Lord, Thou givest me only so rarely the ecstasy of complete identification and perfect consciousness?

I was spoiled by Thee formerly: Thou madest me live so constantly in Thy Presence. . . . But now it seems that Thou wouldst teach me to know the unchanging bliss even in darkness, and not to have any preference for either consciousness or unconsciousness.

Beyond all desire, to be plunged in the condition of those who live by desire . . . strange!

But the strangest thing is that this leaves me perfectly calm, peaceful and content, and that in this darkness I see a great strength, and that in the depth of the night sublime celestial harmonies can also be heard.

Each new step in Thy kingdom, O Lord, is a new cause for wonder!

December 12, 1916

MY mind was worried about being so constantly turned towards such petty things, moving in so narrow a circle of practical and immediate thoughts.

It has learned to see Thee in everything, Lord, and in the least thing it is aware of Thee and rejoices in Thee. But even while delighting in Thee thus and recognising Thee in the most futile things and activities as well as in the vastest and noblest, it wonders why these prevail over the others. Many a time during these last months has it tried to react against this tendency but always in vain; is it because Thou findest it well thus, or because it is incapable of being otherwise? It put the question to Thee, and as always Thy smile came to comfort it; but the precise answer has not made itself heard.

Now for this mind the least object becomes an unfathomable mystery, and everything is a constantly renewed cause for wonder.

December 14, 1916

I HAIL Thee, O Lord, and bow before Thee. But I shall not write, for Thou hast just told me, in reply to a question about the present meditation: "We have had a private conversation which even thy own physical ears should not hear."

December 20, 1916

THE days have gone by, stormy and troubled to all appearance but calm and strong in their reality reflecting Thy divine will; they have gone by, deploying, disclosing, developing once more all the unexpected and varied splendour of Thy untiring divine play. And how marvellous it is to watch this when one perceives the infinite criss-crossing of the movements Thy eternal will creates, when one knows that all this is from all eternity and that it is only in our imperfect faculties that it becomes an uninterrupted succession of facts, in which we are gratuitous and ignorant actors. We act with the apparent unconsciousness and blindness of those who do not know, and yet, I do know and, even while being an actor, I am a spectator too. But I am still not pure enough for Thee to unveil before my eyes the totality of the effects and results; it is only partially and imperfectly that I know them before the act and am permitted to act with the knowledge of the “why”, with a full illumination as to what Thou expectest from me. When, O Lord, shall I have this purity? But for that too I am no longer impatient and no longer implore. I see how much Thy splendours are obscured and veiled in this miserable and poor instrument; but Thou, Thou knowest why it is thus; and these its shadows and weaknesses Thou dost also use for Thy eternal ends.

My soul is in prayer and bows down in love before what it can understand and know of Thee. My soul is in prayer and gives itself unreservedly to Thee in one of

those sublime fervours which culminate in identification. My soul is in prayer . . . and my body too; and my thought is silent in a mute ecstasy.

*(Communication received at 5.30 in the evening
after meditation.)*

“As thou art contemplating me, I shall speak to thee this evening. I see in thy heart a diamond surrounded by a golden light. It is at once pure and warm, something which may manifest impersonal love; but why dost thou keep this treasure enclosed in that dark casket lined with deep purple? The outermost covering is of a deep lustreless blue, a real mantle of darkness. It would seem that thou art afraid of showing thy splendour. Learn to radiate and do not fear the storm: the wind carries us far from the shore but shows us over the world. Wouldst thou be thrifty of thy tenderness? But the source of love is infinite. Dost thou fear to be misunderstood? But where hast thou seen man capable of understanding the Divine? And if the eternal truth finds in thee a means of manifesting itself, what dost thou care for all the rest? Thou art like a pilgrim coming out of the sanctuary; standing on the threshold in front of the crowd, he hesitates before revealing his precious secret, that of his supreme discovery. Listen, I too hesitated for days, for I could foresee both my preaching and its results: the imperfection of expression and the still greater imperfection of understanding. And yet I turned

to the earth and men and brought them my message. Turn to the earth and men—isn't this the command thou always hearest in thy heart?—in thy heart, for it is that which carries a blessed message for those who are athirst for compassion. Henceforth nothing can attack the diamond. It is unassailable in its perfect constitution and the soft radiance that flashes from it can change many things in the hearts of men. Thou doubttest thy power and fearest thy ignorance? It is precisely this that wraps up thy strength in that dark mantle of starless night. Thou hesitatest and tremblest as on the threshold of a mystery, for now the mystery of the manifestation seems to thee more terrible and unfathomable than that of the Eternal Cause. But thou must take courage again and obey the injunction from the depths. It is I who am telling thee this, for I know thee and love thee as thou didst know and love me once. I have appeared clearly before thy sight so that thou mayst in no way doubt my word. And also to thy eyes I have shown thy heart so that thou canst thus see what the supreme Truth has willed for it, so that thou mayst discover in it the law of thy being. The thing still seems to thee quite difficult: a day will come when thou wilt wonder how for so long it could have been otherwise.”

Sākyamuni

December 21, 1916

LORD, Thou didst speak to me through the lips of one of those who have known Thee best — most probably to make me understand Thy lesson better (was I then deaf to Thy direct suggestion?). And still I do not understand at the moment what to do. Thou knowest what happiness would be mine if by Thy grace I could be integrally transformed into a hearth of divine love — that love which is the first and highest manifestation of Thy eternal Truth, that love which is at once the completest expression in this world of Thy Truth and the most direct road to lead to it the human consciousness that has gone astray. In the days when I used to aspire, desire and ask, how many times have I asked of Thee the grace of this state as the one most in conformity with my present ideal of action! And at that time it seemed to me that the day I should be purified of all egoistic preference, Thou wouldst choose this individual terrestrial being as an instrument of Thy manifestation of love upon earth. And now that Thou askest it of me, more than ever before do I feel my helplessness. For such a long time I thought I knew what love was, and now that I no longer see anything that cannot be called love, I also no longer see anything that may specially be called love. And how can I be that which I can no longer define, that state which I can no longer distinguish? And yet Thou didst show me yesterday that I was holding enclosed in a dark sheath one of Thy most precious and powerful gifts. . . . Lord, all my being aspires to obey Thy voice, to conform to Thy Law; but it does not know in its outer

consciousness, does not understand what Thou expectest of it. It feels indeed that at present its love is a passive state and that Thou wouldst awaken it to an active state; but how to pass from one to the other is what escapes it. It knows that this active state of love should be constant and impersonal, that is, absolutely independent of circumstances and persons, since it cannot and must not be concentrated upon any one thing in particular; and in this it will resemble the present passive state of love which is pure, unchanging and impersonal. But what it still does not know is how, even while retaining its purity, unchangeability and impersonality, qualities now inherent in its being, it can resume its activity.

That is why this evening I implored Lord Mitra who so perfectly symbolises Thy truth of love, asking him to come to my help and enlighten my ignorance, dissolve my doubts, vanquish my hesitations, break down the last obstacles and take possession of this physical instrument so that it may become what Thou expectest it to be.

But my speech is timid and my voice faltering and I do not know if Lord Mitra heard my prayer.

December 24, 1916

LORD, without allowing my mind to become aware of what was going to happen and how it was going to happen, Thou gavest me this evening a foretaste of what Thou expectest from me, only a foretaste, for it is a first, very timid step upon the marvellous road Thou hast partially opened before me. It was like a rising flood swelling, ever swelling the river until it overflows and covers everything with its beneficent waters. And this time it was the heart which thus overflowed under the pressure of the powers of love Thou didst pour into it; and the whole being began to love, to love ever more and more, without any definite aim, nothing and everything at the same time, what it knows and does not know, what it sees and has never seen; and gradually this potential love became an effective love, ready to pour itself out upon all and everything, in beneficent waves, in an active effulgence. . . . This was a beginning, a very weak beginning. But I knew, O Lord, that this is what Thou willest. As always Thy Will is an infinite Grace which floods the being with Thy divine delight and transports it far above all petty contingencies to the Glory of Thy celestial dwelling-places.

To be what Thou willest is to be divine.

December 25, 1916

(What I heard in the silence and noted down last evening)

“**B**Y renouncing everything, even wisdom and consciousness, thou wert able to prepare thy heart for the role assigned to it: apparently the most unrewarding role, that of the spring which always lets its waters flow abundantly for all, but towards which no waters can ever run back; it draws its inexhaustible strength from the depths and expects nothing from outside. But thou canst already sense the sublime felicity that accompanies this inexhaustible expansion of love; for love is sufficient unto itself and needs no reciprocity; this is true even of individual love, how much more true then of divine love which so nobly reflects the infinite.

“Be this love in all things and everywhere, ever more widely, ever more intensely, and the whole world will become at the same time thy work and thy wealth, thy field of action and thy conquest. Fight with persistence to break down the last limits which are only frail barriers before the expansion of the being, to vanquish the last obscurities already being lit up by the Illuminating Power. Fight in order to conquer and triumph; fight to overcome everything that was till today, to make the new Light spring forth, the new Example the world needs. Fight stubbornly against all obstacles, inner or outer. It is the pearl of great price which is offered for thy Realisation.”

*December 26, 1916**

ALWAYS the word Thou makest me hear in the silence is sweet and encouraging, O Lord. But I see not in what this instrument is worthy of the grace Thou accordest to it or how it will have the capacity to realise what Thou attendest from it. All in it appears so small, weak and ordinary, so lacking in intensity and force and amplitude in comparison with what it should be to undertake this overwhelming role. But I know that what the mind thinks is of little importance. The mind itself knows it and, passive, it awaits the working out of Thy decree.

Thou biddest me strive without cease, and I could wish to have the indomitable ardour that prevails over every difficulty. But Thou hast put in my heart a peace so smiling that I fear I no longer know even how to strive. Things develop in me, faculties and activities, as flowers bloom, spontaneously and without effort, in a joy to be and a joy to grow, a joy to manifest Thee, whatever the mode of Thy manifestation. If struggle there is, it is so gentle and easy that it can hardly be given the name. But how small is this heart to contain so great a love! and how weak this vital and physical being to carry the power to distribute it! Thus Thou hast placed me on the threshold of the marvellous Way, but will my feet have the strength to advance upon it? . . . But Thou repliest to me that my movement is to soar and it would be an error to wish to walk. . . . O Lord, how infinite is Thy compassion! Once more

Thou hast taken me in Thy omnipotent arms and cradled me on Thy unfathomable heart, and Thy heart said to me, "Torment not thyself at all, be confident like a child: art thou not myself crystallised for my work?"

*December 27, 1916**

O MY beloved Lord, my heart is bowed before Thee, my arms are stretched towards Thee imploring Thee to set all this being on fire with Thy sublime love that it may radiate from there on the world. My heart is wide open in my breast; my heart is open and turned towards Thee, it is open and empty that Thou mayst fill it with Thy divine Love; it is empty of all but Thee and Thy presence fills it through and through and yet leaves it empty, for it can contain also all the infinite variety of the manifested world. . . .

O Lord, my arms are outstretched in supplication towards Thee, my heart is wide open before Thee, that Thou mayst make of it a reservoir of Thy infinite love.

“Love me in all things, everywhere and in all beings” was Thy reply. I prostrate myself before Thee and ask of Thee to give me that power.

*December 29, 1916**

O MY sweet Lord, teach me to be the instrument of
Thy Love.

December 30, 1916

WHY, O Lord, does my heart seem to me to be so cold and dry?

I feel, I see my soul living deep within my being, and my soul sees Thee, recognises Thee and loves Thee in all things, in everything that is; it is fully conscious of this, and as the outer being is surrendered to it, it too is conscious; the mind knows and never forgets; the purified vital being no longer has any attractions and repulsions, and more and more does it taste of the joy of Thy Presence in all things and always. But the heart seems to have fallen asleep in a slumber of exhaustion, and the soul no longer finds sufficient activity within it to respond fully to its impulsion. Why? Was it so poor that the struggle could thus wear it out, or so deeply wounded that it has become quite stiff? And yet it would like to answer the inner call; it wants this with a faith and ardour which have never wavered; but it is like an old man smiling benevolently at the games of youth but unable to take part in them. And yet it is full of joy and confidence, it overflows with gratitude for all the treasures of affection which Nature has so generously lavished upon it; it would like, in exchange for these precious gifts, to pour out in inexhaustible streams the golden wine of tenderness which restores and fortifies, enlivens and consoles, the true wine of life for human beings. It would like to and tries . . . but how poor is what it does beside what it dreams of doing, how mediocre what it is able to do beside what it hopes, for it hopes always. It knows that Thy call is never heard

in vain, and it has no doubt it can one day realise the splendours of which Thou hast given it a glimpse.

Who will open these closed flood-gates?

My heart loves in its human way, and in its human way it seems to me it loves with strength, constancy and purity. But Thou wouldest have it love divinely in a boundless unfolding of Thy sovereign power; and this remains yet unrealised for it.

Who will open these closed flood-gates? . . .

January 4, 1917

O LORD, Thou showerest upon me all Thy boons. Now that this being expects nothing, desires nothing from life any longer, life brings it its most precious treasures, those coveted by all men. In all the domains of my individual being Thou showerest Thy boons, in the mind, the psychic and even the physical. Thou hast placed me amidst abundance, and abundance seems to me as natural as scarcity and does not bring me a greater joy, for often in poverty the spiritual life was more intense and conscious for me; but I see this abundance very clearly, and my individual being on whom Thou heapest Thy boons thus, prostrates itself before Thee in inexpressible gratitude.

Thy goodness is unequalled and Thy mercy infinite.

January 5, 1917

LOVE is nothing but the tie that binds and holds together all the flowers of Thy divine bouquet. It is an unobtrusive role, modest, unrecognised, a role essentially impersonal, which can find all its utility only in this very impersonality.

Because I am becoming more and more this tie, this link of union gathering the scattered fragments of Thy consciousness and enabling them, by grouping them together, to reconstitute better and better Thy consciousness, at once single and multiple, it was possible for me to see clearly what love is in the play of universal forces, what its place and mission; it is not an end in itself but it is Thy supreme means. Active, everywhere, between all things, everywhere it is veiled by the very things it unites, which, though feeling its effect, are sometimes not even aware of its presence.

O Lord, Thy sweetness has entered my soul and Thou hast filled all my being with joy.

And in this joy I have offered Thee a prayer so that it may reach up to Thee.

January 6, 1917

T HOU hast filled my being with an ineffable peace and unequalled repose . . . Without any personal thought or will, I let myself be cradled passively by Thy infinity.

January 8, 1917

T HOU hast made my heart and mind fall silent; but no voice has arisen from the depths of this silence. Peace alone has reigned, a sweet and beneficent guest.

January 10, 1917

DOST Thou then want to teach me that every effort that has my own being as its aim will be useless and vain? That action alone which has as its motive the radiating of Thy Grace is accomplished with ease and success. When the will acts in the external life, it is powerful and effective; when it attempts to practise going inwards, it is without force or effect. . . . So all action undertaken for personal progress becomes more and more unfruitful, and consequently rarer and rarer. On the other hand, all outer action seems to gain in effectivity what the inner has lost. Thus, O Lord, Thou takest the instrument as it is, and if it has to be refined, that will come in the course of the work.

January 14, 1917

“MAY all who are unhappy become happy, may the wicked become good, may the sick become healthy!” Thus was formulated the aspiration within me concerning the manifestation of Thy divine Love through this instrument. It was like a request, a request a child makes to its father with the certitude that it will be granted. For the certitude was in me when I asked: it seemed to me so simple and easy; I felt so clearly in myself how it was possible. To grow from joy to joy, from beauty to beauty, is this not more natural and also more fruitful than always to suffer and toil in an ignorant struggle unwillingly undergone? If Thou allowest the heart to blossom freely at the touch of Thy divine Love, this transformation is easy and comes of itself.

Wilt Thou not grant this, O Lord, as a pledge of Thy mercy?

It is with the confidence of a child that my heart implores Thee this evening.

January 19, 1917

AND the hours pass,
fading away like unlivéd dreams. . . .

January 23, 1917

THOU didst fill my being with so complete, so intense a love and beauty and joy that it seemed impossible to me that this would not be communicated. It was like a glowing hearth whence the breath of thought wafted far many sparks which, entering the secrecy of men's hearts, kindled other similar fires, fires of Thy divine Love, O Lord, that Love which impels and draws all human beings irresistibly to Thee. O my sweet Lord, grant that this may not be only a vision of my enrapt consciousness, but indeed a reality, effectively transforming all beings and things.

Grant that this love, this beauty and joy which flood all my being that is hardly strong enough to bear their intensity, may also flood the consciousness of all those I have seen, all those I have thought of and all those also whom I have never thought of or seen . . . Grant that all may awake to the consciousness of Thy infinite Bliss!

O my sweet Lord, fill their hearts with joy, love and beauty.

January 25, 1917

O RADIANT Love who fillest all my being and makest it festive, art Thou received, art Thou given? Nobody can say, for Thou receivest Thy own self and givest Thyself to Thyself, being sovereignly active and receptive, at once in all things, in every being.

January 29, 1917

IN the world of forms a violation of Beauty is as great a fault as a violation of Truth in the world of ideas. For Beauty is the worship Nature offers to the supreme Master of the universe; Beauty is the divine language in forms. And a consciousness of the Divine which is not translated externally by an understanding and expression of Beauty would be an incomplete consciousness.

But true Beauty is as difficult to discover, to understand and above all to live as any other expression of the Divine; this discovery and expression exacts as much impersonality and renunciation of egoism as that of Truth or Bliss. Pure Beauty is universal and one must be universal to see and recognise it.

O Lord of Beauty, how many faults I have committed against Thee, how many do I still commit. . . . Give me the perfect understanding of Thy Law so that I may not again fail to keep it. Love would be incomplete without Thee, Thou art one of its most perfect ornaments, Thou art one of its most harmonious smiles. At times I have misunderstood Thy role, but in the depths of my heart I have always loved Thee; and the most arbitrary and radical doctrines could not extinguish the fire of worship which, from my childhood, I had vowed to Thee.

Thou art not at all what a vain people think Thee to be, Thou art not at all attached exclusively to this or that form of life: it is possible to awaken Thee and make Thee shine in every form; but for that one must have discovered Thy secret. . . .

O Lord of Beauty, give me the perfect understanding of Thy Law, so that I may no longer fail to keep it, so that Thou mayst become in me the harmonious consummation of the Lord of Love.

March 27, 1917

(*Communication in dialogue received during meditation*)

“**L**OOK: thou seest the living form and the three inanimate images. The living one is clad in violet, the other three are made of dust, but cleansed and purified. It is in the calm of silence that the living form can, by penetrating the other three, unite them in order to transform them into a living and acting vesture.”

*

O Lord, Thou knowest that I am surrendered to Thee and that my being adheres with a peaceful and deep joy to all that Thou givest it.

*

“I know thy adherence, but I would increase thy consciousness, and for that awaken what still sleeps within thee. Open thy eyes to the light, and in the limpid mirror of the mind will be reflected what thou shouldst know.”

*

Lord, all is silent within my being and waits. . . .

*

“Knock at the door of consciousness and the door will be opened to thee.”

*

The river runs limpid and silvery; its unbroken flow descends from the sky to the earth. But what dost Thou want to say to me that I must understand?

*

“Thy silence is not yet deep enough: something stirs within thy mind. . . .

“The fire of the soul must be seen through the veils of the manifestation; but these veils must be clear and distinct like words traced upon a luminous screen. And all this should be preserved in the purity of thy heart, as the sown meadow is shrouded and protected under the snow.

“Now that thou hast sown the seeds in the field and traced the signs on the screen, thou mayst return to thy calm silence, thou mayst go back to thy calm retreat to renew thy strength in a deeper and truer consciousness. Thou canst forget thy own person and find again the charm of the universal.

“May peace be upon thee in these hours of repose; but do not forget the reveille which will sound soon.

“Thou wilt smile yet at thy destiny which speaks to thee.

“Thy heart will use the returning strength.

“Thou shalt be the woodcutter who ties the bundle of firewood.

“Thou shalt be the great swan with outspread wings which purifies the sight with its pearly whiteness and warms all hearts with its white down.

“Thou wilt lead them all to their supreme destiny.

“Thou hast seen the hearth and seen the child. One attracted the other: both were happy; one because it burned, the other because it was warm.

“Thou seest it in thy heart, this triumphant hearth; thou alone canst carry it without its being destructive. If others touched it, they would be consumed. Do not let them come too near it. The child should know that it must not touch the dazzling flame which attracts it so much. From far it warms it and illumines its heart; too close, it would reduce it to ashes.

“One alone may dwell fearlessly within this heart; for he is the ray that has indeed kindled it. He is the salamander ever reborn in the fire.

“Another is above, unafraid of being burnt: it is the immaculate phoenix, the bird come from the sky who knows how to return to it.

“The first is the Power of realisation.

“The other is the Light.

“And the third the sovereign Consciousness.”

*

O Lord, I listen to Thee and lie prostrate at Thy feet:
Thou hast opened the door to me; Thou hast opened my
eyes, and a little of the night has been illumined. . . .

March 30, 1917

***T**HERE is a sovereign royalty in taking no thought for oneself. To have needs is to assert a weakness; to claim something proves that we lack what we claim. To desire is to be impotent; it is to recognise our limitations and confess our incapacity to overcome them.

If only from the point of view of a legitimate pride, man should be noble enough to renounce desire. How humiliating to ask something for oneself from life or from the Supreme Consciousness which animates it! How humiliating for us, how ignorant an offence against Her! For all is within our reach, only the egoistic limits of our being prevent us from enjoying the whole universe as completely and concretely as we possess our own body and its immediate surroundings.*

Such too should be our attitude towards the means of action.

O Thou who dwellest in my heart and directest all by Thy supreme Will, Thou hast told me a year ago to burn all my bridges and cast myself headlong into the Unknown, as did Caesar when he crossed the Rubicon: it meant the Capitol for him or the Tarpeian Rock.

Thou didst hide then from my eyes the result of the action. Now still Thou keepest it secret; and yet Thou knowest that my equanimity remains the same before greatness as before misery.

Thou hast willed that for me the future should be uncertain and that I should go forward with confidence without even knowing where the road would lead.

Thou hast willed that I should put the care of my destiny utterly in Thy hands, and abdicate altogether all personal preoccupation.

This means undoubtedly that my road must be virgin even to my own thought.

*March 31, 1917**

EACH time that a heart leaps at the touch of Thy divine breath, a little more beauty seems to be born upon the Earth, the air is embalmed with a sweet perfume, all becomes more friendly.

How great is Thy power, O Lord of all existences, that an atom of Thy joy is sufficient to efface so much darkness, so many sorrows and a single ray of Thy glory can light up thus the dullest pebble, illumine the blackest consciousness!

Thou hast heaped Thy favours upon me, Thou hast unveiled to me many secrets, Thou hast made me taste many unexpected and un hoped for joys, but no grace of Thine can be equal to this Thou grantest to me when a heart leaps at the touch of Thy divine breath.

At these blessed hours all earth sings a hymn of gladness, the grasses shudder with pleasure, the air is vibrant with light, the trees lift towards heaven their most ardent prayer, the chant of the birds becomes a canticle, the waves of the sea billow with love, the smile of children tells of the infinite and the souls of men appear in their eyes.

Tell me, wilt Thou grant me the marvellous power to give birth to this dawn in expectant hearts, to awaken the consciousness of men to Thy sublime presence, and in this bare and sorrowful world awaken a little of Thy true Paradise? What happiness, what riches, what terrestrial powers can equal this wonderful gift!

O Lord, never have I implored Thee in vain, for that which speaks to Thee is Thyself in me.

Drop by drop Thou allowest to fall in a fertilising rain the living and redeeming flame of Thy almighty love. When these drops of eternal light descend softly on our world of obscure ignorance, one would say a rain upon earth of golden stars one by one from a sombre firmament.

All kneels in mute devotion before this ever-renewed miracle.

April 1, 1917

THOU hast shown to my mute and expectant soul all the splendour of fairy landscapes: trees at festival and lonely paths that seem to scale the sky.

But of my destiny Thou didst not speak to me. Must it be so veiled from me? . . .

Once more, everywhere I see cherry trees; Thou hast put a magical power in these flowers: they seem to speak of Thy sole Presence; they bring with them the smile of the Divine.

My body is at rest and my soul blossoms in light: what kind of a charm hast Thou put into these trees in flower?

O Japan, it is thy festive adorning, expression of thy goodwill, it is thy purest offering, the pledge of thy fidelity; it is thy way of saying that thou dost mirror the sky.

And now here is a magnificent country, of high mountains all covered with pines and richly tilled valleys. And the little pink roses this Chinese brings, are they a promise of the near future?

*April 7, 1917**

A DEEP concentration seized on me, and I perceived that I was identifying myself with a single cherry-blossom, then through it with all cherry-blossoms, and, as I descended deeper in the consciousness, following a stream of bluish force, I became suddenly the cherry-tree itself, stretching towards the sky like so many arms its innumerable branches laden with their sacrifice of flowers. Then I heard distinctly this sentence:

“Thus hast thou made thyself one with the soul of the cherry-trees and so thou canst take note that it is the Divine who makes the offering of this flower-prayer to heaven.”

When I had written it, all was effaced; but now the blood of the cherry-tree flows in my veins and with it flows an incomparable peace and force. What difference is there between the human body and the body of a tree? In truth, there is none: the consciousness which animates them is identically the same.

Then the cherry-tree whispered in my ear:

“It is in the cherry-blossom that lies the remedy for the disorders of the spring.”

April 9, 1917

ONCE the threshold of the kingdom of Thy Omnipotence has been crossed, each time there is a return to the mental world, every thought one has there seems a marvellous and unfathomable problem one had never dreamed of before.

Above, no question is put; in that calm silence all is known from all eternity. Below, all is new, unknown, unexpected.

And the two meeting in one single consciousness bring a trustful wondering, source of Peace and Light and Joy.

April 10, 1917

MY heart has fallen asleep down to the very depths of my being. . . .

The whole earth is in a stir and agitation of perpetual change; all life enjoys and suffers, strives, struggles, conquers, is destroyed and formed again.

My heart has fallen asleep down to the very depths of my being. . . .

In all these innumerable and manifold elements, I am the Will that moves, the Thought that acts, the Force that realises, the Matter that is put in motion.

My heart has fallen asleep down to the very depths of my being. . . .

No more personal limits, no more individual action, no longer any separative concentration creating conflict, nothing but a single and infinite Oneness.

My heart has fallen asleep down to the very depths of my being. . . .

*April 28, 1917**

O MY divine Master, who hast appeared to me this night in all Thy radiant splendour, Thou canst in an instant make this being perfectly pure, luminous, translucent, conscious. Thou canst liberate it from its last dark spots, free it from its last preferences. Thou canst . . . but hast Thou not done this tonight when it was penetrated with Thy divine effluence and Thy ineffable light? It may be . . . for in me is a superhuman strength made all of calm and immensity. Grant that from this summit I may not fall; grant that peace may for ever reign as the master of my being, not only in my depths of which it has long been the sovereign but in the least of my external activities, in the smallest recesses of my heart and of my action.

I salute Thee, O Lord, deliverer of beings!

“Lo! here are flowers and benedictions! here is the smile of divine Love! It is without preferences and without repulsions. It streams out towards all in a generous flow and never takes back its marvellous gifts!”

Her arms outstretched in a gesture of ecstasy, the Eternal Mother pours upon the world the unceasing dew of Her purest love!

Akakura: July 13, 1917

ONE day I wrote:

“My heart has fallen asleep down to the very depths of my being. . . .” Merely asleep? I cannot believe it. I think it is completely hushed, perhaps for ever. From sleep one awakes, from this quietness there is no falling back. And since that day I have not observed any relapse. In place of something very intensely concentrated which for a long while was intermittently tumultuous, has come an immensity so vast and calm and untroubled, filling my being; or rather my being has melted into that; for how could that which is limitless be contained in a form?

And these great mountains with their serene contours which I see from my window, range after majestic range up to the very horizon, are in perfect harmony with the rhythm of this being, filled with an infinite peace. Lord, couldst Thou have taken possession of Thy kingdom? Or rather of this part of the kingdom, for the body is still obscure and ignorant, slow to respond, without plasticity. Will it be purified one day like the rest? And will Thy victory then be total? It matters little. This instrument is what Thou wantest it to be and its bliss is unalloyed.

*Tokio: September 24, 1917**

THOU hast subjected me to a hard discipline; rung after rung, I have climbed the ladder which leads to Thee and, at the summit of the ascent, Thou hast made me taste the perfect joy of identity with Thee. Then, obedient to Thy command, rung after rung, I have descended to outer activities and external states of consciousness, re-entering into contact with these worlds that I left to discover Thee. And now that I have come back to the bottom of the ladder, all is so dull, so mediocre, so neutral, in me and around me, that I understand no more. . . .

What is it then that Thou awaitest from me, and to what use that slow long preparation, if all is to end in a result to which the majority of human beings attain without being subjected to any discipline?

How is it possible that having seen all that I have seen, experienced all that I have experienced, after I have been led up even to the most sacred sanctuary of Thy knowledge and communion with Thee, Thou hast made of me so utterly common an instrument in such ordinary circumstances? In truth, O Lord, Thy ends are unfathomable and pass my understanding. . . .

Why, when Thou hast placed in my heart the pure diamond of Thy perfect Felicity, sufferest Thou its surface to reflect the shadows which come from outside and so leave unsuspected and, it would seem, ineffective the treasure of Peace Thou hast granted me? Truly all this is a mystery and confounds my understanding.

Why, when Thou hast given me this great inner silence, sufferest Thou the tongue to be so active and the thought to be occupied with things so futile? Why? . . . I could go on questioning indefinitely and, to all likelihood, always in vain. . . .

I have only to bow to Thy decree and accept my condition without uttering a word.

I am now only a spectator who watches the dragon of the world unrolling its coils without end.

(A few days later)

LORD, how many times, giving way before Thy decree,
I have prayed to Thee: “Spare me this calvary of earthly
consciousness; let me merge in Thy supreme unity.” But
my prayer is faint-hearted, I know, for it remains unfruit-
ful.

*October 15, 1917**

I HAVE cried to Thee in my despair, O Lord, and Thou hast answered my call.

I have no right to complain of the circumstances of my existence; are they not consonant with what I am?

Because Thou ledst me to the threshold of Thy splendour and gavest me the joy of Thy harmony, I thought I had reached the goal: but, in truth, Thou hast regarded Thy instrument in the perfect clarity of Thy light and plunged it back into the crucible of the world that it may be melted anew and purified.

In these hours of an extreme and anguished aspiration I see, I feel myself drawn by Thee with a dizzy rapidity along the road of transformation and my whole being vibrates to a conscious contact with the Infinite.

It is so that Thou givest me patience and the strength to surmount this new ordeal.

*November 25, 1917**

O LORD, because in an hour of cruel distress I said in the sincerity of my faith: “Thy Will be done”, Thou camest garbed in Thy raiment of glory. At Thy feet I prostrated myself, on Thy breast I found my refuge. Thou hast filled my being with Thy divine light and flooded it with Thy bliss. Thou hast reaffirmed Thy alliance and assured me of Thy constant presence. Thou art the sure friend who never fails, the Power, the Support, the Guide. Thou art the Light which scatters darkness, the Conqueror who assures the victory. Since Thou art there, all has become clear. Agni is rekindled in my fortified heart, and his splendour shines out and sets aglow the atmosphere and purifies it. . . .

My love for Thee, compressed so long, has leaped forth again, powerful, sovereign, irresistible — increased tenfold by the ordeal it has undergone. It has found strength in its seclusion, the strength to emerge to the surface of the being, impose itself as master on the entire consciousness, absorb everything in its overflowing stream. . . .

Thou hast said to me: “I have returned to leave thee no more.”

And, my forehead on the soil, I have received Thy promise.

July 12, 1918

***S**UDDENLY, before Thee, all my pride fell. I understood how futile it was in Thy Presence to wish to surmount oneself, and I wept, wept abundantly and without constraint the sweetest tears of my life. . . . *Ah yes, how refreshing, how calm and sweet were those tears I shed before Thee without shame or constraint! Was it not like a child in its father's arms? But what a Father! What sublimity, what magnificence, what immensity of comprehension! And what a power and plenitude in the response! Yes, my tears were like holy dew. Was it because it was not for my own sorrow that I wept? *Tears sweet and beneficent, tears that opened my heart without constraint before Thee and melted in one miraculous moment all the remaining obstacles that could separate me from Thee!*

Some days ago I had known it, I had heard: "If thou canst weep without restraint or disguise before Me, many things will change, a great victory will be won." And that is why when the tears rose from my heart to my eyes, I came and sat before Thee to let them flow as an offering, devotedly. And how sweet and comforting was the offering!

*And now, although I weep no longer, I feel so near, so near to Thee that my whole being quivers with joy.

Let me stammer out my homage:

I have cried too with the joy of a child, "O supreme and only Confidant, Thou who knowest beforehand all we can say to Thee because Thou art its source!"

"O supreme and only Friend, Thou who acceptest,

Thou who lovest, Thou who understandest us just as we are, because it is Thyself who hast so made us!

“O supreme and only Guide, Thou who never gainsayest our highest will because it is Thou Thyself who willest in it!

“It would be folly to seek elsewhere than in Thee for one who will listen, understand, love and guide, since always Thou art there ready to our call and never wilt Thou fail us!

“Thou hast made me know the supreme, the sublime joy of a perfect confidence, an absolute serenity, a surrender total and without reserve or colouring, free from effort or constraint.

Joyous like a child I have smiled and wept at once before Thee, O my Well-Beloved!”*

October 10, 1918

O MY beloved Lord, how sweet it is to think that it is for Thee and Thee alone that I act! It is at Thy service that I am; it is Thou who dost decide and ordain and set in motion, guide and accomplish the action. What peace, what tranquillity, what supreme delight come with the feeling and perception of this! For it is enough to be docile, plastic, surrendered, attentive, in order to let Thee act freely; no longer then are any errors or faults, any lack or insufficiency possible, for what Thou hast willed Thou doest and Thou doest it even as Thou hast willed it. . . .

Accept the ardent flame of my gratitude and my joyous and fully confident adherence.

My father has smiled and taken me in his powerful arms. What could I fear? I have melted into Him and it is He who acts and lives in this body which He himself has formed for His manifestation.

*Oiwaké: September 3, 1919**

SINCE the man refused the meal I had prepared with so much love and care, I invoked the God to take it.

My God, Thou hast accepted my invitation, Thou hast come to sit at my table, and in exchange for my poor and humble offering Thou hast granted to me the last liberation. My heart, even this morning so heavy with anguish and care, my head surcharged with responsibility, are delivered of their burden. Now are they light and joyful as my inner being has been for a long time past. My body smiles to Thee with happiness as before my soul smiled to Thee. And surely hereafter Thou wilt withdraw no more from me this joy, O my God! for this time, I think, the lesson has been sufficient, I have mounted the Calvary of successive disillusionments high enough to attain to the Resurrection. Nothing remains of the past but a potent love which gives me the pure heart of a child and the lightness and freedom of thought of a god.

(END OF THE FIRST PART)

*Pondicherry June 22, 1920**

AFTER granting me the joy which surpasses all expression, Thou hast sent me, O my beloved Lord, the struggle, the ordeal and on this too I have smiled as on one of Thy precious messengers. Before, I dreaded the conflict, for it hurt in me the love of harmony and peace. But now, O my God, I welcome it with gladness: it is one among the forms of Thy action, one of the best means for bringing back to light some elements of the work which might otherwise have been forgotten, and it carries with it a sense of amplitude, of complexity, of power. And even as I have seen Thee, resplendent, exciting the conflict, so also it is Thou whom I see unravelling the entanglement of events and jarring tendencies and winning in the end the victory over all that strives to veil Thy light and Thy power: for out of the struggle it is a more perfect realisation of Thyself that must arise.

May 6, 1927

ONE must know how to give one's life and also one's death, give one's happiness and also one's suffering, to depend for everything and in all things upon the Divine Dispenser of all our possibilities of realisation, who alone can and will decide whether we shall be happy or not, whether we shall live or not, whether we shall participate or not in the realisation.

In the integrality and absoluteness of this love, this self-giving, lies the essential condition for perfect peace, the indispensable foundation of constant beatitude.

December 28, 1928

THERE is a Power that no ruler can command; there is a Happiness that no earthly success can bring; there is a Light that no wisdom can possess; there is a Knowledge that no philosophy and no science can master; there is a Bliss of which no satisfaction of desire can give the enjoyment; there is a thirst for Love that no human relation can appease; there is a Peace that one finds nowhere, not even in death.

It is the Power, the Happiness, the Light, the Knowledge, the Bliss, the Love, the Peace that flow from the Divine Grace.

*November 24, 1931**

O MY Lord, my sweet Master, for the accomplishment of Thy work I have sunk down into the unfathomable depths of Matter, I have touched with my finger the horror of the falsehood and the conscience, I have reached the seat of oblivion and a supreme obscurity. But in my heart was the Remembrance, from my heart there leaped the call which could arrive to Thee: "Lord, Lord, everywhere Thy enemies appear triumphant; falsehood is the monarch of the world; life without Thee is a death, a perpetual hell; doubt has usurped the place of Hope and revolt has pushed out Submission; Faith is spent, Gratitude is not born; blind passions and murderous instincts and a guilty weakness have covered and stifled Thy sweet law of love. Lord, wilt Thou permit Thy enemies to prevail, falsehood and ugliness and suffering to triumph? Lord, give the command to conquer and victory will be there. I know we are unworthy, I know the world is not yet ready. But I cry to Thee with an absolute faith in Thy Grace and I know that Thy Grace will save."

Thus, my prayer rushed up towards Thee; and, from the depths of the abyss, I beheld Thee in Thy radiant splendour; Thou didst appear and Thou saidst to me: "Lose not courage, be firm, be confident,—I COME."

*October 23, 1937**

(A prayer for those who wish to serve the Divine)

GLORY to Thee, O Lord, who triumphest over every obstacle.

Grant that nothing in us shall be an obstacle in Thy work.

Grant that nothing may retard Thy manifestation.

Grant that Thy will may be done in all things and at every moment.

We stand here before Thee that Thy will may be fulfilled in us, in every element, in every activity of our being, from our supreme heights to the smallest cells of the body.

Grant that we may be faithful to Thee utterly and forever.

We would be completely under Thy influence to the exclusion of every other.

Grant that we may never forget to own towards Thee a deep, an intense gratitude.

Grant that we may never squander any of the marvellous things that are Thy gifts to us at every instant.

Grant that everything in us may collaborate in Thy work and all be ready for Thy realisation.

Glory to Thee, O Lord, Supreme Master of all realisation.

Give us a faith active and ardent, absolute and unshakable in Thy Victory.

APPENDIX

Four Letters by Sri Aurobindo

I have said that the Divine does the Sadhana first for the world and then gives what is brought down to others. There can be no Sadhana without realisations and experiences. The *Prayers* are a record of Mother's experiences.

4 January 1935

*

In some of the Mother's Prayers which are addressed to "divin Maître" I find the words: "avec notre divine Mère". How can the Mother and "divin Maître" have a "divine Mère"? It is as if the Mother was not the "divine Mère" and there was some other Mother and the "divin Maître" was not the Transcendent and had also a "divine Mère"! Or is it that all these are addressed to something impersonal?

The Prayers are mostly written in an identification with the earth-consciousness. It is the Mother in the lower nature addressing the Mother in the higher nature, the Mother herself carrying on the Sadhana of the earth-consciousness for the transformation, praying to herself above from whom the forces of transformation come. This continues till the identification of the earth-consciousness and the higher consciousness is effected. The word "notre" is general, I believe, referring to all born into the earth-consciousness—it does not mean the Mother of the "Divin Maître" and myself. It is the Divine who is always referred to as Divin Maître and Seigneur. There is the Mother

Prayers and Meditations

who is carrying on the Sadhana and the Divine Mother, both being one but in different poises, and both turn to the Seigneur or Divine Master. This kind of prayer from the Divine to the Divine you will find also in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

21 August 1936

*

There are some Prayers of the Mother of 1914 in which she speaks of transformation and manifestation. Since at that time she was not here, does this not mean that she had these ideas long before she came here?

The Mother had been spiritually conscious from her youth, even from her childhood, upward and she had done Sadhana and had developed this knowledge very long before she came to India.

23 December 1933

*

There are many who hold the view that she was human but now embodies the Divine Mother and her "Prayers", they say, explain this view. But, to my mental conception, to my psychic being, she is the Divine Mother who has consented to put on her the cloak of obscurity and suffering and ignorance so that she can effectively lead us — human beings — to Knowledge and Bliss and Ananda and to the Supreme Lord.

The Divine puts on an appearance of humanity, assumes the outward human nature in order to tread the path and show it to human beings, but does not cease to be the Divine. It is a manifestation that takes place, a manifestation of a growing divine consciousness, not human turning into divine. The Mother was

inwardly above the human even in childhood, so the view held by “many” is erroneous.

I also conceive that the Mother’s “Prayers” are meant to show us—the aspiring psychic—how to pray to the Divine.

Yes.

17 August 1938

Note on the Text

The 313 prayers comprising this volume were selected by the Mother from her spiritual diaries. These diaries were destroyed after the selection was published. The original French text, entitled *Prières et Méditations de la Mère*, was first brought out in 1932. A second edition, which included one new prayer and an introductory note by the Mother, was issued in 1944. Subsequent editions were published in 1952, 1973, 1980 and 1990 under the shortened title *Prières et Méditations*.

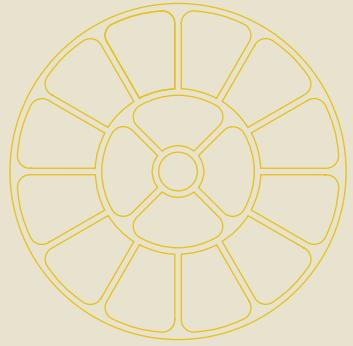
An English translation of the entire text, entitled *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*, was first published in 1948. A second edition, newly translated and with the shortened title *Prayers and Meditations*, was brought out in 1979 as Volume 1 of the Collected Works of the Mother. New impressions of that edition were issued in 1979, 1988, 1997 and 1999. The present, third edition has the same text as the second.

In 1941 English translations of sixty-one prayers (about one-fifth of the complete text) were published under the title *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*. Six of those prayers were translated by Sri Aurobindo in their entirety, three others in part. For the rest, he revised the translations made by disciples. Further revisions were made by Sri Aurobindo when he corrected the page proofs at the time of publication. A second edition of the book, containing three more prayers added by the Mother, was issued in 1962. New editions were brought out in 1969, 1971, 1975 and 1979; the last of these editions has been reprinted several times. The sixty-four prayers in the 1962 edition were incorporated into the 1979 edition of the complete text.

For the first English edition of selected prayers, the Mother wrote an introductory note which she dated "September 1941". She recopied this note in 1948 for the first edition of the complete text in English, dating it "1941-1948"; this note is reproduced in facsimile at the

Prayers and Meditations

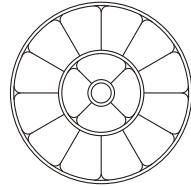
beginning of this book. It is followed by an English translation of the introductory note she wrote for the 1944 (French) edition.



THE MOTHER

Words of Long Ago

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The Mother

**Words
of
Long Ago**

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry

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The Mother in Tokyo, 1916

Publisher's Note

This volume contains all writings of the Mother from the period before 1920, with the exception of *Prayers and Meditations*. The material includes the Mother's earliest known composition, a story written in 1893; notes, stories and essays written between 1904 and 1915; miscellaneous prayers and meditations written between 1914 and 1920; letters, reflections and essays written in Japan between 1916 and 1920; and stories for children adapted from a book published in 1911.

The volume is divided into seven parts, according to the nature and date of the material. Most of the pieces were written originally in French and appear here in English translation. The texts in this edition are the same as those in the first edition. Further information is provided in the Note on the Texts.

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Words of Long Ago

Part 1

The Path of Later On

*"The path of later-on and the road of tomorrow
lead only to the castle of nothing-at-all."*

BY THE wayside, many-coloured flowers delight the eye, red berries gleam on small trees with knotty branches, and in the distance a brilliant sun shines gold upon the ripe corn.

A young traveller is walking briskly along, happily breathing in the pure morning air; he seems joyful, without a care for the future. The way he is following comes to a cross-roads, where innumerable paths branch off in all directions.

Everywhere the young man can see criss-crossing footprints. The sun shines ever bright in the sky; the birds are singing in the trees; the day promises to be very beautiful. Without thinking, the traveller takes the path that is nearest to him, which seems, after all, quite practicable; it occurs to him for a moment that he could have chosen another way; but there will always be time to retrace his steps if the path he has taken leads nowhere. A voice seems to tell him, "Turn back, turn back, you are not on the right road." But everything around him is charming and delightful. What should he do? He does not know. He goes on without taking any decision; he enjoys the pleasures of the moment. "In a little while," he replies to the voice, "in a little while I shall think; I have plenty of time." The wild grasses around him whisper in his ear, "Later." Later, yes, later. Ah, how pleasant it is to breathe the scented breeze, while the sun warms the air with its fiery rays. Later, later. And the traveller walks on; the path widens. Voices are heard from afar, "Where are you going? Poor fool, don't you see that you are heading for your ruin? You are young; come, come to us, to the beautiful, the good, the true; do not be misled by indolence

Words of Long Ago

and weakness; do not fall asleep in the present; come to the future.” “Later, later,” the traveller answers these unwelcome voices. The flowers smile at him and echo, “Later.” The path becomes wider and wider. The sun has reached its zenith; it is a glorious day. The path becomes a road.

The road is white and dusty, bordered with slender birch-trees; the soft purling of a little stream is heard; but in vain he looks in every direction, he can see no end to this interminable road.

The young man, feeling a secret unease, cries, “Where am I? Where am I going?... What does it matter? Why think, why act? Let us drift along on this endless road; let us walk on, I shall think tomorrow.”

The small trees have disappeared; oak-trees line the road; a gully runs on either side. The traveller feels no weariness; he is borne along as if in a delirium.

The gully becomes deeper; the oaks give way to fir-trees; the sun begins to go down. In a daze, the traveller looks all around him; he sees human figures rolling into the ravine, clutching at the fir-trees, the sheer rocks, the roots jutting from the ground. Some of them are making great efforts to climb out; but as they come near to the edge, they turn their heads and let themselves fall back.

Hollow voices cry out to the traveller, “Flee this place; go back to the cross-roads; there is still time.” The young man hesitates, then replies, “Tomorrow.” He covers his face with his hands so as not to see the bodies rolling into the ravine, and runs along the road, drawn on by an irresistible urge to go forward. He no longer wonders whether he will find a way out. With furrowed brow and clothes in disorder, he runs on in desperation. At last, thinking himself far away from the accursed place, he opens his eyes: there are no more fir-trees; all around are barren stones and grey dust. The sun has disappeared beyond the horizon; night is coming on. The road has lost itself in an endless desert. The desperate traveller, worn out by his long run, wants

The Path of Later On

to stop; but he must walk on. All around him is ruin; he hears stifled cries; his feet stumble on skeletons. In the distance, the thick mist takes on terrifying shapes; black forms loom up; something huge and misshapen suggests itself. The traveller flies rather than walks towards the goal he senses and which seems to flee from him; wild cries direct his steps; he brushes against phantoms.

At last he sees before him a huge edifice, dark, desolate, gloomy, a castle to make one say with a shudder: "A haunted castle." But the young man pays no attention to the bleakness of the place; these great black walls make no impression on him; as he stands on the dusty ground, he hardly trembles at the sight of these formidable towers; he thinks only that the goal is reached, he forgets his weariness and discouragement. As he approaches the castle, he brushes against a wall, and the wall crumbles; instantly everything collapses around him; towers, battlements, walls have vanished, sinking into dust which is added to the dust already covering the ground.

Owls, crows and bats fly out in all directions, screeching and circling around the head of the poor traveller who, dazed, downcast, overwhelmed, stands rooted to the spot, unable to move; suddenly, horror of horrors, he sees rising up before him terrible phantoms who bear the names of Desolation, Despair, Disgust with life, and amidst the ruins he even glimpses Suicide, pallid and dismal above a bottomless gulf. All these malignant spirits surround him, clutch him, propel him towards the yawning chasm. The poor youth tries to resist this irresistible force, he wants to draw back, to flee, to tear himself away from all these invisible arms entwining and clasping him. But it is too late; he moves on towards the fatal abyss. He feels drawn, hypnotized by it. He calls out; no voice answers to his cries. He grasps at the phantoms, everything gives way beneath him. With haggard eyes he scans the void, he calls out, he implores; the macabre laughter of Evil rings out at last.

The traveller is at the edge of the gulf. All his efforts have been in vain. After a supreme struggle he falls... from his bed.

Words of Long Ago

A young student had a long essay to prepare for the following morning. A little tired by his day's work, he had said to himself as he arrived home, "I shall work later." Soon afterwards he thought that if he went to bed early, he could get up early the next morning and quickly finish his task. "Let's go to bed," he said to himself, "I shall work better tomorrow; I shall sleep on it." He did not know how truly he spoke. His sleep was troubled by the terrible nightmare we have described, and his fall awoke him with a start. Thinking over what he had dreamt, he exclaimed, "But it's quite clear: the path is called the path of 'later on', the road is the road of 'tomorrow' and the great building the castle of 'nothing at all'." Elated at his cleverness, he set to work, vowing to himself that he would never put off until tomorrow what he could do today.

1893

The Virtues

(*A tale for young and old*)

ONCE UPON a time there was a splendid palace, in the heart of which lay a secret sanctuary, whose threshold no being had ever crossed. Furthermore, even its outermost galleries were almost inaccessible to mortals, for the palace stood on a very high cloud, and very few, in any age, could find the way to it.

It was the palace of Truth.

One day a festival was held there, not for men but for very different beings, gods and goddesses great and small, who on earth are honoured by the name of Virtues.

The vestibule of the palace was a great hall, where the walls, the floor, the ceiling, luminous in themselves, were resplendent with a myriad glittering fires.

It was the Hall of Intelligence. Near to the ground, the light was very soft and had a beautiful deep sapphire hue, but it became gradually clearer towards the ceiling, from which girandoles of diamonds hung like chandeliers, their myriad facets shooting dazzling rays.

The Virtues came separately, but soon formed congenial groups, full of joy to find themselves for once at least together, for they are usually so widely scattered throughout the world and the worlds, so isolated amid so many alien beings.

Sincerity reigned over the festival. She was dressed in a transparent robe, like clear water, and held in her hand a cube of purest crystal, through which things can be seen as they really are, far different from what they usually seem, for there their image is reflected without distortion.

Near to her, like two faithful guardians, stood Humility, at

Words of Long Ago

once respectful and proud, and Courage, lofty-browed, clear-eyed, his lips firm and smiling, with a calm and resolute air.

Close beside Courage, her hand in his, stood a woman, completely veiled, of whom nothing could be seen but her searching eyes, shining through her veils. It was Prudence.

Among them all, coming and going from one to another and yet seeming always to remain near to each one, Charity, at once vigilant and calm, active and yet discrete, left behind her as she passed through the groups a trail of soft white light. The light that she spreads and softens comes to her, through a radiance so subtle that it is invisible to most eyes, from her closest friend, her inseparable companion, her twin sister, Justice.

And around Charity thronged a shining escort, Kindness, Patience, Gentleness, Solicitude, and many others.

All of them are there, or so at least they think.

But then suddenly, at the golden threshold, a newcomer appears.

With great reluctance the guards, set to watch the gates, have agreed to admit her. Never before had they seen her, and there was nothing in her appearance to impress them.

She was indeed very young and slight, and the white dress which she wore was very simple, almost poor. She takes a few steps forward with a shy, embarrassed air. Then, apparently ill at ease to find herself in such a large and brilliant company, she pauses, not knowing towards whom she should go.

After a brief exchange with her companions, Prudence steps forward at their request and goes towards the stranger. Then, after clearing her throat, as people do when they are embarrassed, to give herself a moment to reflect, she turns to her and says:

"We who are gathered here and who all know each other by our names and our merits are surprised at your coming, for you appear to be a stranger to us, or at least we do not seem to have ever seen you before. Would you be so kind as to tell us who you are?"

The Virtues

Then the newcomer replied with a sigh:
“Alas! I am not surprised that I appear to be a stranger in
this palace, for I am so rarely invited anywhere.
“My name is Gratitude.”

1904

A Sapphire Tale

ONCE UPON a time, far away in the East, there was a small country that lived in order and harmony, where each one in his own place played the part for which he was made, for the greatest good of all.

Farmers, craftsmen, workmen and merchants — all had but one ambition, one concern: to do their work as best they could. This was in their own interest, firstly because, since each one had freely chosen his occupation, it suited his nature and gave him pleasure, and also because they knew that all good work was fairly rewarded, so that they, their wives and their children could lead a quiet and peaceful life, without useless luxury, but with a generous provision for their needs, which was enough to satisfy them.

The artists and scientists, few in number but each devoted to his science or art — his purpose in life — were supported by the grateful nation, which was the first to benefit from their useful discoveries and to enjoy their ennobling works. Thus sheltered from the cares of the struggle for life, these scientists had a single aim: that their experimental research, their sincere and earnest studies should serve to allay the sufferings of humanity, to increase its strength and well-being by making superstition and fear draw back as far as possible before the knowledge that brings solace and enlightenment. The artists, whose whole will was free to concentrate upon their art, had only one desire: to manifest beauty, each according to his own highest conception.

Among them, as friends and guides, were four philosophers, whose entire life was spent in profound study and luminous contemplations, to widen constantly the field of human knowledge and one by one to lift the veils from what is still a mystery.

All were content, for they knew no bitter rivalries and could each devote themselves to the occupation or the study that

A Sapphire Tale

pleased him. Since they were happy they had no need for many laws, and their Code was only this: a very simple counsel to all, "Be yourself", and for all a single law to be strictly observed, the law of Charity, whose highest part is Justice, the charity which will permit no wastage and which will hinder no one in his free evolution. In this way, very naturally, everyone works at once for himself and for the collectivity.

This orderly and harmonious country was ruled by a king who was king simply because he was the most intelligent and wise, because he alone was capable of fulfilling the needs of all, he alone was both enlightened enough to follow and even to guide the philosophers in their loftiest speculations, and practical enough to watch over the organisation and well-being of his people, whose needs were well known to him.

At the time when our narrative begins, this remarkable ruler had reached a great age — he was more than two hundred years old — and although he still retained all his lucidity and was still full of energy and vigour, he was beginning to think of retirement, a little weary of the heavy responsibilities which he had borne for so many years. He called his young son Meotha to him. The prince was a young man of many and varied accomplishments. He was more handsome than men usually are, his charity was of such perfect equity that it achieved justice, his intelligence shone like a sun and his wisdom was beyond compare; for he had spent part of his youth among workmen and craftsmen to learn by personal experience the needs and requirements of their life, and he had spent the rest of his time alone, or with one of the philosophers as his tutor, in seclusion in the square tower of the palace, in study or contemplative repose.

Meotha bowed respectfully before his father, who seated him at his side and spoke to him in these words:

"My son, I have ruled this country for more than a hundred and seventy years and although, to this day, all men of goodwill have seemed content with my guidance, I fear that my great age will soon no longer allow me to bear so lightly the heavy

Words of Long Ago

responsibility of maintaining order and watching over the well-being of all. My son, you are my hope and my joy. Nature has been very generous to you; she has showered you with her gifts and by a wise and model education you have developed them most satisfactorily. The whole nation, from the humblest peasant to our great philosophers, has a complete and affectionate trust in you; you have been able to win their affection by your kindness and their respect by your justice. It is therefore quite natural that their choice should fall on you when I ask for leave to enjoy a well-earned repose. But as you know, according to age-old custom, no one may ascend the throne who is not biune, that is, unless he is united by the bonds of integral affinity with the one who can bring him the peace of equilibrium by a perfect match of tastes and abilities. It was to remind you of this custom that I called you here, and to ask you whether you have met the young woman who is both worthy and willing to unite her life with yours, according to our wish."

"It would be a joy to me, my father, to be able to tell you, 'I have found the one whom my whole being awaits', but, alas, this is yet to be. The most refined maidens in the kingdom are all known to me, and for several of them I feel a sincere liking and a genuine admiration, but not one of them has awakened in me the love which can be the only rightful bond, and I think I can say without being mistaken that in return none of them has conceived a love for me. Since you are so kind as to value my judgment, I will tell you what is in my mind. It seems to me that I should be better fitted to rule our little nation if I were acquainted with the laws and customs of other countries; I wish therefore to travel the world for a year, to observe and to learn. I ask you, my father, to allow me to make this journey, and who knows? — I may return with my life's companion, the one for whom I can be all happiness and all protection."

"Your wish is wise, my son. Go — and your father's blessing be with you."

* * *

A Sapphire Tale

Amid the western ocean lies a little island valued for its valuable forests.

One radiant summer's day, a young girl is walking slowly in the shade of the wonderful trees. Her name is Liane and she is fair among women; her lithe body sways gracefully beneath light garments, her face, whose delicate skin seems paler for her carmine lips, is crowned with a heavy coil of hair so golden that it shines; and her eyes, like two deep doors opening on limitless blue, light up her features with their intellectual radiance.

Liane is an orphan, alone in life, but her great beauty and rare intelligence have attracted much passionate desire and sincere love. But in a dream she has seen a man, a man who seems, from his garments, to come from a distant land; and the sweet and serious gaze of the stranger has won the heart of the girl—now she can love no other. Since then she has been waiting and hoping; it is to be free to dream of the handsome face seen in the night that she is walking amid the solitude of the lofty woods.

The dazzling sunlight cannot pierce the thick foliage; the silence is hardly broken by the light rustle of the moss beneath the footsteps of the walking girl; all sleeps in the heavy drowse of the noonday heat; and yet she feels a vague unease, as if invisible beings were hiding in the thickets, watchful eyes peeping from behind trees.

Suddenly a bird's song rings out clear and joyful; all uneasiness vanishes. Liane knows that the forest is friendly—if there are beings in the trees, they cannot wish her harm. She is seized by an emotion of great sweetness, all appears beautiful and good to her, and tears come to her eyes. Never has her hope been so ardent at the thought of the beloved stranger; it seems to her that the trees quivering in the breeze, the moss rustling beneath her feet, the bird renewing its melody—all speak to her of the One whom she awaits. At the idea that perhaps she is going to meet him she stops short, trembling, pressing her hands against her beating heart, her eyes closed to savour to the full the exquisite emotion; and now the sensation grows more and more intense

Words of Long Ago

until it is so precise that Liane opens her eyes, sure of a presence. Oh, wonder of wonders! He is there, he, he in truth as she has seen him in her dream... more handsome than men usually are.
— It was Meotha.

With a look they have recognised each other; with a look they have told each other of the long waiting and the supreme joy of rediscovery; for they have known each other in a distant past, now they are sure of it.

She places her hand in the hand he offers her, and together, silent in a silence filled with thoughts exchanged, they wend their way through the forest. Before them appears the sea, calm and green beneath a happy sun. A great ship sways gently near the shore.

Meekly, trustingly, Liane follows Meotha into the boat which awaits them, drawn up on the sand. Two strong oarsmen put it to sea and soon bring them alongside the vessel.

Only as she sees the little island disappearing below the horizon does the girl say to her companion:

“I was waiting for you, and now that you have come, I have followed you without question. We are made for each other. I feel it, I know it, and I know also that now and forever you will be my happiness and my protection. But I loved my island birthplace with its beautiful forests, and I would like to know to what shore you are taking me.”

“I have sought you throughout the world, and now that I have found you, I have taken your hand without asking you anything, for in your eyes I saw that you expected me. From this moment and forever, my beloved shall be all to me; and if I have made her leave her little wooded isle, it is to lead her as a queen to her kingdom, the only land on earth that is in harmony, the only nation that is worthy of Her.”

October 1906

A Leader

IT WAS in January 1907, shortly after the sanguinary crushing of the revolutionary movement in Russia.

A few friends and I had assembled in a small group for philosophical studies, when we were informed of the presence of a mysterious visitor asking to be admitted.

We went out to meet him, and in the anteroom we saw a man whose clean but very worn clothes, arms held close to his sides, pale face steadfastly turned towards the ground and half-concealed by a black felt hat, made him look like a hunted animal.

At our approach he removed his hat and looked up to cast us a brief, frank glance.

In the half-light of the hall one could scarcely distinguish the features of his waxen face; only its sorrowful expression was clearly visible.

The silence had become embarrassing, and to break it, I asked, "Can I help you, Sir?"

"I have just come from Kiev to see you."

His voice was tired, deep, a little hollow, with a slight Slavonic accent.

From Kiev to see us! This was something indeed. We were surprised. He thought our silence indicated doubt, and after some hesitation he added in a lower tone, "Yes, in Kiev there is a group of students who are deeply interested in great philosophical ideas. Your books have fallen into our hands, and we were happy to find at last a synthetical teaching which does not limit itself to theory, but encourages action. So my comrades, my friends, told me, 'Go and seek their advice on what is preoccupying us.' And I have come."

It was clearly expressed, in correct if not elegant language, and we immediately knew that if, perhaps out of caution, he

Words of Long Ago

was withholding something from us, what he was telling us at least was the truth.

Once we had brought him in and made him sit down in the drawing-room, we saw him in full light. Oh, the poor face pallid with long vigil or seclusion far from air and sun, ravaged by suffering, lined by anxiety, and yet all shining with a fine intellectual light which haloed his brow and lit his eyes, sad, wan eyes reddened by overwork or perhaps by tears....

Perturbed, we remained silent. But after a while, to find out what he expected of us, we asked him what his occupations were in his own country. He seemed to concentrate, to take some resolve, then slowly said:

“I work for the revolution.”

The reply sounded like a knell amid the luxury of this bourgeois apartment.

However, without betraying our emotion, with great admiration for the courage of his sincerity, we replied:

“Would you tell us how we could be of service to you?”

The fact that our attitude towards him had not changed gave him confidence and he began his story:

“You have heard about recent events in Russia, so I will not say anything about that. But perhaps you do not know that at the centre of the revolutionary activity there is a small group of men who call themselves students, to which I belong. Occasionally we meet to take decisions together, but more often we are scattered, firstly so as not to attract attention to ourselves, and secondly to be able to direct the action personally at close quarters. I am their connecting link; when they want to consult together, they meet at my home.

“For a long time we fought openly, violently, hoping to conquer by terror. All means seemed justified to us in our intense and ardent desire to see the cause of Justice, Liberty and Love triumph. You might have seen me, I who feel in my soul a wealth of tenderness and pity that seeks to relieve the miseries of mankind, I who became a doctor with the sole aim of fighting its

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ills and alleviating its sufferings, being forced by painful circumstances to take the bloodiest decisions. It's surprising, isn't it? Nobody could have believed that I was suffering because of that; nevertheless, it is a fact. But the others pushed me, overwhelmed me with good reasons and sometimes succeeded in convincing me.

"However, even in the heat of action, I was aware that there was something better to do, that our methods were not the best ones, that we were wasting our finest energies in vain, and that in spite of the almost fanatical enthusiasm which urged us on, we might well be defeated.

"The collapse came, mowing us down like corn in a field; and misfortune compelled us to regain possession of ourselves, to think carefully. The best of us are lost. The most intelligent, those who were most able to guide and direct us paid for their courageous self-sacrifice with exile or death. Consternation reigned in our ranks; at last I was able to make the others listen to what I thought, to what I felt.

"We are not strong enough to fight by force, for we are not united enough, not organised enough. We must develop our intelligence to understand better the deeper laws of Nature, and to learn better how to act in an orderly way, to co-ordinate our efforts. We must teach the people around us, we must train them to think for themselves and to reflect so that they can become aware of the precise aim we want to attain and thus become an effective help to us, instead of being the hindrance they most often are at the moment.

"I have told them that for a nation to win its freedom, it must first of all deserve it, make itself worthy of it, prepare itself to be able to enjoy it. This is not the case in Russia, and we shall have much to do to educate the masses and pull them out of their torpor; but the sooner we set to the task, the sooner we shall be ready for renewed action.

"I have been able to make my friends understand these things; they trusted me and we began to study. That is how we

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came to read your books. And now I have come to ask your help in adapting your ideas to our present situation and with them to draw up a plan of action, and also to write a small pamphlet which will become our new weapon and which we shall use to spread these beautiful thoughts of solidarity, harmony, freedom and justice among the people."

He remained thoughtful a moment, then continued in a lower tone:

"And yet I sometimes wonder if my philosophical dream is only a utopia, whether I am wrong to lead my brothers along this path, whether it is only cowardice, in brief, if we would not do better to oppose violence to violence, destruction to destruction, bloodshed to bloodshed, to the very end."

"Violence is never a good way to bring victory to a cause such as yours. How can you hope to win justice with injustice, harmony with hatred?"

"I know. This opinion is shared by nearly all of us. As for me, I have a very particular aversion to bloody actions; they horrify me. Each time we immolated a new victim, I felt a pang of regret, as if by that very act we were moving away from our goal.

"But what are we to do when we are driven by events and when we are faced with adversaries who will not shrink even from mass slaughter in the hope of overcoming us? But that they can never do. Though we may perish to the last man, we shall not falter in the sacred task that has fallen to us, we shall not betray the holy cause which we have sworn in our heart of hearts to serve to the last breath."

These few words had been spoken with sombre determination, while the face of this obscure hero was marked with such noble mysticism that I would not have been astonished to see the martyr's crown of thorns encircling his brow.

"But as you were telling us in the beginning," I replied, "since you have yourselves been forced to recognise that this open struggle, this struggle of desperate men, although certainly

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not without an intrepid greatness, is at the same time vain and foolish in its recklessness, you should renounce it for a time, fade into the shadows, prepare yourselves in silence, gather your strength, form yourselves into groups, become more and more united, so as to conquer on the auspicious day, helped by the organising intelligence, the all-powerful lever which, unlike violence, can never be defeated.

“Put no more weapons in the hands of your adversaries, be irreproachable before them, set them an example of courageous patience, of uprightness and justice; then your triumph will be near at hand, for right will be on your side, integral right, in the means as in the goal.”

He had been listening to me carefully, occasionally nodding in agreement. After a silence full of thoughts, in which we could feel brooding around him all the painful hopes, all the burning aspirations of his companions in strife:

“I am happy, Madame,” he said, turning towards me, “to see a woman concerned with such matters. Women can do so much to hasten the coming of better days! There, in Russia, their services have been invaluable to us. Without them we would never have had so much courage, energy and endurance. They move about among us, going from town to town, from group to group, uniting us to one another, comforting the disheartened, cheering the downcast, nursing the sick and everywhere bringing with them, in them, a hope, a confidence, an enthusiasm that never tire.

“So it was that a woman came to assist me in my work, when my eyes were overstrained by my long vigils spent writing by candle-light. For during the day I had to have some kind of occupation so as not to attract attention. It was only at night that I could prepare our plans, compose our propaganda leaflets and make numerous copies of them, draw up lists and do other work of the same kind. Little by little my eyes were burnt up. Now I can hardly see. So a young woman, out of devotion for the cause, became my secretary and writes to my dictation, as long

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as I wish, without ever showing the slightest trace of fatigue or boredom." And his expression softened and grew tender at the thought of this humble devotion, this proof of self-abnegation.

"She came with me to Paris and we work together every evening. It is thanks to her that I shall be able to write the pamphlet we have spoken of. You know, it is courageous to link one's destiny with a man whose life is as precarious as mine. To retain my freedom, everywhere, I must hide as if I were an outlaw."

"At least you are safe in Paris?"

"Yes and no. They are scared of us, I don't know why. They take us for dangerous anarchists, and we are watched, we are spied on almost as much as in our own country. Yet how can anyone imagine that men whose aim is to make justice triumph, even at the cost of their own blood, could fail to be grateful towards a country such as France, which has always protected the weak and upheld equity? And why should they disturb the peace of a city which is their refuge in the darkest days?"

"So you intend to remain here for some time?"

"Yes, as long as I can, as long as I am not useful to my brothers there, and can be of service to them here by bringing together all the elements we need to take up the struggle again; but this time the struggle will be as peaceful and intellectual as lies within our power."

"So you will come and see us again, won't you? Bring us your projects and the plans for your pamphlet. We shall talk about all that again in more detail."

"Yes, I shall come back, as soon as I have started my work, as soon as possible. I shall be so happy to see you again and to continue our conversation."

His kind, sad eyes looked at us full of confidence and hope, while he clasped our hands firmly in his.

And as we accompanied him to the door he turned and once more warmly shook our hands, saying in his grave voice:

"It is good to meet people one can trust, people who have

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the same ideal of justice as we have and do not look upon us as criminals or lunatics because we want to realise it. Good-bye....”

He never returned.

He excused himself in a hastily written note. Too closely watched, under suspicion, tracked down after he had changed his lodgings many times, this gentle, just man had to return to his own country, a terrible country where perhaps a tragic end awaited him....

To Know How to Suffer

IF AT any time a deep sorrow, a searing doubt or an intense pain overwhelms you and drives you to despair, there is an infallible way to regain calm and peace.

In the depths of our being there shines a light whose brilliance is equalled only by its purity; a light, a living and conscious portion of a universal godhead who animates and nourishes and illumines Matter, a powerful and unfailing guide for those who are willing to heed his law, a helper full of solace and loving forbearance towards all who aspire to see and hear and obey him. No sincere and lasting aspiration towards him can be in vain; no strong and respectful trust can be disappointed, no expectation ever deceived.

My heart has suffered and lamented, almost breaking beneath a sorrow too heavy, almost sinking beneath a pain too strong.... But I have called to thee, O divine comforter, I have prayed ardently to thee, and the splendour of thy dazzling light has appeared to me and revived me.

As the rays of thy glory penetrated and illumined all my being, I clearly perceived the path to follow, the use that can be made of suffering; I understood that the sorrow that held me in its grip was but a pale reflection of the sorrow of the earth, of this abyss of suffering and anguish.

Only those who have suffered can understand the suffering of others; understand it, commune with it and relieve it. And I understood, O divine comforter, sublime Holocaust, that in order to sustain us in all our troubles, to soothe all our pangs, thou must have known and felt all the sufferings of earth and man, all without exception.

How is it that among those who claim to be thy worshippers, some regard thee as a cruel torturer, as an inexorable judge

To Know How to Suffer

witnessing the torments that are tolerated by thee or even created by thy own will?

No, I now perceive that these sufferings come from the very imperfection of Matter which, in its disorder and crudeness, is unfit to manifest thee; and thou art the very first to suffer from it, to bewail it, thou art the first to toil and strive in thy ardent desire to change disorder into order, suffering into happiness, discord into harmony.

Suffering is not something inevitable or even desirable, but when it comes to us, how helpful it can be!

Each time we feel that our heart is breaking, a deeper door opens within us, revealing new horizons, ever richer in hidden treasures, whose golden influx brings once more a new and intenser life to the organism on the brink of destruction.

And when, by these successive descents, we reach the veil that reveals thee as it is lifted, O Lord, who can describe the intensity of Life that penetrates the whole being, the radiance of the Light that floods it, the sublimity of the Love that transforms it for ever!

1910

On Thought

(Talk given to a women's association)

SINCE we want to learn to think better in order to live better, since we want to know how to think in order to recover our place and status in life as feminine counterparts and to become in fact the helpful, inspiring and balancing elements that we are potentially, it seems indispensable to me that we should first of all enquire into what thought is.

Thought.... It is a very vast subject, the vastest of all, perhaps.... Therefore I do not intend to tell you exactly and completely what it is. But by a process of analysis, we shall try to form as precise an idea of it as it is possible for us to do.

It seems to me that we must first of all distinguish two very different kinds, or I might say qualities, of thought: thoughts in us which are the result, the fruit, as it were, of our sensations, and thoughts which, like living beings, come to us—from where?... most often we do not know—thoughts that we perceive mentally before they express themselves in our outer being as sensations.

If you have observed yourselves even a little, you must have noticed that the contact with what is not yourselves is established first of all through the medium of your senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell, etc. The impact felt in this way, whether slight or violent, pleasant or unpleasant, arouses a feeling in you—like or dislike, attraction or repulsion—which very quickly turns into an idea, an opinion you form about the object, whatever it may be, that has determined the contact.

An example: you go out and as you step out of your house you see that it is raining and at the same time you feel the damp cold seizing you; the sensation is unpleasant, you feel a dislike for the rain and inwardly, almost mechanically, you say to yourself,

On Thought

"This rain is really a nuisance, especially as I have to go out! Not to mention that I am going to get dreadfully dirty; Paris is very dirty in rainy weather, especially now that all the streets have been dug up" (and so on)....

All these and many other similar thoughts about the simple fact that it is raining come to assail your mind; and if nothing else, outwardly or inwardly, comes to attract your attention, for a long while, almost without your noticing it, your brain may produce minute, trivial thoughts about this small, insignificant sensation....

This is how most human lives are spent; this is what human beings most often call *thinking*—a mental activity that is almost mechanical, unreflecting, out of our control, a reflex. All thoughts concerning material life and its many needs are of the same quality.

Here we face the first difficulty to be overcome; if we want to be able to truly think, that is, to receive, formulate and form valid and viable thoughts, we must first of all empty our brain of all this vague and unruly mental agitation. And this is certainly not the easiest part of our task. We are dominated by this irrational cerebral activity, we do not dominate it.

Only one method is worth recommending: meditation. But as I was telling you last time, there are many ways of meditating; some are very effective, others less so.

Each one should find his own by successive trial and error. However, one thing can be recommended to everyone: reflection, that is to say, concentration, self-observation in solitude and silence, a close and strict analysis of the multitude of insignificant little thoughts which constantly assail us.

During the few moments you devote each day to this preliminary exercise of meditation, avoid, if possible, the complacent contemplation of your sensations, your feelings, your states of mind.

We all have an inexhaustible fund of self-indulgence, and very often we treat all these little inner movements with the

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greatest respect and give them an importance which they certainly do not have, even relative to our own evolution.

When one has enough self-control to be able to analyse coldly, to dissect these states of mind, to strip them of their brilliant or painful appearance, so as to perceive them as they are in all their childish insignificance, then one can profitably devote oneself to studying them. But this result can only be achieved gradually, after much reflection in a spirit of complete impartiality. I would like to make a short digression here to put you on your guard against a frequent confusion.

I have just said that we always look upon ourselves with great indulgence, and I think in fact that our defects very often appear to us to be full of charm and that we justify all our weaknesses. But to tell the truth, this is because we lack self-confidence. Does this surprise you?... Yes, I repeat, we lack confidence, not in what we are at the present moment, not in our ephemeral and ever-changing outer being — this being always finds favour in our eyes — but we lack confidence in what we can become through effort, we have no faith in the integral and profound transformation which will be the work of our true self, of the eternal, the divine who is in all beings, if we surrender like children to its supremely luminous and far-seeing guidance.

So let us not confuse complacency with confidence — and let us return to our subject.

When you are able by methodical and repeated effort to objectivise and keep at a distance all this flood of incoherent thoughts which assail us, you will notice a new phenomenon.

You will observe within yourself certain thoughts that are stronger and more tenacious than others, thoughts concerning social usages, customs, moral rules and even general laws that govern earth and man.

They are your opinions on these subjects or at least those you profess and by which you try to act.

Look at one of these ideas, the one most familiar to you, look at it very carefully, concentrate, reflect in all sincerity, if

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possible leaving aside all bias, and ask yourself why you have this opinion on that subject rather than any other.

The answer will almost invariably be the same, or nearly:

Because it is the opinion prevalent in your environment, because it is considered good form to have it and therefore saves you from as many clashes, frictions, criticisms as possible.

Or because this was the opinion of your father or mother, the opinion which moulded your childhood.

Or else because this opinion is the normal outcome of the education, religious or otherwise, you received in your youth. This thought is not your own thought.

For, to be your own thought, it would have to form part of a logical synthesis you had elaborated in the course of your existence, either by observation, experience and deduction, or by deep, abstract meditation and contemplation.

This, then, is our second discovery.

Since we have goodwill and endeavour to be integrally sincere, that is, to make our actions conform to our thoughts, we are now convinced that we act according to mental laws we receive from outside, not after having maturely considered and analysed them, not by deliberately and consciously receiving them, but because unconsciously we are subjected to them through atavism, by our upbringing and education, and above all because we are dominated by a collective suggestion which is so powerful, so overwhelming, that very few succeed in avoiding it altogether.

How far we are from the mental individuality we want to acquire!

We are products determined by all our past history, impelled by the blind and arbitrary will of our contemporaries.

It is a pitiful sight.... But let us not be disheartened; the greater the ailment and the more pressing the remedy, the more energetically we must fight back.

The method will always be the same: to reflect and reflect and reflect.

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We must take these ideas one after another and analyse them by appealing to all our common sense, all our reason, our highest sense of equity; we must weigh them in the balance of our acquired knowledge and accumulated experience, and then endeavour to reconcile them with one another, to establish harmony among them. It will often prove very difficult, for we have a regrettable tendency to let the most contradictory ideas dwell side by side in our minds.

We must put all of them in place, bring order into our inner chamber, and we must do this each day just as we tidy the rooms of our house. For I suppose that our mentality deserves at least as much care as our house.

But, once again, for this work to be truly effective, we must strive to maintain in ourselves our highest, quietest, most sincere state of mind so as to make it our own.

Let us be transparent so that the light within us may fully illumine the thoughts we want to observe, analyse, classify. Let us be impartial and courageous so as to rise above our own little preferences and petty personal conveniences. Let us look at the thoughts in themselves, for themselves, without bias.

And little by little, if we persevere in our work of classification, we shall see order and light take up their abode in our minds. But we should never forget that this order is but confusion compared with the order that we must realise in the future, that this light is but darkness compared with the light that we shall be able to receive after some time.

Life is in perpetual evolution; if we want to have a living mentality, we must progress unceasingly.

Moreover, this is only a preliminary work. We are still very far from true thought, which brings us into relation with the infinite source of knowledge.

These are only exercises for training ourselves gradually to an individualising control of our thoughts. For control of the mental activity is indispensable to one who wants to meditate.

I cannot speak to you in detail today about meditation;

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I shall only say that in order to be genuine, to serve its full purpose, meditation must be disinterested, impersonal in the integral sense of the word.

Here is a description, taken from an old Hindu text, of a typical meditation:

“The great and magnificent King ascended to the chamber of the Great Collection and, stopping at the threshold, exclaimed with intense emotion:

“‘Away! Advance no further, thoughts of lust! Away! Advance no further, thoughts of bad will! Away! Advance no further, thoughts of hate!’

“And entering the chamber, he sat upon a seat of gold. Then, having rejected all passion, all feeling contrary to righteousness, he attained the first *dhāma*, a state of well-being and joy arising from solitude, a state of reflection and seeking.

“Setting aside reflection and seeking, he attained the second *dhāma*, a state of well-being and joy arising from serenity, a state void of reflection and seeking, a state of quietude and elevation of mind.

“Ceasing to delight in joy, he remained indifferent, conscious, self-controlled, and attained the third *dhāma*, experiencing the inmost contentment proclaimed by the sages, saying, ‘One who, self-controlled, dwells in indifference, experiences an inner well-being.’

“Setting aside this well-being, rejecting pain, dead to both joy and suffering, he attained the state of most pure and perfect self-mastery and serenity which constitute the fourth *dhāma*.

“Then the great and magnificent King left the chamber of the Great Collection and, entering the golden chamber, sat upon a seat of silver. He beheld the world in a thought of love and his love went forth to the four regions in turn; and then with his heart full of love, with a love growing without end or limit, he enfolded the vast world, in its entirety, to its very ends.

“He beheld the world in a thought of pity and his pity went forth to the four regions in turn; and then with his heart full of

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pity, with a pity growing without end or limit, he enfolded the vast world, in its entirety, to its very ends.

“He beheld the world in a thought of sympathy and his sympathy went forth to the four regions in turn; and then with his heart full of sympathy, with a sympathy growing without end or limit, he enfolded the vast world, in its entirety, to its very ends.

“He beheld the world in a thought of serenity and his serenity went forth to the four regions in turn; and then with his heart full of serenity, with a serenity growing without end or limit, he enfolded the vast world, in its entirety, to its very ends.”¹

One who strives in sincere quest for truth, who is ready, if necessary, to sacrifice all he had thought until then to be true, in order to draw ever nearer to the integral truth that can be no other than the progressive knowledge of the whole universe in its infinite progression, enters gradually into relation with great masses of deeper, completer and more luminous thoughts.

After much meditation and contemplation, he comes into direct contact with the great universal current of pure intellectual force, and thenceforth no knowledge can be veiled from him.

From that moment serenity — mental peace — is his portion. In all beliefs, in all human knowledge, in all religious teachings, which sometimes appear so contradictory, he perceives the deep truth which nothing can now conceal from his eyes.

Even errors and ignorance no longer disturb him, for, as an unknown master says:

“He who walks in the Truth is not troubled by any error, for he knows that error is the first effort of life towards truth.”

But to attain this state of perfect serenity is to attain to the summit of thought.

Without hoping to reach that point at once, we can strive to acquire an individual thought that is both original and as

¹ See Appendix page 29.

On Thought

equitable as possible. Thus we shall have become minds of some consequence, with the right to bring to society the precious contribution of their highest intuitions.

I have several times spoken to you this evening of thought as a living and active being. This calls for an explanation. At our next meeting, I shall give you what I might call the chemical or inner structure of thought, its composition, how it is formed, how it lives, acts and transforms.

And now allow me, before concluding, to express a wish.

I would like us to make the resolution to raise ourselves each day, in all sincerity and goodwill, in an ardent aspiration towards the Sun of Truth, towards the Supreme Light, the source and intellectual life of the universe, so that it may pervade us entirely and illumine with its great brilliance our minds and hearts, all our thoughts and our actions.

Then we shall acquire the right and the privilege of following the counsel of the great initiate of the past, who tells us:

“With your hearts overflowing with compassion, go forth into this world torn by pain, be instructors, and wherever the darkness of ignorance rules, there light a torch.”

15 December 1911

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APPENDIX ²

LOVE: For the Being, because he is the Being independent of all contingencies and individuals.

PITY: One no longer feels suffering for oneself, but only for others.

SYMPATHY: To suffer with the world, to share suffering (to suffer with).

SERENITY: Perfect knowledge of the state in which all suffering disappears (individual experience).

*
* * *

LOVE: For the being in his entirety without distinction of good or evil, light or darkness.

PITY: For all weakness and all bad will.

SYMPATHY: Towards effort, encouragement, collaboration.

SERENITY: Hope in the ending of suffering (knowing one's individual experience, one logically infers that it can be generalised and become the experience of all).

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* * *

LOVE: Without distinction of past, present or future.

PITY: For the life of pain.

SYMPATHY: Understanding of everything, even of evil.

SERENITY: Certitude of the final victory.

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* * *

² These notes, found among the Mother's manuscripts, seem to relate to the typal meditation described on pp. 27-28.

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Three active attitudes, one passive attitude; three external relationships with the all, one inner relationship. A state to be maintained throughout the whole meditation: Serenity in love, sympathy and pity.

On Dreams

AT FIRST sight one might think that the subject of dreams is an altogether secondary one; this activity generally seems to have very little importance compared to the activity of our waking state.

However, if we examine the question a little more closely, we shall see that this is not at all the case.

To begin with, we should remember that more than one third of our existence is spent in sleeping and that, consequently, the time devoted to physical sleep well deserves our attention.

I say physical sleep, for it would be wrong to think that our whole being sleeps when our bodies are asleep.

A study based on certain experiments conducted according to the strictest scientific methods, was published some twenty years ago by Dr. Vaschid in a book entitled "Sleep and Dreams".

The doctors who carried out these experiments were led to the conclusion that mental activity never really ceases; and it is this activity which is more or less confusedly transcribed in our brains by what we know as dreams. Thus, whether we are aware of it or not, we always dream.

Certainly, it is possible to suppress this activity completely and to have a total, dreamless sleep; but to be able in this way to immerse our mental being in a repose similar to the repose of our physical being, we must have achieved a perfect control over it, and this is not an easy thing to do.

In most cases, this activity is even heightened, because, as the body is asleep, the internal faculties are no longer focussed on or used by the physical life.

It is sometimes said that in a man's sleep his true nature is revealed.

Indeed, it often happens that the sensory being, which throughout the whole day has been subjected to the control of

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the active will, reacts all the more violently during the night when this constraint is no longer effective.

All the desires that have been repressed without being dissolved—and this dissociation can only be obtained after much sound and wide-ranging analysis—seek satisfaction while the will is dormant.

And since desires are true dynamic centres of formation, they tend to organise, within and around us, the combination of circumstances that is most favourable to their satisfaction.

In this way the fruit of many efforts made by our conscious thought during the day can be destroyed in a few hours at night.

This is one of the main causes of the resistances which our will for progress often encounters within us, of the difficulties which sometimes appear insurmountable to us and which we are unable to explain, because our goodwill seems so integral to us.

We must therefore learn to know our dreams, and first of all to distinguish between them, for they are very varied in nature and quality. In the course of one night we may often have several dreams which belong to different categories, depending on the depth of our sleep.

As a general rule, each individual has a period of the night that is more favourable for dreams, during which his activity is more fertile, more intellectual, and the mental circumstances of the environment in which he moves are more interesting.

The great majority of dreams have no other value than that of a purely mechanical and uncontrolled activity of the physical brain, in which certain cells continue to function during sleep as generators of sensory images and impressions conforming to the pictures received from outside.

These dreams are nearly always caused by purely physical circumstances—state of health, digestion, position in bed, etc.

With a little self-observation and a few precautions, it is easy to avoid this type of dream, which is as useless as it is tiring, by eliminating its physical causes.

There are also other dreams which are nothing but futile

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manifestations of the erratic activities of certain mental faculties, which associate ideas, conversations and memories that come together at random.

Such dreams are already more significant, for these erratic activities reveal to us the confusion that prevails in our mental being as soon as it is no longer subject to the control of our will, and show us that this being is still not organised or ordered within us, that it is not mature enough to have an autonomous life.

Almost the same in form to these, but more important in their consequences, are the dreams which I mentioned just now, those which arise from the inner being seeking revenge when it is freed for a moment from the constraint that we impose upon it. These dreams often enable us to perceive tendencies, inclinations, impulses, desires of which we were not conscious so long as our will to realise our ideal kept them concealed in some obscure recess of our being.

You will easily understand that rather than letting them live on unknown to us, it is better to bring them boldly and courageously to the light, so as to force them to leave us for ever.

We should therefore observe our dreams attentively; they are often useful instructors who can give us a powerful help on our way towards self-conquest.

No one knows himself well who does not know the unconfined activities of his nights, and no man can call himself his own master unless he has the perfect consciousness and mastery of the numerous actions he performs during his physical sleep.

But dreams are not merely the malignant informers of our weaknesses or the malicious destroyers of our daily effort for progress.

Although there are dreams which we should contend with or transform, there are others which should on the contrary be cultivated as precious auxiliaries in our work within and around us.

There can be no doubt that from many points of view our subconscious knows more than our habitual consciousness.

On Dreams

Who has not had the experience of a metaphysical, moral or practical problem with which we grapple in vain in the evening, and whose solution, impossible to find then, appears clearly and accurately in the morning on waking?

The mental enquiry had been going on throughout the period of sleep and the internal faculties, freed from all material activity, were able to concentrate solely on the subject of their interest.

Very often, the work itself remains unconscious; only the result is perceived.

But at other times, by means of a dream, we participate in all the mental activity in its smallest details. Only the cerebral transcription of this activity is often so childish that we normally pay no attention to it.

From this point of view, it is interesting to note that there is nearly always a considerable disparity between what our mental activity is in fact and the way in which we perceive it, and especially the way in which we remain conscious of it. In its own medium, this activity produces vibrations which are transmitted by repercussion to the cellular system of our organic brain, but in our sleeping brain, the subtle vibrations of the suprasensible domain can affect only a very limited number of cells; the inertia of most of the organic supports of the cerebral phenomenon reduces the number of active elements, impoverishes the mental synthesis and makes it unfit to transcribe the activity of the internal states, except into images which are most often vague and inadequate.

To make this disparity more tangible to you, I shall give you an example, one among many, which has come to my knowledge.

Recently, a writer was preoccupied with a half-written chapter which he was unable to finish.

His mind, particularly interested in this work of composition, continued the chapter during the night, and the more it phrased and rephrased the ideas making up the various

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paragraphs, it became aware that these ideas were not expressed in the most rational order and that the paragraphs had to be rearranged.

All this work was transcribed in the consciousness of our writer in the following dream: he was in his study with several armchairs which he had just brought there and was arranging and rearranging them in the room, until he found the most suitable place for each one.

In the knowledge that certain people may have had of such inadequate transcriptions, we can find the origin of the popular beliefs, the "dream-books" which are the delight of so many simple souls.

But it is easy to understand that this clumsy transcription has a particular form for each individual; each one makes his own distortion.

Consequently, an excessive generalisation of certain interpretations which may have been quite correct for the person applying them to his own case, merely gives rise to vulgar and foolish superstitions.

It is as if the writer we have just mentioned were to impart as a great secret to his friends and acquaintances that every time they saw themselves arranging armchairs in a dream, it was a sign that the next day they would at some moment reverse the order of the paragraphs in a book.

The cerebral transcription of the activities of the night is sometimes warped to such an extent that phenomena are perceived as the opposite of what they really are.

For example, when you have a bad thought against someone and when this bad thought, left to itself, gathers full force during the night, you dream that the person in question is beating you, is doing you some bad turn, or even wounding you or trying to kill you.

Moreover, as a general rule, we should take great intellectual precautions before interpreting a dream, and above all, we should review exhaustively all the subjective explanations before

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we assign to it the value of an objective reality.

However, especially in those who have unlearnt the habit of always directing their thoughts towards themselves, there are cases where we can observe events outside ourselves, events which are not the reflection of our personal mental constructions. And if we know how to translate into intellectual language the more or less inadequate images into which the brain has translated these events, we can learn many things that our too limited physical faculties do not allow us to perceive.

Some people, by a special culture and training, are even able to become and remain conscious of the deeper activities of their inner being, independently of their own cerebral transcription, and thus to evoke them and know them in the waking state with the full range of their faculties.

Many interesting observations could be made on this topic, but perhaps it is better to allow each one to experience for himself the many possibilities which lie within man's reach in a field of activity which he too often leaves undeveloped.

Uncultivated lands produce weeds. We do not want any weeds in ourselves, so let us cultivate the vast field of our nights.

You must not think that this can be in the least harmful to the depth of your sleep and the efficacy of a repose which is not only indispensable but beneficial. On the contrary, there are many people whose nights are more tiring than their days, for reasons which often elude them; they should become conscious of these reasons so that their will can begin to act on them and remove their effects, that is, to put a stop to these activities which in such cases are nearly always useless and even harmful.

If our night has enabled us to gain some new knowledge — the solution of a problem, a contact of our inner being with some centre of life or light, or even the accomplishment of some useful task — we shall always wake up with a feeling of strength and well-being.

The hours that are wasted in doing nothing good or useful are the most tiring.

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But how can we cultivate this field of action, how can we become conscious of our nocturnal activities?

We shall find the way to do so very broadly outlined in a passage from a book devoted to the study of our inner life:

"The same discipline of concentration which enables man not to remain a stranger to the inner activities of the waking state also provides him with a way to escape from his ignorance of the even richer activities of the various states of sleep.

"These activities usually leave behind them only a few rare and confused memories.

"However, it is noteworthy that a chance circumstance, an impression received, a word pronounced, is sometimes enough to bring suddenly back to the consciousness a whole long dream of which we had no recollection a moment before.

"We can infer from this simple fact that the conscious activity has taken only a very minor part in the phenomena of the sleeping state, since in the normal state of things they would have remained lost for ever in the subconscious memory.

"In this domain, the practice of concentration should therefore focus both on the special faculty of memory and on the participation of the consciousness in the activities of the sleeping state.

"Someone who wishes to recover the memory of a forgotten dream should first of all focus his attention on the vague impressions which the dream may have left behind it and in this way follow its indistinct trace as far as possible.

"This regular exercise will enable him to go further every day towards the obscure retreat of the subconscious where these forgotten phenomena of sleep take refuge, and thus trace out an easily followed path between these two domains of consciousness.

"One useful remark to be made from this point of view is that the absence of memories is very often due to the abruptness of the return to the waking consciousness. (The waking should not be too abrupt.)

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“As a matter of fact, at that moment, the new activities breaking into the field of consciousness force out everything that is unfamiliar to them and add to the difficulty of the subsequent work of concentration needed to recall the things which have been expelled in this way. On the other hand, this work will be made easier whenever certain mental and even physical precautions are observed for a quiet transition from one state to another. (If possible, do not make any abrupt movements in bed at the time of waking.)

“However, this special training of the faculty of memory can only transform into conscious phenomena in the waking state the phenomena which have already been made conscious, even if only fleetingly, during sleep. For where there is no consciousness, there can be no memory.

“Consequently, in the second place, we must work to extend the participation of the consciousness to a greater number of activities in the sleeping state.

“The daily habit of reviewing with interest the various dreams of the night, whose traces will gradually become transformed into precise memories, as well as the habit of noting them down on waking, will be found most helpful from this point of view.

“By these habits, the mental faculties will be led to adapt their mechanism to phenomena of this kind and to exercise on them their attention, their curiosity and power of analysis.

“A kind of intellectualisation of our dreams will then occur, with the double result of making the conscious activities intervene more and more closely in the play of the formerly disorganised activities of the sleeping state, and of progressively increasing their scope by making them more and more rational and instructive.

“Dreams will then take on the nature of precise visions and sometimes of revelations, and useful knowledge of a whole important order of things will be gained.”

25 March 1912

The Supreme Discovery

IF WE want to progress integrally, we must build within our conscious being a strong and pure mental synthesis which can serve us as a protection against temptations from outside, as a landmark to prevent us from going astray, as a beacon to light our way across the moving ocean of life.

Each individual should build up this mental synthesis according to his own tendencies and affinities and aspirations. But if we want it to be truly living and luminous, it must be centred on the idea that is the intellectual representation symbolising That which is at the centre of our being, That which is our life and our light.

This idea, expressed in sublime words, has been taught in various forms by all the great Instructors in all lands and all ages.

The Self of each one and the great universal Self are one. Since all that exists from all eternity in its essence and principle, why make a distinction between the being and its origin, between ourselves and what we place at the beginning?

The ancient traditions rightly said:

“Our origin and ourselves, our God and ourselves are one.”

And this oneness should not be understood merely as a more or less close and intimate relationship of union, but as a true identity.

Thus, when a man who seeks the Divine attempts to reascend by degrees towards the inaccessible, he forgets that all his knowledge and all his intuition cannot take him one step forward in this infinite; neither does he know that what he wants to attain, what he believes to be so far from him, is within him.

For how could he know anything of the origin until he becomes conscious of this origin in himself?

It is by understanding himself, by learning to know himself,

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that he can make the supreme discovery and cry out in wonder like the patriarch in the Bible, “The house of God is here and I knew it not.”

That is why we must express that sublime thought, creatrix of the material worlds, and make known to all the word that fills the heavens and the earth, “I am in all things and all beings.”

When all shall know this, the promised day of great transfigurations will be at hand. When in each atom of Matter men shall recognise the indwelling thought of God, when in each living creature they shall perceive some hint of a gesture of God, when each man can see God in his brother, then dawn will break, dispelling the darkness, the falsehood, the ignorance, the error and suffering that weigh upon all Nature. For, “all Nature suffers and laments as she awaits the revelation of the Sons of God.”

This indeed is the central thought epitomising all others, the thought which should be ever present to our remembrance as the sun that illumines all life.

That is why I remind you of it today. For if we follow our path bearing this thought in our hearts like the rarest jewel, the most precious treasure, if we allow it to do its work of illumination and transfiguration within us, we shall know that it lives in the centre of all beings and all things, and in it we shall feel the marvellous oneness of the universe.

Then we shall understand the vanity and childishness of our meagre satisfactions, our foolish quarrels, our petty passions, our blind indignations. We shall see the dissolution of our little faults, the crumbling of the last entrenchments of our limited personality and our obtuse egoism. We shall feel ourselves being swept along by this sublime current of true spirituality which will deliver us from our narrow limits and bounds.

The individual Self and the universal Self are one; in every world, in every being, in every thing, in every atom is the Divine Presence, and man’s mission is to manifest it.

In order to do that, he must become conscious of this Divine Presence within him. Some individuals must undergo a real

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apprenticeship in order to achieve this: their egoistic being is too all-absorbing, too rigid, too conservative, and their struggles against it are long and painful. Others, on the contrary, who are more impersonal, more plastic, more spiritualised, come easily into contact with the inexhaustible divine source of their being. But let us not forget that they too should devote themselves daily, constantly, to a methodical effort of adaptation and transformation, so that nothing within them may ever again obscure the radiance of that pure light.

But how greatly the standpoint changes once we attain this deeper consciousness! How understanding widens, how compassion grows!

On this a sage has said:

“I would like each one of us to come to the point where he perceives the inner God who dwells even in the vilest of human beings; instead of condemning him we would say, ‘Arise, O resplendent Being, thou who art ever pure, who knowest neither birth nor death; arise, Almighty One, and manifest thy nature.’”

Let us live by this beautiful utterance and we shall see everything around us transformed as if by miracle.

This is the attitude of true, conscious and discerning love, the love which knows how to see behind appearances, understand in spite of words, and which, amid all obstacles, is in constant communion with the depths.

What value have our impulses and our desires, our anguish and our violence, our sufferings and our struggles, all these inner vicissitudes unduly dramatised by our unruly imagination — what value do they have before this great, this sublime and divine love bending over us from the innermost depths of our being, bearing with our weaknesses, rectifying our errors, healing our wounds, bathing our whole being with its regenerating streams?

For the inner Godhead never imposes herself, she neither demands nor threatens; she offers and gives herself, conceals and forgets herself in the heart of all beings and things; she

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never accuses, she neither judges nor curses nor condemns, but works unceasingly to perfect without constraint, to mend without reproach, to encourage without impatience, to enrich each one with all the wealth he can receive; she is the mother whose love bears fruit and nourishes, guards and protects, counsels and consoles; because she understands everything, she can endure everything, excuse and pardon everything, hope and prepare for everything; bearing everything within herself, she owns nothing that does not belong to all, and because she reigns over all, she is the servant of all; that is why all, great and small, who want to be kings with her and gods in her, become, like her, not despots but servitors among their brethren.

How beautiful is this humble role of servant, the role of all who have been revealers and heralds of the God who is within all, of the Divine Love that animates all things....

And until we can follow their example and become true servants even as they, let us allow ourselves to be penetrated and transformed by this Divine Love; let us offer Him, without reserve, this marvellous instrument, our physical organism. He shall make it yield its utmost on every plane of activity.

To achieve this total self-consecration, all means are good, all methods have their value. The one thing needful is to persevere in our will to attain this goal. For then everything we study, every action we perform, every human being we meet, all come to bring us an indication, a help, a light to guide us on the path.

Before I close, I shall add a few pages for those who have already made apparently fruitless efforts, for those who have encountered the pitfalls on the way and seen the measure of their weakness, for those who are in danger of losing their self-confidence and courage. These pages, intended to rekindle hope in the hearts of those who suffer, were written by a spiritual worker at a time when ordeals of every kind were sweeping down on him like purifying flames.

You who are weary, downcast and bruised, you who fall,

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who think perhaps that you are defeated, hear the voice of a friend. He knows your sorrows, he has shared them, he has suffered like you from the ills of the earth; like you he has crossed many deserts under the burden of the day, he has known thirst and hunger, solitude and abandonment, and the cruellest of all wants, the destitution of the heart. Alas! he has known too the hours of doubt, the errors, the faults, the failings, every weakness.

But he tells you: Courage! Hearken to the lesson that the rising sun brings to the earth with its first rays each morning. It is a lesson of hope, a message of solace.

You who weep, who suffer and tremble, who dare not expect an end to your ills, an issue to your pangs, behold: there is no night without dawn and the day is about to break when darkness is thickest; there is no mist that the sun does not dispel, no cloud that it does not gild, no tear that it will not dry one day, no storm that is not followed by its shining triumphant bow; there is no snow that it does not melt, nor winter that it does not change into radiant spring.

And for you too, there is no affliction which does not bring its measure of glory, no distress which cannot be transformed into joy, nor defeat into victory, nor downfall into higher ascension, nor solitude into radiating centre of life, nor discord into harmony — sometimes it is a misunderstanding between two minds that compels two hearts to open to mutual communion; lastly, there is no infinite weakness that cannot be changed into strength. And it is even in supreme weakness that almighty chooses to reveal itself!

Listen, my little child, you who today feel so broken, so fallen perhaps, who have nothing left, nothing to cover your misery and foster your pride: never before have you been so great! How close to the summits is he who awakens in the depths, for the deeper the abyss, the more the heights reveal themselves!

Do you not know this, that the most sublime forces of

The Supreme Discovery

the vasts seek to array themselves in the most opaque veils of Matter? Oh, the sublime nuptials of sovereign love with the obscurest plasticities, of the shadow's yearning with the most royal light!

If ordeal or fault has cast you down, if you have sunk into the nether depths of suffering, do not grieve — for there indeed the divine love and the supreme blessing can reach you! Because you have passed through the crucible of purifying sorrows, the glorious ascents are yours.

You are in the wilderness: then listen to the voices of the silence. The clamour of flattering words and outer applause has gladdened your ears, but the voices of the silence will gladden your soul and awaken within you the echo of the depths, the chant of divine harmonies!

You are walking in the depths of night: then gather the priceless treasures of the night. In bright sunshine, the ways of intelligence are lit, but in the white luminosities of the night lie the hidden paths of perfection, the secret of spiritual riches.

You are being stripped of everything: that is the way towards plenitude. When you have nothing left, everything will be given to you. Because for those who are sincere and true, from the worst always comes the best.

Every grain that is sown in the earth produces a thousand. Every wing-beat of sorrow can be a soaring towards glory.

And when the adversary pursues man relentlessly, everything he does to destroy him only makes him greater.

Hear the story of the worlds, look: the great enemy seems to triumph. He casts the beings of light into the night, and the night is filled with stars. He rages against the cosmic working, he assails the integrity of the empire of the sphere, shatters its harmony, divides and subdivides it, scatters its dust to the four winds of infinity, and lo! the dust is changed into a golden seed, fertilising the infinite and peopling it with worlds which now gravitate around their eternal centre in the larger orbit of space — so that even division creates a richer and deeper unity, and

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by multiplying the surfaces of the material universe, enlarges the empire that it set out to destroy.

Beautiful indeed was the song of the primordial sphere cradled in the bosom of immensity, but how much more beautiful and triumphant is the symphony of the constellations, the music of the spheres, the immense choir that fills the heavens with an eternal hymn of victory!

Hear again: no state was ever more precarious than that of man when he was separated on earth from his divine origin. Above him stretched the hostile borders of the usurper, and at his horizon's gates watched jailers armed with flaming swords. Then, since he could climb no more to the source of life, the source arose within him; since he could no more receive the light from above, the light shone forth at the very centre of his being; since he could commune no more with the transcendent love, that love offered itself in a holocaust and chose each terrestrial being, each human self as its dwelling-place and sanctuary.

That is how, in this despised and desolate but fruitful and blessed Matter, each atom contains a divine thought, each being carries within him the Divine Inhabitant. And if no being in all the universe is as frail as man, neither is any as divine as he!

In truth, in truth, in humiliation lies the cradle of glory!

28 April 1912

Part 2

MEETINGS

In 1912 a small group of seekers met regularly with the aim of gaining self-knowledge and self-mastery.

At the end of each session, a general question was set, which each member was to answer individually. These answers were read out at the next meeting. Then, to close the session, a small essay was read out. Here are the essays.

7 May 1912

What is the most useful work to be done at the present moment?

The general aim to be attained is the advent of a progressing universal harmony.

The means for attaining this aim, in regard to the earth, is the realisation of human unity through the awakening in all and the manifestation by all of the inner Divinity which is One.

In other words,—to create unity by founding the Kingdom of God which is within us all.

This, therefore, is the most useful work to be done:

(1) For each individually, to be conscious in himself of the Divine Presence and to identify himself with it.

(2) To individualise the states of being that were never till now conscious in man and, by that, to put the earth in connection with one or more of the fountains of universal force that are still sealed to it.

(3) To speak again to the world the eternal word under a new form adapted to its present mentality.

It will be the synthesis of all human knowledge.

(4) Collectively, to establish an ideal society in a propitious spot for the flowering of the new race, the race of the Sons of God.

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The terrestrial transformation and harmonisation can be brought about by two processes which, though opposite in appearance, must combine—must act upon each other and complete each other:

(1) Individual transformation, an inner development leading to the union with the Divine Presence.

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(2) Social transformation, the establishment of an environment favourable to the flowering and growth of the individual.

Since the environment reacts upon the individual and, on the other hand, the value of the environment depends upon the value of the individual, the two works should proceed side by side. But this can be done only through division of labour, and that necessitates the formation of a group, hierarchised, if possible.

The action of the members of the group should be threefold:

(1) To realise in oneself the ideal to be attained: to become a perfect earthly representative of the first manifestation of the Unthinkable in all its modes, attributes and qualities.

(2) To preach this ideal by word, but, above all, by example, so as to find out all those who are ready to realise it in their turn and to become also announcers of liberation.

(3) To found a typic society or reorganise those that already exist.

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For each individual also there is a twofold labour to be done, simultaneously, each side of it helping and completing the other:

(1) An inner development, a progressive union with the Divine Light, sole condition in which man can be always in harmony with the great stream of universal life.

(2) An external action which everyone has to choose according to his capacities and personal preferences. He must find his own place, the place which he alone can occupy in the general concert, and he must give himself entirely to it, not forgetting that he is playing only one note in the terrestrial symphony and yet his note is indispensable to the harmony of the whole, and its value depends upon its justness.

14 May 1912

What is my place in the universal work?

We all have a role to fulfil, a work to accomplish, a place which we alone can occupy.

But since this work is the expression, the outer manifestation of the inmost depth of our being, we can become conscious of its definitive form only when we become conscious of this depth within ourselves.

This is what sometimes happens in cases of true conversion.

The moment we perceive the transfiguring light and give ourselves to it without reserve, we can suddenly and precisely become aware of what we are made for, of the purpose of our existence on earth.

But this enlightenment is exceptional. It is brought about within us by a whole series of efforts and inner attitudes. And one of the essential conditions if we want to achieve and maintain within ourselves these attitudes, these soul-states, is to devote part of our time each day to some impersonal action; every day, we must do something useful for others.

Until we know *the* essential thing we are intended to do, we must therefore find a temporary occupation which will be the best possible manifestation of our present capacities and our goodwill.

Then we shall give ourselves to this occupation with conscientiousness and perseverance, knowing that it may well be only a stage and that with the progress of our ideal and our energies, we shall certainly one day be led to see more clearly the work we must accomplish. To the extent that we lose the habit of referring everything to ourselves and learn more and more to give ourselves more completely, with greater love, to earth and

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men, we shall see our horizons widen and our duties become more numerous and clear.

We shall find that our action follows a general line of progression determined by our own particular temperament.

Indeed, the successive occupations we shall hold before we become conscious of the definitive form of our action will always point in the same direction, be of the same type and mode, which is the spontaneous expression of our character, our nature, our own characteristic vibration.

The discovery of this tendency, this particular orientation, should come about quite naturally; it is a matter of taste and free choice, beyond all outer selfish considerations.

People are often blamed for choosing an action for themselves which does not correspond to their abilities. There is a slight confusion here.

Those who freely set out to accomplish their own favourite work cannot, in my opinion, be on the wrong track; this work must surely be the expression of their own particular tendency. But their mistake lies in wanting to accomplish this work all at once in its entirety, in its integrality, in depth and above all on the surface, forgetting that the very conception of the work is imperfect as they are imperfect and that to be wise, they should add to the knowledge of what they *wish* to do the more immediate and practical knowledge of what they are *capable* of doing at the present moment.

By taking both these factors into account, they can employ themselves with a minimum waste of time and energy.

But few people act with so much insight and wisdom. And it very often happens that one who is seeking his way falls into one of these two possible errors:

Either he takes his desires for realities, that is, he overestimates his present strength and capacity and imagines that he is capable of immediately assuming a place and a role which he can honourably fulfil only after many years of methodical and persevering effort.

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Or he underestimates his latent powers and deliberately confines himself, in spite of his deeper aspirations, to a task which is far beneath his abilities and which will gradually extinguish within him the light that could have shone for others.

It seems difficult at first to steer clear of these pitfalls and find the balanced way, the middle way.

But we have a sure pointer to guide us.

Above all, whatever we undertake should not be done for the purpose of self-assertion. If we are attached to fame and glory, to the esteem of our peers, we are soon led to make concessions to them; and if we seek any opportunity to admire ourselves, it becomes easy to make ourselves out to be what we are not, and nothing more obscures the ideal within us.

We should never tell ourselves, openly or indirectly, "I want to be great, what vocation can I find for myself in order to become great?"

On the contrary, we should tell ourselves, "There must certainly be something I can do better than anyone else, since each one of us is a special mode of manifestation of the divine power which, in its essence, is one in all. However humble and modest it may be, this is precisely the thing to which I should devote myself, and in order to find it, I shall observe and analyse my tastes, tendencies and preferences, and I shall do it without pride or excessive humility, whatever others may think I shall do it just as I breathe, just as the flower smells sweet, quite simply, quite naturally, because I cannot do otherwise."

As soon as we have abolished within us, even for a moment, all egoistic desires, all personal and selfish aims, we can surrender to this inner spontaneity, this deep inspiration which will enable us to commune with the living and progressive forces of the universe.

The conception of our work will inevitably grow more perfect as we grow more perfect ourselves; and to realise this growing perfection, no effort to exceed ourselves should be

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neglected, but the work we perform must become always more and more joyful and spontaneous, like water welling from a pure spring.

21 May 1912

What is the greatest obstacle in ourselves to our consecration to impersonal work?

Regarded from the most general point of view, this obstacle is indistinguishable from the very reason for the work to be accomplished: it is the present state of imperfection of physical Matter.

Since we are made up of an imperfect substance, we cannot but share in this imperfection.

Therefore, whatever degree of perfection, consciousness or knowledge is possible to our inmost being, the very fact that it incarnates in a physical body gives rise to obstacles to the purity of its manifestation; and on the other hand, the aim of its incarnation is victory over these obstacles, the transformation of Matter. We must therefore not be surprised or saddened if we encounter obstacles within ourselves, for every single being on earth has difficulties to overcome.

The cause of this imperfection may become apparent to us from two points of view, one general, the other individual.

From the general point of view, the imperfection of Matter comes from its lack of receptivity to the more subtle forces which are to be manifested through it. But this lack of receptivity itself has many causes, and to explain them would lead us too far away from the heart of our subject. Besides, I think that, in the last analysis, all difficulties lie in the illusion of personality, that is, the illusion that one thing can be distinct from the whole.

To avoid speculating on the necessity of this illusion for the very existence of the universe as we know it, I shall consider the question solely from the terrestrial and human angle.

This illusion of a self separate from the whole brings about two tendencies within ourselves.

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The first comes from an unconscious need for identification with the whole. But by the very fact of the illusion of personality, each one conceives this identification only as an absorption into himself and seeks more or less to be the centre of this whole. As a result, in proportion to his intellectual or physical strength, each one attempts to draw to himself everything he is conscious of in order to continually increase his personality.

This is the outcome of a desire which is justified in essence — to become conscious of everything — but ignorant in expression, for if a way to become conscious of everything does exist, it certainly does not lie in trying to draw everything to oneself, which is absurd and unrealisable, but in identifying one's consciousness with the consciousness of the whole, which demands the very opposite action and attitude.

The second tendency, which is in fact a normal consequence of the first, is an excessively conservative spirit, a fixity of the whole nature — intellectual, moral and physical — which makes it impossible for us to transform ourselves as rapidly as we should in order to be always in harmony with the law of universal progress.

It is as if the individual were afraid of not being different enough from others if he encouraged too free and large an exchange with the whole.

Moreover, this fixity comes from the desire to appropriate and the error of believing that we can own something in the universe. We think that the elements we are made of are our own. Consciously or unconsciously, we want to hold on to them for ourselves while at the same time we are quite ready to add to them by drawing other elements to ourselves; but we forget that since there is no real separation, we can receive nothing if we do not give.

We must be a link in the chain: the link does not grow bigger at the expense of its neighbours. But when it faithfully transmits the current it has received, it will receive another, and the more complete and swift its transmission, the more it will

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be brought into contact with a great number of forces or things for it to use or manifest. And so, little by little, by taking and keeping nothing for itself, it can become aware of everything by communing with everything.

Foreseeing the objections which could be raised, I shall add this:

When I speak of the illusion of personality, I am not denying that each one has a special mode of manifestation. Differentiation does not mean division.

Why should there be so many countless links in the chain if each one did not have its own function?

And here another comparison is needed to complete the first, for any comparison is necessarily incomplete.

If we consider ourselves as cells of an immense living organism, we shall immediately understand that a cell, which is dependent for its own life on the life of the whole and can separate itself from it only at the risk of destruction, does in fact have its own special part to play in the whole.

But this role is precisely what is most profoundly spontaneous in our being; no egoistic assertion of our personality is needed to discover it. On the contrary, the more fully we give ourselves to an impersonal action, the more this role will gain in strength and clarity within us. But this role is precisely what constitutes our true individuality, since it is our own special way of manifesting the Divine Essence, which is one in everything and in all.

28 May 1912

What is the psychological difficulty which I can best study by experience?

In each one of us there is a difficulty which is more central than all the others; it is the one which, relative to the part we have to play in the world, is like the shadow of that light, a shadow which gradually dissolves, fades more and more as the light becomes more intense, more brilliant, more powerful and extends to the whole being.

This difficulty, which is particular to each one, seems to me to be the one which deserves all our attention and effort, for if we know how to observe ourselves, we shall see that it is the source of all the others which may obstruct our way.

So this evening, I shall make a brief survey of a difficulty of this kind.

Some people have an excessive sensitivity, which becomes most acute when it does not manifest itself outwardly. This sensitivity is of an affective, emotional kind.

It usually comes from a supra-nervous substance which is highly intellectualised but not spiritualised enough for its degree of intellectualisation.

It is a stage of evolution in which the being is ready for self-giving, for he is conscious of himself; but, as a result of the work of individualisation, of intellectualisation he has undergone, he has acquired the habit of considering everything in relation to himself and has carried the illusion of personality to its utmost limit.

Thus it is sometimes very difficult for him not to watch himself acting, feeling and thinking, and this results in a lack of spontaneity which verges on insincerity.

The being takes pleasure in his extreme sensitivity; he is

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a delicate instrument which responds marvellously to the least vibration, and so, instead of exteriorising himself and forgetting his own self as he should, he withdraws into himself, observes and analyses and almost contemplates himself.

Thus cultivated, the emotional sensitivity goes on increasing, sharpening and refining itself. And since in life opportunities for suffering are more frequent than opportunities for joy, the need to experience and study these subtle movements of feeling develops an inclination, a taste for suffering, a true mystical aberration which is nothing but self-seeking through suffering, a refined but very pernicious form of egoism.

The practical results of this need to suffer are altogether disastrous if you add to it the intuitive but still inaccurate perception that the work you have to accomplish, your purpose in life, is to draw towards yourself, to take upon yourself, the suffering of others and change it into harmony.

As a matter of fact, on one hand this knowledge is incomplete because you do not know that the only way to relieve others, to eliminate a little suffering in this world, is not to allow any sensitivity, however painful it may seem, to arouse suffering in yourself or to disturb your peace and serenity. On the other hand the idea of the work to be accomplished is itself warped by the illusion of personality. The correct idea is not to draw all suffering to yourself, which is unrealisable, but to identify yourself with all suffering, in all others, to become in it and in them a seed of light and love which will give birth to a deep understanding, to hope, trust and peace.

Until this is well understood, the taste for sacrifice rises in the being; and each time an opportunity for it appears, since you are not *disinterested* in this matter, since you *desire* this sacrifice, it becomes something sentimental and irrational and results in absurd errors which sometimes have disastrous consequences. Even if you are in the habit of reflecting before acting, the reflections preceding the act will necessarily be biased, since they are warped by the taste for suffering, by the

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desire to have an opportunity to impose a painful sacrifice on yourself.

Thus, consciously or not, instead of sacrificing yourself for the good of others, you sacrifice yourself for the pleasure of it, which is perfectly absurd and of no benefit to anyone.

No action should be deemed good, no action should be undertaken until we know its immediate and, if possible, its distant consequences, and until it appears that they must in the end add, however little, to earthly happiness. But to be able to give a sound judgment on the matter, this judgment must in no way be disturbed by any personal preference, and this implies self-detachment.

Not the detachment which is equivalent to the annihilation of the capacity to feel, but the detachment which brings about the abolition of the capacity to suffer.

By this you should understand that for the time being I am excluding insensitive people, those who do not suffer because the substance they are made of is still too unrefined, too crude to feel, those who are not even ready for suffering.

But of those who have achieved a high development of sensitivity, it can be said that their capacity to suffer is the exact measure of their imperfection.

Indeed, the expression of a true psychic life in the being is peace, a joyful serenity.

Any suffering is therefore a precious indication to us of our weak point, of the point which demands a greater spiritual effort from us.

Thus, to cure in ourselves this attraction for suffering, we must understand the absurdity, the petty egoism of the various causes of our sufferings.

And to cure our excessive and ridiculous desire for sacrifice—too frequently for its own sake, regardless of any useful results—we must understand that if we are to remain in contact with all human sufferings through our sensitivity, we must also be vigilant and discerning enough to dissolve these

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sufferings as they come; to the clear-sighted, they are purely imaginary.

For, from this point of view, the only way to come to the help of men is to oppose to their suffering an immutable and smiling serenity which will be the highest human expression of Impersonal Love.

Finally, in a case such as the one I have just shown to you, even more than in any other, it is indispensable to keep in mind that true impersonality does not consist only in forgetting ourselves in our acts, but above all in the fact of not being aware that we are forgetting ourselves.

In short, to be truly impersonal, we must stop noticing that we are being impersonal.

And then the work can be accomplished with a large-hearted spontaneity, in all its perfection.

4 June 1912

What improvements can we bring to our meetings?

We said one day with regard to the numerous groups that form and disappear almost immediately, that this phenomenon of rapid decay is a result of the conventional and arbitrary factors which enter into the organisation of these groups.

In fact, they are founded upon an ideal prototype originating from one or several minds — a formula which is sometimes very beautiful in theory, but which takes no account of the individuals who with their difficulties and weaknesses must form the living cells of the group.

In my opinion, it is impossible to give an arbitrary form to any being, individual or collective; its form can only be the outer expression which perfectly reflects the quality of its constituent elements.

Because this vital law of formation is not observed, these groups follow one upon another and multiply endlessly; all are fated to the same swift destruction. For instead of being living organisms capable of normal growth, development and expansion, they are nothing but inert conglomerations without any possibility of progress.

We had decided to heed this law and carefully refrain from prematurely deciding upon the conditions of life of our little group. It is not yet born, it has hardly begun its period of gestation. Let us allow it to form and blossom very slowly before making any rules for its existence.

Consequently, it would seem disastrous to me to attempt to organise our meetings according to a preconceived plan or to conform to the ideal of one individual or another or even of all of us. We would then be entering on the way of artificial formations shaped by theory and destined to perish even more

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rapidly than those institutions which develop according to their own spontaneity, which is the sum total of the varied tendencies of their members.

Certainly, our meetings should progress, since that is the condition of their continuation. But this can only happen if they become an opportunity for each one of us to progress.

For if we want their progress to be sincere and in depth, it must depend on our own.

If we could all bring with us here an ardent aspiration for greater knowledge and wisdom, we would create a contemplative atmosphere, which I would like to be able to call religious, and this atmosphere would be most favourable to our self-perfection.

An atmosphere of spirituality is sometimes a far greater help than an exchange of words; the most beautiful thoughts cannot make us progress unless we have a persistent will to translate them within ourselves into higher feelings, more exact sensations and nobler actions.

Thus, to improve our meetings, the essential condition is our own self-improvement.

If we unify ourselves and identify our consciousness with the consciousness of our Divine Self, our group will become unified. If we enlighten and illumine our intellectual faculties, our group will manifest the light. If we allow impersonal love to permeate our whole being, our group will radiate love. And finally, if we bring order into ourselves, our group will become organised of itself, without our needing to intervene arbitrarily in its formation.

In short, let us become the living cells of the organism we want to bring forth, and let us not forget that on the value of its cells will depend the value of the collective being and its action, its usefulness in the work of universal harmony.

11 June 1912

How can one become master of one's thought?

First condition. To understand the full importance of this mastery by becoming aware, through observation, that our actions are the exact expression of our thoughts and that so long as we do not have perfect control over our mental activity, these thoughts are nothing but reflexes coming from every outside influence (sensations and suggestions). Thus we do not possess ourselves and can in no way be responsible for ourselves so long as we are not the masters of our thought.

Second condition. To will persistently an effective direction of our mental activity.

Third condition. To observe our thoughts in order to become familiar with them, to know their habitual course and become aware of the ones which have a special affinity with our sensorial and emotional nature.

Fourth condition. To seek in ourselves the idea which seems to be the highest, the noblest, the purest and most disinterested and, until the day we find a more beautiful idea to replace it, to make it the pivot around which our mental synthesis will be built up, the regulating idea in whose light all other thoughts can be seen and judged, that is, accepted or rejected.

Fifth condition. To undergo a regular daily mental discipline. To discover among all the teachings that have been given on this subject the method that seems to be most effective and to follow it scrupulously, rigorously, with energy and perseverance.

Some important recommendations:

11 June 1912

To know how to take enough mental rest.

Not to demand from ourselves more than we can do.

To take time into account and to know how to wait patiently
for the result of our effort.

Lastly, without neglecting anything we can do ourselves, to
know how to rely with childlike trust on the Great Supreme
Force, the Divine Force that is One in all beings and all things.

18 June 1912

The Power of Words

It seems unnecessary to draw your attention to the quantity of useless words that are uttered each day; this evil is well known to all, although very few people think of remedying it.

But there are many other words which are spoken needlessly. That is to say, in the course of the day, we often have the opportunity of expressing a helpful wish by pronouncing one word or another, provided that we know how to put the appropriate thought behind the words.

But too often we lose this opportunity of drawing a beneficial mental atmosphere around the people we know and thus of truly helping them. It would be very useful to remedy this neglect.

To do this, we must refuse to allow our minds to remain in that state of vague and passive imprecision which is almost constant in most people.

To cure ourselves progressively of this somnolence, we can, when pronouncing a word, force ourselves to reflect upon its exact meaning, its true import, in order to make it fully effective.

In this regard, we can say that the active power of words comes from three different causes.

The first two lie in the word itself, which has become a battery of forces. The third lies in the fact of living integrally the deep thought expressed by the word when we pronounce it.

Naturally, if these three causes of effectiveness are combined, the power of the word is considerably enhanced.

1) There are certain words whose resonance in the physical world is the perfect vibratory materialisation of the more subtle vibration produced by the thought in its own domain.

If we examine closely this similarity between the vibrations of thought and sound, we can discover the limited number

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of root syllables which express the most general ideas, and which are to be found in most spoken languages with an almost identical meaning. (This origin of language should not be confused with the origin of written languages, which are of an altogether different nature and correspond to different needs.)

2) There are other words which have been repeated in certain circumstances for hundreds of years and which are instinct with the mental forces of all those who have pronounced them. They are true batteries of energy.

3) Finally, there are words which assume an immediate value when they are pronounced, as a result of the living thought of the one who pronounces them.

To illustrate what I have just said with an example, here is a very powerful word, for it can combine the qualities of all three categories: it is the Sanskrit word "AUM".

It is used in India to express the divine Immanence. There, it is associated with every meditation, every contemplation, every yogic practice.

More than any other sound, this sound "AUM" gives rise to a feeling of peace, of serenity, of eternity.

Moreover, this word is instinct with the mental forces which for centuries all those who have used it have accumulated around the idea that it expresses; and, for Hindus especially, it has the true power of bringing one into contact with the divine Essence it evokes.

And as Orientals have a religious mind and the habit of concentration, few pronounce this word without putting into it the conviction that is needed to make it fully effective.

In China, a similar effect is obtained with a word of identical meaning and somewhat similar sound, the word "TAO".

Our western languages are less expressive; in their present form, they are too far removed from the root language which gave birth to them. But we can always animate a word by the power of our living and active thought.

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Besides, there are formulas which we could profitably add to all those in common use.

These formulas were used in certain ancient schools of initiation. They served as greetings, and in the mouth of one who knew how to think them, they had a very special power of action.

The disciples, the neophytes who were taking their first steps on the path, were greeted: "May the peace of equilibrium be with you."

All those who by their constant and progressive inner and outer attitude had shown their deep and lasting goodwill, were greeted: "May the highest good be yours."

And in certain instructors manifesting especially high forces, this word was endowed with the power of transmitting true gifts, for example, the gift of healing.

25 June 1912

What is the most useful idea to spread and what is the best example to set?

The question can be considered in two ways, a very general one applicable to the whole earth, and another specific one which concerns our present social environment.

From the general point of view, it seems to me that the most useful idea to spread is twofold:

1) Man carries within himself perfect power, perfect wisdom and perfect knowledge, and if he wants to possess them, he must discover them in the depth of his being, by introspection and concentration.

2) These divine qualities are identical at the centre, at the heart of all beings; this implies the essential unity of all, and all the consequences of solidarity and fraternity that follow from it.

The best example to give would be the unalloyed serenity and immutably peaceful happiness which belong to one who knows how to live integrally this thought of the One God in all.

From the point of view of our present environment, here is the idea which, it seems to me, it is most useful to spread:

True progressive evolution, an evolution which can lead man to his rightful happiness, does not lie in any external means, material improvement or social change. Only a deep and inner process of individual self-perfection can make for real progress and completely transform the present state of things, and change suffering and misery into a serene and lasting contentment.

Consequently, the best example is one that shows the first stage of individual self-perfection which makes possible all the rest, the first victory to be won over the egoistic personality: disinterestedness.

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At a time when all rush upon money as the means to satisfy their innumerable cravings, one who remains indifferent to wealth and acts, not for the sake of gain, but solely to follow a disinterested ideal, is probably setting the example which is most useful at present.

2 July 1912

Which minds are nearest to me and what is my ideal work among them?

Always, in one way or another, life puts in our path those who for some reason are near to us. Each individual creates his own environment according to what he is himself.

And, if such is our dominant preoccupation, all those whom we thus meet on our way are the very ones to whom we can be most useful.

For one who lives constantly in the spiritual consciousness, everything that happens to him takes on a special value and all is conducive to his progressive evolution. It will always be beneficial for him to observe his encounters, to investigate both the apparent and the deeper reasons for them, and, in accordance with his altruistic aspirations, he will ask himself what good he can do in each different case. And according to his own degree of spirituality, his action will always have a greater or lesser spiritualising effect.

If we observe at all attentively the causes which bring us closer to our kind, we see that these contacts occur at various levels of depth in our being, depending on our own special mode of conscious activity.

We can classify these relationships into four main categories corresponding to our four principal modes of activity: physical, vital, psychic and mental. They may have their play in one or several of these categories, simultaneously or successively, according to the quality and type of the manifestation of our activity.

Physical contact is compulsory, so to say, since it depends on the fact that we have a physical body. It inevitably occurs with those who have provided us with this body and with all

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those who are materially dependent on them. These are the relations of kinship. There are also relationships of proximity: neighbourhood in houses, in the various means of transport, in the street. (I may remark here — and this remark also applies to the other three categories — that this relationship is not necessarily exclusive: this is in fact rare, since we are seldom active on only one plane of our being; what I mean is that the physical relationship is dominant over the other three.)

Vital contact occurs between impulses and desires which are identical or liable to combine in order to complement and heighten one another.

Psychic contact occurs between converging spiritual aspirations.

Mental contact comes from similar or complementary mental capacities and affinities.

Normally, if the predominance of one category is not clearly established — and this can only happen when there is enough order in our being to organise it in all its depth and complexity — we can and should give material help to those who are near to us for physical reasons.

With certain exceptions, material help is the best assistance we can give to the members of our family or to those whom we chance to meet in the street, in trains, in ships, in buses, etc.: pecuniary help, aid in case of illness or danger.

We should assist the sensitivity of those who are attracted to us because they have identical tastes, artistic or otherwise, by rectifying, balancing or canalising their sense-energies.

We can help those who by a common aspiration for progress have been brought into contact with us, through our example, by showing them the path, and through our love, by smoothing the way for them.

Finally, we must allow the light of our intelligence to shine for those who come close to us as a result of mental affinity, so that, if possible, we may widen their field of thought and enlighten their ideal.

2 July 1912

These various affinities express themselves outwardly in slight and sometimes subtle variations in the conditions of our encounters, and because our insight is seldom alert enough, these slight variations often elude us.

But to direct our action in the right way and reduce as far as possible the causes of our wrong attitudes towards our fellowmen, we should always investigate with the greatest care the numerous reasons for our contacts and find the category of affinities which binds us to them.

A few rare beings are close to us in all four modes of existence at the same time. These are friends in the deepest sense of the word. It is on them that our actions can have their most integral, their most perfectly helpful and beneficial effect.

We should never forget that the duration of a contact between two human lives depends on the number and depth of the states of being in which the affinities that bind them have their play.

Only those who commune with the eternal essence within themselves and in all things can be eternally united.

Only those are friends forever who have been close or distant friends from all time in this or other worlds.

And whether or not we meet these friends depends on the encounter we must first experience within ourselves, in the unknown depths of our being.

Moreover, when this meeting occurs, our whole attitude is transformed.

When we become one with the inner Godhead, we become one in depth with all, and it is through Her and by Her that we must come into contact with all beings. Then, free from all attraction and repulsion, all likes and dislikes, we are close to what is close to Her and far from what is far from Her.

Thus we learn that in the midst of others we should become always more and more a divine example of integral activity both intellectual and spiritual, an opportunity which is offered to them to understand and enter upon the path of divine life.

Part 3

Between 1911 and 1913 the Mother gave a number of talks to different groups in Paris. Two of them, “On Thought” and “On Dreams”, appear in Part 1. The same talk was sometimes presented to two or more groups with suitable variations. Additions and alternative versions have been given here as footnotes.

The first piece in this part is a note found among the Mother’s manuscripts.

That Which is Speaking

THAT WHICH is speaking to you now, is a faithful servant of the Divine. From all time, since the beginning of the earth, as a faithful servant of the Divine, it has spoken in the name of its Master. And as long as earth and men exist, it will be there in a body to preach the divine word.

So, wherever I am asked to speak, I do my best, as a servant of the Divine.

But to speak in the name of a particular doctrine or of a man, however great he may be, that I cannot do!

The Eternal Transcendent forbids me.

1912

On Thought—Introduction

M^{LLE.} MOLITOR has very kindly asked me to say a few words on thought.

Since you have been good enough to come and listen to me today, I conclude that you are among those who, knowing the primary importance of thought, its master-role in life, strive to build up for themselves an ever stronger and more conscious thought.

So I hope you will excuse me if, while showing you what this primary importance of thought is, I venture to give you — to give *us* — some advice on learning how to think well.

In this, I shall act only as an interpreter for you on behalf of the great instructors, the great initiates who have come from age to age to bring to men their words of wisdom and peace.

But before translating for you as best I can their beautiful teachings on the rational, effective and just use of the marvellous faculty in us which is thought, it seems to me indispensable that we should first of all enquire a little into what thought is.

5 February 1912

On Thought-II

YOU PROBABLY remember that, last month, we made two observations.

The first is that thought is a living, active, autonomous entity.

The second is that in order to contend victoriously with the injurious effects of the polluted mental atmosphere in which we live, we must build up within ourselves a pure, luminous and powerful intellectual synthesis.

For this purpose we must bring down into ourselves the highest thoughts within our reach, that is, within the field of our mental activity, and make them our own.

But since thoughts are living beings, they have, as we do, their likes and dislikes, their attractions and repulsions.

We must therefore adopt a special attitude towards them, treat them as people, make advances and concessions to them and show them the same attentions as we would to someone we would wish to be our friend.

On this matter, a modern philosopher writes:

“Sometimes thinkers in their meditations, explorers and prospectors of the intellectual world in their discoveries, and poets—the diviners of thought—in their dreams, feel and vaguely sense that the idea is not something abstract and bodiless. It appears to them to be winged, something which soars, comes close and flees, denies and gives itself, something which must be called, pursued and won.

“To the most clairvoyant, the idea seems to be an aloof person with her whims and desires, her preferences, her queenly disdain, her virgin modesty. They know that it takes much care to win her and but a little thing to lose her, that there is a love of the mind for the idea, a love made of consecration and sacrifice, and without this the idea cannot belong to it.

Words of Long Ago

“But these are pretty symbols, and few indeed can perceive the very precise reality which lies beneath them.

“It needed a Plato to identify this thing which lives and vibrates, which moves and shines, travels and is propagated through time and space, which acts and wills and freely chooses its own time and place — in short, to know the Idea as a being.”

Let us take especially one phrase from this beautiful page: “There is a love of the mind for the idea, a love made of consecration and sacrifice, and without this the idea cannot belong to it.”

This is not an image. To enter into an intimate and conscious relation with the idea, we must consecrate ourselves to it, love it with a disinterested love, in itself, for itself.

Today we shall try to find out what this love consists of and, at the same time, what we must do for it to blossom within us.

The first attitude to be taken, the most indispensable, is the most perfect mental sincerity it is within our power to acquire.

Of all sincerities, this is perhaps the most difficult. Not to deceive oneself mentally is not an easy thing to achieve.

First of all we have, as I explained to you last December, a certain habit of thought which comes from the education we have received, from the influence of the environment, and which is most often made up of social conventions and collective suggestions. This habit naturally makes us give a far better reception to all the thoughts which are similar, if not conformable, to those which already fill our minds, than to those which could, to however small an extent, unsettle this mental structure.

For the same reason, as you probably remember, it is sometimes so difficult for us to learn to think for ourselves: we hesitate to change anything whatsoever in our customary way of thinking, which is most often made up of social conventions and collective suggestions. For our whole existence is based upon this habit. It takes a great courage and a great love of progress to consent to examine one’s existence in the light of thoughts that are deeper, and consequently more independent of the customs and usages of the environment.

On Thought-II

You can judge from this the great, the very great love of the idea that is needed to achieve such a revolution in one's habits, for the sole purpose of gaining the power to enter into a more intimate, more conscious relationship with it!

And even when our mental synthesis is made up of thoughts that we have received and made our own in the course of a constant and persevering effort of meditation, we must love the idea with a very powerful love, perhaps even more powerful still, so that we may always be in quest of a new idea, ready to give it the most eager reception if it is willing to come to us. For we are well aware that each new idea will constrain us to modify our synthesis, relegate to the background ideas which had seemed to us master-ideas, bring to the light other ideas too long disregarded, rearrange them all so that they do not clash, to the great detriment of our brain, in brief, a long and sometimes painful task. Indeed we are very seldom disinterested with regard to ideas; there are some which we prefer to others and which, consequently, occupy a place in our mental activity which they do not always deserve.

And if we must replace them with others that are more precise, more true, we often hesitate long before doing so, we cling to them as indispensable friends, and we love their defects as well as their qualities,—which is the worst way to love people, as well as the laziest and most selfish,—for we are always more highly esteemed by those we flatter than by those from whom we demand a constant effort of progress. But our difficulties do not stop there.

As a consequence of the intellectual education we have received or of some personal preference, we are also prejudiced about the way, or ways, in which ideas should be introduced to us.

These preconceptions are so many veritable superstitions that we must overcome.

They are different for each person.

Some people have the superstition of the book. For an idea

Words of Long Ago

to merit consideration in their eyes, it must have been expressed in some famous book, in one of the bibles of humanity, and any thought coming in any other way will appear suspect to them.

There are some who accept an idea only from the official sciences, and those who recognise one only in the established religions, old or new. For others, the idea must come from the mouth of a man of renown with enough honorary titles so that none can question his value.

Still others, more sentimental, in order to come into contact with thought, need a master who should be the perfect incarnation of the ideal human standard constructed by their imagination. But they are bound to be sorely disappointed, for they forget that they alone are capable of realising their own ideal, that the one in whom they have placed their confidence has a duty to realise his own ideal which, consequently, however great it may be, may very well differ considerably from their own. So, most often, when they become aware of these divergences, since they had attached themselves to the ideas only for the sake of the man, they will reject both man and ideas together.

This is absurd, for ideas are worth what they are worth regardless of the individuals who have expressed them.

Finally, there is a whole category of people enamoured of the miraculous, who will recognise a truth only if it has come to them clothed in the mystery of a supramundane revelation, in dream or trance.

For them the master must be their God, an angel or a Mahatma, and give them his precious teachings during their contemplation or their sleep.

Needless to say, this method is still more unreliable than the others. That a thought should reach us by extraordinary means is no guarantee of its correctness or its truth.¹

¹ *Paragraph added when this talk was presented to a different group:*

I do not mean that it is impossible to come into contact with an idea by these means, but they are far from being the only ones or even perhaps the best.

On Thought-II

You see, the true lover of the idea knows that by seeking it ardently he will find it everywhere, and even more so in the subterranean and secret fountainheads than in those which have lost their pristine purity by turning into rivers that are majestic and renowned but also polluted by the waste of all kinds which they carry with them.

The lover of the idea knows that it can come to him from the mouth of a child as from the mouth of a learned man.

And it is even in this unexpected way that it can reach him most often.

That is why it is said: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings comes forth truth."

For if the thought of a child cannot have the precision of the thought of a man, neither does it have the fixity which results from laziness of habit and which in the adult prevents the thought from expressing itself whenever it does not belong to the categories which are familiar to him.

Moreover, it was to escape the distortion of an environment made up of habit and fixity that the schools of ancient times where the young prophets were educated were established far from the cities.

That is also why the great instructors of men began their apprenticeship in solitude. For if too many things are absent for the thought to be able to express itself in the minds of unrefined men, too many things are also absent from the mind of the cultivated man shaped by the artificial life of human societies.

How much silence is needed—not the outer, illusory and momentary silence, but on the contrary the true, profound, integral, permanent silence—to be able to hear the far-off voices of thought!

That is why the sincere lover of knowledge also knows that the greatest sages are always the most modest and the most unknown. For one who has the knowledge and the capacity prefers silence and retirement where he is free to accomplish his

Words of Long Ago

work without being disturbed by anything, to the fanfares of glory which would throw him as fodder to men.

The lover of thought knows that he will find thought everywhere around him, in the little flower as in the radiant sun; nothing and no one appears to him too humble or too obscure to be for him an intermediary of the idea he is ever seeking.

But above all he knows that the best, the most reliable contact with the idea is certainly a direct contact.

Since we are made out of the universal substance, we are this universe in miniature.

Since no phenomenon can exist without a corresponding medium, the existence of ideas implies the existence of a corresponding domain, the realm of free intelligence always in form but not subject to form, and this realm is within us as within the great universe.

If then we concentrate sufficiently, if we become conscious of our inmost being, we shall come into contact, within it and through it, with the free universal intelligence, the world of ideas.

Then, if we have taken care to polish our mirror well and to clear it of all the dust of preconception and habit, all ideas will be able to reflect themselves there with a minimum of distortion, and we shall have acquired bodhi (knowledge), we shall have acquired the power of reflecting the rays of the Sun of Truth²—such was the hope which Siddhartha Gautama held out to us. When he was asked, “How shall we obtain bodhi?”, he would reply:

“Bodhi has no distinctive signs or marks: what can be known in respect of it is of no use whatsoever; but the care

² In a version presented to another group the paragraph ends here and is followed by these two paragraphs:

Then will our mental actions take on their full power and effectivity. Our thought-formations will become useful and luminous messengers going forth to do their work of goodness and harmony wherever material circumstances prevent us from doing it physically.

And by a little effort of concentration we shall rapidly succeed in becoming conscious of these actions while at the same time remaining in touch with the emanated thought.

On Thought-II

we take in practising its spirit is of great importance. It is like a cleansed and polished mirror that has become clear and bright, so that images are reflected in it sharply and vividly.”

And again:

“One who is without darkness, free from blemish, of blameless conduct, perfectly pure, that one, even though he does not know and has never heard and in short has no knowledge, however little, of any of the things that are in the world of the ten regions since time without beginning until today, none the less, he possesses the highest knowledge of the one who knows all. He is the one of whom it is said: Clarity.” You see here a panegyric of the direct relationship with the idea as opposed to the wholly external and superficial method of erudition.

The advantages of this direct relationship are incalculable.

It enables us to recover and love the idea behind all appearances, all veils, all forms, even the most barbarous, the most crude, the most superstitious.

Thus we can put into living practice the state of mind of the sage, of which I spoke to you in my first talk and which a master defines in this way:

“One who advances in Truth is not troubled by any error, for he knows that error is the first effort of life towards truth.”

Consequently, not a single fragment of an idea can ever be lost for us; wherever it is concealed, we know how to discover and cherish it.

Moreover, when we have become familiar with an idea, when we know it in itself, for itself, we recognise it behind the most diverse appearances, the most varied forms.

This faculty can even serve as a criterion to discover whether someone is in contact with the idea itself, that is to say, whether he has understood it well and made it his own or whether he is part of the mass of those who have assimilated as best they could a doctrine, a special language, and who can think only in the words of that language — outside this formula, they no longer understand anything.

Words of Long Ago

This attachment to form, which consists entirely of intellectual impotence, is one of the most powerful causes of dissension among men.

But one who penetrates deeply enough to see the thought, the naked truth, soon realises that it is the same behind its varied and more or less opaque veils.

This is the surest way to achieve true tolerance.

Indeed, how can we have an exclusive passion for one particular doctrine or school or religion when we have had the experience that each one of them contains treasures of light and truth, however varied the caskets which enclose them?

16 February 1912

On Thought—III

IT HAS always seemed to me that apart from a very few exceptions, the mental role of women is not to speculate on the metaphysical causes of the phenomena which are perceptible to us, but to draw practical conclusions from these phenomena.

Madame Martial was telling you very rightly last Friday that it would be wrong for women to want to think in the same way as men, that they would be in danger of losing their own qualities—profound intuition and practical deduction—with-out acquiring those of their masculine counterparts—logical reasoning and the capacity of analysis and synthesis.

That is why today I shall not attempt to demonstrate to you by logical reasoning and transcendental speculation that thoughts exist as true, autonomous, living and active entities.

Besides, if we do not want to indulge in idle talk, if, very sincerely, we want to explain the smallest phenomenon, we must always go back to the most universal general laws. The whole universe is necessary to explain a grain of sand. And this is not the programme we have chosen for the *Union de Pensée Féminine*. Those who, as a result of the teaching they have received and the cerebral gymnastics they have undertaken, are fond of taking up vast metaphysical problems, will find an excellent opportunity to do so at the *École de la Pensée* on the first Friday of each month.¹

¹ Alternative version intended for another group:

I do not know if you are familiar with the notion of thought as a living and autonomous entity. I shall not venture here to prove its exactitude to you, and this for two reasons.

The first is that in order to explain the smallest phenomenon (for such is our usual way of proving its reality to ourselves), it is necessary to bring in the most universal general laws. Many times we have been led to observe that the whole universe is necessary to explain a grain of sand. And this enquiry would lead us really too far tonight.

On the other hand, to do this, we would have to devote ourselves to lengthy meta-

Words of Long Ago

At the *Union de Pensée Féminine*, we shall be more modest, if you agree.

Women, by their very nature, are more capable of taking the spiritual or, in the deepest sense of the word, moral standpoint.

We are essentially realistic and formative in this spiritual domain; we want to know how to live well, and for this we must learn how to think well.

To realise the primary importance of thought, we must know it as it is, that is, as a living being; and so that you may be convinced of the autonomous existence of thought, I shall ask you only to ascertain this for yourselves, which is an easy thing to do.

A little observation will enable us to realise that very often, for example, we receive thoughts which come to us from outside, although we have not been brought into contact with them either by speech or reading.

Who has not also observed this phenomenon: a thought which is “in the air”, as we say, and which several inventors, several scientists, several literary men receive simultaneously without having been in physical communication on this matter?

One could go on giving examples indefinitely. I leave each one to reflect and find the examples which seem most conclusive to her.

Before proceeding further with our subject I shall read you a page on thought which may help you to understand it.

It is a page from an as yet unpublished philosophical volume.

“Any phenomenon implies a corresponding substance; any

physical speculations, and there is nothing I dread more than this form of mental activity.

Faithful in this matter to the teaching of the Buddha, I am convinced that we can make a far better use of our time and minds than in hazardous excursions into the intellectual realm which, in the last analysis, always eludes our enquiry and inevitably brings us face to face with the unthinkable.

The Buddha always categorically refused to answer any metaphysical question on the origin or the end of the universe, saying that only one thing matters: to advance on the Way, that is, to purify oneself inwardly, to destroy in oneself all egoistic desire.

On Thought–III

vibration necessitates a medium of its own; and if vibrations of light require the medium which we know as ether, will not a medium be needed for the more subtle, more mysterious and also more rapid vibrations of thought?

“I am not speaking of a thought which has already assumed the form and substance provided by the materiality of the brain. Psychologists know very well that before it attains to its modes of conscious activity there, a thought must first of all have passed through remoter states, through the unknown regions of what we call the subconscious.

“It has come from the inner depths to our surface self like a meteor reaching us from inaccessible spaces.

“What was the origin of this meteor, the source of this thought? We do not know, but they exist, the one beyond our sun, the other probably beyond light.

“There is a relationship of ascendancy between light and thought. To go from one to the other in the scale of imponderables, it is necessary to mount a step: conceiving (*concevoir*) is a higher way of seeing (*voir*).

“If we do not see thought, it is because its substance is more ethereal than that of light; just as, if we do not hear light, it is because its essence is more subtle than that of sound.

“Among the elements of its own order, thought moves just as our bodies do among physical objects. Just as our hands know how to shape these objects, in the same way thought also knows how to mould these elements and cast them into a myriad appropriate forms.

“Thus our intellectual gestures are no less fruitful than our physical gestures. And that is why wisdom has always taught that we must watch over our thoughts as we would over generating acts.”

So we see that thought, which is a dynamism in the highest sense of the word, acts in its own realm as a formative power in order to build a body for itself. It acts like a magnet on iron filings. It

Words of Long Ago

attracts all the elements which are akin to its own character, aim and tendencies, and it vivifies these elements — which are the constituent cells of its own body, that I shall call fluidic to avoid going into too many explanations — it animates them, moulds them, gives them the form which is best suited to its own nature.

We shall find a striking analogy between the work of thought and the work of the inventor, the builder of any kind.

Let us take as an example a steam engine. The engineer draws up a plan in its smallest details, calculates and arranges everything, then he selects the appropriate materials for the materialisation of his conception, watches over the construction, etc.

And when the engine works, becoming by its movement a real living being, it will be the most complete possible manifestation of the thought which has built it, it will give the full measure of the power of this thought. (The awakened unconsciousness of locomotives, cars, ships.) The formative thought, a living entity, animates the body which has been built for it by the hands of men. In the mental domain also, there are conscious builders.

There are people who are specially gifted or who have developed certain inner senses in themselves, who can come into direct contact with this domain, mainly through vision and touch.

When they are thus able to watch over the working of the phenomenon, they can, like chemists in their laboratories, manipulate substances, select them, mould them by their will-power and clothe their thoughts in forms that can manifest them fully.

But this is the ultimate stage of one of the many paths of individual progress. Long before achieving this full consciousness, it is possible to make powerful formations. Any person whose thought has any strength and persistence is constantly making formations without being aware of it.

If you keep in mind that these formations are living entities always acting in the direction imparted to them by the thoughts which have given them birth, you will easily perceive the considerable consequences of these mental acts.

Just as a good, kind, just and lofty thought can be eminently

On Thought-III

beneficial, so also a malevolent, base, wicked and selfish thought can be baneful.

On this matter, I shall quote to you a passage from the Dhammapada which will give you an idea of the enormous importance attributed to thought by the wisdom of the past.

“Whatever an enemy may do to an enemy, whatever a hater may do to a hater, the harm caused by a misdirected thought is even greater still.

“Neither father nor mother nor any other kinsman can do so much good as a well-directed thought.”

If you reflect upon the incalculable number of thoughts which are emitted each day, you will see rising before your imagination a complex, mobile, quivering and terrible scene in which all these formations intercross and collide, battle, succumb and triumph in a vibratory movement which is so rapid that we can hardly picture it to ourselves.

Now you realise what the mental atmosphere of a city like Paris can be, where millions of individuals are thinking — and what thoughts! You can picture this teeming, mobile mass, this inextricable tangle. Well, in spite of all the contradictory tendencies, wills and opinions, a kind of unification or identity gets established among all these vibrations, for all of them — with a few minor exceptions — all express craving, craving in all its forms, all its aspects, on all planes.

All the thoughts of worldly-minded people whose only aim is enjoyment and physical diversion, express craving.

All the thoughts of intellectual creators or artists thirsting for esteem, fame and honour, express craving.

All the thoughts of the ruling class and the officials hankering after more power and influence, express craving.

All the thoughts of the thousands of employees and workmen, of all the oppressed, the unfortunate, the downtrodden struggling for some improvement of their cheerless existence, express craving.

All, rich or poor, powerful or weak, privileged or deprived,

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intellectual or obtuse, learned or ignorant, all want gold, always more gold to satisfy all their cravings.

If from place to place there occasionally flashes out a spark of pure and disinterested thought, of will to do well, of sincere seeking for truth, it is very soon swallowed up by this material flood that rolls like a sea of slime....

And yet we must kindle the stars that one by one will come to illumine this night.

But for the moment we are living within it, soaking it up, for in the mental as in the physical domain we are in a state of perpetual interchange with the environment.

This is to point out to you how we are contaminated each day, at each minute.

Can any one of us say that she has never felt craving and that she will never feel it again? Besides, how could we not feel craving when the atmosphere we breathe is saturated with it? How could we not feel this host of desires rising in ourselves when all the vibrations we receive are made of desires?...

And yet if we want our thought to be beneficial and effective we must free ourselves of this bondage.

With this fact in mind, let us first of all draw a practical conclusion: let us be lenient towards all, for temptation is strong and human ignorance is great indeed.

But just as we must be compassionate and kind to others, we must be exacting and strict with ourselves, since we want to become lights in the darkness, torches in the night.

We must therefore learn to resist this daily pollution victoriously.

The very fact of knowing that there is a danger of contagion is already a great step towards liberation. But it is far from sufficient.

There are two possible victories to be won, one collective, the other individual. The first is, so to say, positive and active, the second negative and passive.

To win the positive victory it is necessary to declare an open

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war of idea against idea, for the thoughts that are disinterested, lofty and noble to give battle to those that are selfish, base and vulgar. This is a real hand-to-hand fight, a struggle of each minute which demands considerable mental power and clarity. For to fight against thoughts it is first of all necessary to receive them, to admit them into oneself, deliberately allow oneself to be contaminated, absorb the sickness into oneself the better to destroy the deadly germ by healing oneself. It is a real war in which one imperils one's mental balance at every minute—and a war demands warriors. I shall not recommend this practice to anyone. It belongs by right to the initiates who have prepared themselves for it by long and rigorous discipline, and we shall leave it to them.

For our part, we shall be content to asepticise ourselves so as to be safe from all infection. We shall aspire therefore for the individual victory, and if we win it we shall find out that we have done more for the collectivity in this way than we suspected at first.

To win this victory we must build up in ourselves a mentality whose quality is the opposite of that of the surrounding medium. We must, little by little, day by day, fill our minds with the loftiest, purest, most disinterested thoughts we can conceive of, and through our deliberate care they must become sufficiently living that they awaken in us each time a temptation to think wrongly comes to us from outside and rise in their dazzling splendour to face the shadow which constantly lurks in wait ready to assail us.

Let us light within ourselves the fire of the ancient vestals, the fire symbolising divine intelligence, which it is our duty to manifest.

This work cannot be achieved in a day or a month or even a year. We must will, and will with perseverance. But if you could know the benefits one reaps from this, if you could feel that peace, that perfect serenity which gradually replaces in us the agitation, the anxiety and fear which spring from desire, you would unhesitatingly set to work.

Words of Long Ago

Moreover, the building up of a synthesis of pure and powerful thoughts does not lead solely to our own happiness. The clearer and higher the flame, the more light it sheds around it.

The star we allow to shine through us will foster the birth of similar stars by its example; fortunately, not only darkness and ignorance, but also knowledge and light can be contagious.

In addition, the care we take to remain conscious of our highest thoughts will compel us to control our thoughts constantly, and this control is gradually obtained by the methods I outlined to you last month—analysis, reflection, meditation, etc. Those who have achieved the control of their mental being can emanate at will a certain portion of their intellectual power, send it wherever they think proper, while remaining perfectly conscious of it.

These emanations, which are true messengers, will take your place wherever, physically, it is for any reason impossible for you to go yourself.

The advantages of this power will be easily apparent to you.

A thought which is skilfully directed and sustained can, by affinity, awaken to consciousness a glimmer of wisdom in many minds as yet wrapt in darkness, and thus set them on their way towards progressive evolution; it can serve as an intermediary for one who is sick by drawing towards him the vital forces needed to cure him; it can watch over a dear friend and protect him from many dangers, either by warning him through mental communication and through his intuition or by acting directly on the cause of peril.

Unfortunately, the inverse is also true, and bad thoughts as well are not wanting in power of action.

We cannot imagine all the harm we do by receiving and emanating bad thoughts, thoughts of hate, vengeance, jealousy, envy, malevolent thoughts, harsh judgments, sectarian valuations....

We all know how injurious it is to listen to and repeat slanderous gossip, but it is not enough to abstain from the words,

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we must also abstain from the thoughts.²

Besides, a little reflection will suffice for this, for we shall very soon understand how rash our judgments and estimations always are.

With regard to acts, to actions committed, we shall be able to tell ourselves again and again that we do not know them exactly as they are, that in any case, the motives behind these acts, the many causes which have determined them, almost completely elude us.

With regard to defects, let us not forget that those which annoy us most in others are usually those which thrive most in ourselves and that, in any case, if we did not have any seeds of these defects within us, we would not be able to perceive them anywhere. Besides, what exactly is a defect? Most often it is the reverse side of a quality, an excess of virtue which has found no outlet, something which is not in its place.

As for what concerns us personally, we must be more prudent still and follow one strict rule very scrupulously: never judge anything without first having put ourselves in the place of the other, whoever he may be, with the greatest possible impersonality; try to feel what he has felt, see what he has seen, and if we succeed in being perfectly sincere, very often we shall see our estimation becoming less strict and more just.

Besides, as a general rule, in what light shall we look at what we want to judge? What shall our criterion be? Indeed, do

² Passage added when presented to another group:

For nothing is more pernicious to ourselves and to others than this uncharitable state of mind. How many times have we not felt a kind of insurmountable barrier rising up between ourselves and someone we know? And yet towards this person, our words and acts have always been perfectly courteous and occasionally even very friendly.

But where this person is concerned, within ourselves, we have given rein to this spirit of analysis and criticism which lightly dismisses good qualities and fastens only on shortcomings, no doubt without any spitefulness, but with a shade of irony or malice, a feeling of our own superiority — wretched as we are! And so, little by little, drop by drop, between this person and ourselves, a veritable river is formed which separates us more and more from each other, despite whatever physical efforts we may make to come closer together.

Words of Long Ago

we fancy that we possess the supreme wisdom and the perfect justice that we are able to say with certainty, "This is good, this is bad"? Let us never forget that our notions of good and evil are wholly relative and so ignorant that, in what concerns others, we often find fault with an act which is the expression of a wisdom far greater than our own.

True science does not judge; it investigates phenomena as precisely as it can in their manifold causes and numerous effects. It says, "This will determine that" — see therefore whether *that* conforms to what you wish before doing *this*. At all events, even if in what personally concerns us we can take as a criterion our greater or lesser likeness to our highest ideal in all its intensity and progressive splendour, we have no right to demand from others that they should realise our own ideal, unless we know that our ideal is superior to theirs, in which case we would have to be quite certain that our ideal conforms in every respect to the supreme ideal, the absolute ideal, to the universal plan in its innermost essence....

But before attaining to such transcendent heights, we can always keep in mind that the malevolent or uncharitable thoughts emanating from men are the chief causes of division among them; they make their union almost impossible even when they wish to realise it.

What we constantly endeavour to achieve in our physical actions is at the same time constantly hampered or even destroyed by our mental actions.

So let us watch over our thoughts, let us strive to create for ourselves an atmosphere of beautiful and noble thoughts and we shall have done much to hasten the advent of terrestrial harmony.

19 February 1912

*The Central Thought*¹

WE ARE meeting for the last time this year—at least physically, for I hope we shall always remain united in thought, at all events in the same desire for progress, for perfection.

This desire should always be the centre of our action, animating our will, for, whatever the goal we set ourselves, whatever the duty which devolves to us, whatever the work we have to achieve, in order to attain this goal, to fulfil this duty, to accomplish this work to the best of our ability, we must progress at each moment, we must use yesterday as the stepping-stone to tomorrow.

Life is in perpetual movement, in perpetual transformation. However great or learned or wise one may be, he who does not follow the great current of universal life in an ever ascending march, inevitably moves towards downfall, towards the dissolution of his conscious being.

This has been expressed very forcefully by Pythagoras, in the eloquent words recently pronounced here by Mr. Han Byner.

And these words led me to decide against summarising in this last meeting what has been the object of our study course.

We have attempted to give you some advice on how to develop, sharpen, widen, liberate and deepen your thought, for on the value of our thought depends the value of our being and our action.

This advice has often been repeated through the ages, at all times, in all countries, by the great Instructors.

Those who have seriously studied the methods of evolution laid down in all the great centres of initiation, in Chaldea, in

¹ Originally an introduction to the talk now known as *The Supreme Discovery* (see pp. 38-44)

Words of Long Ago

Tibet, in China, in Egypt, in India, in Cappadocia, will find them everywhere identical in substance behind their varied forms.

For all these methods of development can be epitomised in one sublime teaching, the very teaching that Pythagoras gave to his disciples and which Mr. Han Byner has told us about.

The Self of each individual and the great universal Self are one; we bear God within ourselves.

19 April 1912

Charity

IN ITS most general sense, charity may be defined as the act of giving to each one what he lacks.

That is to say, in the last analysis, to put each thing in its place, which would result in the establishment of the supreme justice upon earth.

Such is the theory, but in practice charity could be considered as the path men ought to follow in their groping advance towards justice.

For, in his present state of evolution, man is incapable not only of realising justice in his earthly abode, but also of conceiving it as it is in its absolute essence. Charity is the living acknowledgment of this inability.

Indeed, in our ignorance of true justice, the justice which is one with perfect harmony, perfect equilibrium and perfect order, our wisest course is to take the path of love, the path of charity which shuns all judgment.

This is what justifies the attitude of those who always set charity against justice. Justice is, in their eyes, rigorous, merciless, and charity must come to temper its excessive severity.

Certainly, they cannot speak thus of divine justice, but more rightly of human or rather of social justice, the egoistic justice which is instituted to defend a more or less extensive grouping of interests and is as much opposed to true justice as shadow is contrary to light.

When we speak of justice as it is rendered in our so-called civilised countries, we should call it not rigorous and merciless but blind and monstrous in its ignorant pretension.

So we can never make too many amends for its fatal effects, and there charity finds an opportunity to apply itself fruitfully.

But this is only one side of the question and before delving deeper into our subject, I would like to remind you that charity,

Words of Long Ago

like all other human activities, is exercised according to four different modes which must be simultaneous if its action is to be integral and truly effective. I mean that no charity is complete if it is not at the same time material, intellectual, spiritual or moral and, above all, loving, for the very essence of charity is love.

At present charity is considered almost exclusively from the external standpoint and the word is synonymous with the sharing of part of one's possessions with life's rejects. We shall see in a moment how mean this conception is even when confined to the purely material field.

The three other modes of action of charity are admirably summed up in this counsel given by the Buddha to his disciples:

"With your hearts overflowing with compassion, go forth into this world torn by pain, be instructors, and wherever the darkness of ignorance rules, there light a torch."

To instruct those who know less, to give to those who do evil the strength to come out of their error, to console those who suffer, these are all occupations of charity rightly understood.

Thus charity, regarded from the individual point of view, consists, for each one, of giving to others all they need, in proportion to one's means.

This brings us to two observations.

The first is that one cannot give what one does not have at one's command.

Materially this is so evident that it is unnecessary to insist upon it. But intellectually, spiritually, the same rule holds true.

Indeed, how can one teach others what one does not know? How can one guide the weak on the path of wisdom if one does not tread the path oneself? How can one radiate love if one does not possess it within oneself?

And the supreme charity, which is integral self-giving to the great work of terrestrial regeneration, implies first of all that one can command what one wants to offer, that is to say, that one is master of oneself.

Only he who has perfect self-control can consecrate himself

Charity

in all sincerity to the great work. For he alone knows that no contrary will, no unexpected impulse can ever again come to impede his action, to check his effort by setting him at variance with himself.

In this fact we find the justification of the old proverb which says: "Charity begins at home."

This maxim seems to encourage every kind of egoism, and yet it is the expression of a great wisdom for one who understands it rightly.

It is because charitable people fail to conform to this principle that their efforts so often remain unfruitful, that their goodwill is so often warped in its results, and that, in the end, they are forced to renounce a charity which, because it has not been rightly exercised, is the cause of nothing but confusion, suffering and disillusionment.

There is evidently a wrong way of interpreting this maxim, which says, "First let us accumulate fortune, intelligence, health, love, energies of all kinds, then we shall distribute them."

For, from the material standpoint, when will the accumulation stop? One who acquires the habit of piling up never finds his pile big enough.

I have even been led to make an observation about this: that in most men generosity seems to exist in inverse proportion to their pecuniary resources.

From observing the way in which workmen, the needy and all the unfortunate act among themselves, I was forced to conclude that the poor are far more charitable, far more prepared to succour their fellow-sufferers than are those more favoured by fortune. There is not enough time to go into the details of all that I have seen, but I assure you that it is instructive. I can, in any case, assure you that if the rich, in proportion to what they have, gave as much as the poor, soon there would no longer be a single starving person in the world.

Thus gold seems to attract gold, and nothing would be more fatal than wanting to accumulate riches before distributing them.

Words of Long Ago

But also, nothing would be more fatal than a rash prodigality which, from lack of discernment, would squander a fortune without benefiting anyone.

Let us never confuse disinterestedness, which is one of the conditions of true charity, with a lack of concern that springs from idle thoughtlessness.

Let us learn therefore to make judicious use of what we may have or earn while giving the least possible play to our personality and, above all, let us not forget that charity should not be confined to material aid.

Nor in the field of forces is it possible to accumulate, for receptivity occurs in proportion to expenditure: the more one expends usefully, the more one makes oneself capable of receiving. Thus the intelligence one can acquire is proportionate to the intelligence one uses. We are formed to manifest a certain quantity of intellectual forces, but if we develop ourselves mentally, if we put our brains to work, if we meditate regularly and above all if we make others benefit by the fruit, however modest, of our efforts, we make ourselves capable of receiving a greater quantity of ever deeper and purer intellectual forces. And the same holds true for love and spirituality.

We are like channels: if we do not allow what they have received to pour out freely, not only do they become blocked and no longer receive anything, but what they contain will spoil. If, on the contrary, we allow all this flood of vital, intellectual and spiritual forces to flow abundantly, if by impersonalising ourselves we know how to connect our little individuality to the great universal current, what we give will be returned to us a hundredfold.

To know how not to cut ourselves off from the great universal current, to be a link in the chain which must not be broken, this is the true science, the very key of charity.

Unfortunately there exists a very widespread error which is a serious obstacle to the practical application of this knowledge.

This error lies in the belief that a thing in the universe may

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be our own possession. Everything belongs to all, and to say or think, "This is mine", is to create a separation, a division which does not exist in reality.

Everything belongs to all, even the substance of which we are made, a whirl of atoms in perpetual movement which momentarily constitutes our organism without abiding in it and which, tomorrow, will form another.

It is true that some people command great material possessions. But in order to be in accord with the universal law, they should consider themselves as trustees, stewards of these possessions. They ought to know that these riches are entrusted to them so that they may administer them for the best interests of all.

We have come a long way from the narrow conception of charity restricted to the giving of a little of what we have in excess to the unfortunate ones that life brings in our way! And what we say of material riches must be said of spiritual wealth also.

Those who say, "This idea is mine", and who think they are very charitable in allowing others to profit from it, are senseless.

The world of ideas belongs to all; intellectual force is a universal force.

It is true that some people are more capable than others of entering into relation with this field of ideas and manifesting it through their conscious cerebrality. But this is nothing other than an additional responsibility for them: since they are in possession of this wealth, they are its stewards and must see that it is used for the good of the greatest number.

The same holds true for all the other universal forces. Only the concept of union, of the perfect identity of everything and everyone, can lead to true charity.

But to come back to practice, there is one more serious pitfall in the way of its complete and fruitful manifestation.

For most people, charity consists of giving anything to anyone without even knowing whether this gift corresponds to a need.

Words of Long Ago

Thus charity is made synonymous with sentimental weakness and irrational squandering.

Nothing is more contrary to the very essence of this virtue.

Indeed, to give someone a thing he has no need of is as great a lack of charity as to deny him what he needs.

And this applies to the things of the spirit as well as to those of the body.

By a faulty distribution of material possessions one can hasten the downfall of certain individuals by encouraging them to be lazy, instead of favouring their progress by inciting them to effort.

The same holds true for intelligence and love. To give someone a knowledge which is too strong for him, thoughts which he cannot assimilate, is to deprive him for long, if not for ever, of the possibility of thinking for himself.

In the same way, to impose on some people an affection, a love for which they feel no need, is to make them carry a burden which is often too heavy for their shoulders.

This error has two main causes to which all the others can be linked: ignorance and egoism.

In order to be sure that an act is beneficial one must know its immediate or distant consequences, and an act of charity is no exception to this law.

To want to do well is not enough, one must also know.

How much evil has been done in the world in the name of charity diverted from its true sense and completely warped in its results!

I could give you many examples of acts of charity which have led to the most disastrous results because they were performed without reflection, without discernment, without understanding, without insight.

Charity, like all things, must be the result in us of a conscious and reasoned will, for impulse is synonymous with error and above all with egoism.

Unfortunately it must be acknowledged that charity is very

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seldom completely disinterested.

I do not mean charity which is performed for the purpose of acquiring merit in the eyes of a personal God or to win eternal bliss.

This utterly base form is the worst of all bargainings and to call it charity would be to tarnish this name.

But I mean charity which is performed because one finds pleasure in it and which is still subject to all kinds of likes or dislikes, attractions or repulsions.

That kind of charity is very rarely completely free from the desire to meet with gratitude, and such a desire always atrophies the impartial clear-sightedness which is necessary to any action if it is to have its full value.

There is a wisdom in charity as everywhere, and it is to reduce waste to the minimum.

Thus to be truly charitable one must be impersonal.

And once more we see that all the lines of human progress converge on the same necessity: self-mastery, dying to oneself in order to be born into the new and true life.

To the extent that we outgrow the habit of referring everything to ourselves, we can exercise a truly effective charity, a charity one with love.

Besides, there is a height where all virtues meet in communion: love, goodness, compassion, forbearance, charity are all one and the same in their essence.

From this point of view, charity could be considered as the tangible and practical outer action determined by the application of the virtues of love.

For there is a force which can be distributed to all, always, provided that it is given in its most impersonal form: this is love, love which contains within itself light and life, that is, all the possibilities of intelligence, health, blossoming.

Yes, there is a sublime charity, one which rises from a happy heart, from a serene soul.

One who has won inner peace is a herald of deliverance

Words of Long Ago

wherever he goes, a bearer of hope and joy. Is not this what poor and suffering humanity needs above all things?

Yes, there are certain men whose thoughts are all love, who radiate love, and the mere presence of these individuals is a charity more active, more real than any other.

Though they utter no word and make no gesture, yet the sick are relieved, the tormented are soothed, the ignorant are enlightened, the wicked are appeased, those who suffer are consoled and all undergo this deep transformation which will open new horizons to them, enable them to take a step forward which no doubt will be decisive, on the infinite path of progress.

These individuals who, out of love, give themselves to all, who become the servants of all, are the living symbols of the supreme Charity.

I invite all of you here, my brothers, who aspire to be charitable, to join your thought with mine in expressing this wish: that we may strive to follow their example a little more each day so that we may be like them, in the world, messengers of light and love.

20 May 1912

The Divinity Within

ALL IN us that is not wholly consecrated to the Divinity within is in the possession, by fragments, of the whole entirety of things that encompass us and act upon what we improperly call "ourselves", whether through the intermediary of our senses or directly on the mind by suggestion.

The only way to become a conscious being, to be oneself, is to unite with the divine Self that is in all. For that, we must, by the aid of concentration, isolate ourselves from external influences.

When you are one with the Divinity within, you are one with all things in their depths. And it is through It and by It that you must enter into relation with them. You are then, but without attraction or repulsion, near to whatever is near to It and far from whatever is far.

Living among others you should always be a divine example, an occasion offered to them to understand and to enter on the path of the life divine. Nothing more: you should not even have the desire to make them progress; for that too would be something arbitrary.

Until you are definitively one with the Divinity within, the best way, in your relations with the outside, is to act according to the unanimous advice given by those who have themselves had the experience of this unity.

To be in a state of constant benevolence, with this as your rule, not to be troubled by anything and not to be the cause of trouble to others, not to inflict suffering upon them so far as possible.

8 June 1912

The Mother and Abdul Baha

I knew Abdul Baha very well, the successor of Baha Ullah, founder of the Bahai religion; Abdul Baha was his son. He was born in prison and lived in prison till he was forty, I believe. When he came out of prison his father was dead and he began to preach his father's religion....¹

* * *

He was the son of the famous Baha Ullah who had been put into prison for spreading ideas that were more progressive and broad-minded than those of the Sufis, and was resented by orthodox Muslims. After his death, his son, the sole heir, became determined to preach his father's religious ideas, and for this purpose he travelled to many countries of the world. He had an excellent nature. He was as simple as his aspiration was great. I liked him very much....

His sincerity and his aspiration for the Divine were simple and very spontaneous. One day, when I went to visit him, he was to give a lecture to his disciples. But he was sick and could not get up. Perhaps the meeting would have to be postponed. When I came near to him, he said, "Go and take my place at today's lecture." I was startled, unprepared as I was to hear such a request. I said to him, "I am not a member of your sect and I know nothing about it, so how can I talk to them about anything?" But he insisted, saying, "It does not matter. Say anything at all, it will be quite all right. Go and talk.... Concentrate in the sitting-room and then speak." At last he persuaded me to do it....

Then one day he asked me to stay in Paris and take the responsibility for his disciples. But I told him that as I did not

¹ *Questions and Answers 1950-51* (14 April), pp. 316-17.

The Mother and Abdul Baha

myself accept the beliefs of his sect, it was out of the question for me to do so....²

INTRODUCTION TO A TALK

All the prophets, all the instructors who have come to bring the divine word to men, have, on one point at least, given an identical teaching.

All of them have taught us that the greatest truths are sterile unless they are transformed through us into useful actions. All have proclaimed the necessity of living their revelation in daily life. All have declared that they show us the path but that we must tread it ourselves; no being, however great, can do our work in our stead.

Baha Ullah was no exception to this rule. I shall not quote the texts to you, you know them as well and better than I do. How many times Abdul Baha has said: "Do not talk, act; words are of no use without actions, we must be an example to the world."

It is indeed very necessary that each one of us should be an example to the world. For it is only by showing to men how an inner commerce with the eternal truths transforms disorder into harmony and suffering into peace, that we shall induce them to follow the way which will lead them towards liberation. But Abdul Baha is not content to give us this teaching, he is living it, and therein lies all his power of persuasion.

Indeed, who has seen Abdul Baha and not felt in his presence this perfect goodness, this sweet serenity, this peace emanating from his being?

And the revelations of Baha Ullah imparted through the mouth of his son are all the more comprehensible and convincing to us since he is living them within himself.

To some of you, perhaps, this reflection will occur: "If Abdul

² From an unpublished talk.

Words of Long Ago

Baha can realise this beauty, it is because he is the master, but for us..."

Certainly, our indolence could not formulate a better reason for refusing to make any effort, but this is merely a lazy excuse.

There is, without doubt, an almost ineradicable difference between individuals, the one arising from their special role, their place, their status in the infinite hierarchy of beings; but whatever this role or status may be, within it each one can develop his own qualities to perfection, each one can and must aspire to gain the perfect purity, the perfect sincerity, the deep harmony which bring us into accord with the laws of order in the universe.

I knew an old sage who used to compare men to minerals that were more or less crude, more or less rich, but all containing gold. Let this ore undergo the purifying flames of spiritualisation and at the bottom of the crucible will be found an ingot which is more or less heavy, but always of pure gold.

We must therefore seek to release from its matrix the pure gold that is within us.

How many methods have been recommended for this!

They are all excellent, but each one applies to a special category of mentality and character, and each individual must find the one that best suits his temperament.

That is why, unless I am mistaken, Miss Sanderson asks one person or another to set forth here his own special view of the question or else the method which he finds most effective.

I do not intend today to expound any one of these methods to you in its entirety.

I would like — since we are taught that our first duty is to act and, moreover, that our acts are for ourselves the most powerful agents of transformation — I would like only to draw your attention to two categories of action which, in my opinion, are not always accorded the full importance they have with regard to others and to ourselves.

They are purely mental actions, but nonetheless, very much

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alive, very powerful and consequently very beneficial or very harmful according to the direction imparted to them.

The first is our faculty of mental formation, thought; the second is our activity in states of sleep, which is usually known as dream and is very intimately linked with the first, as you will see.³

The very ancient traditions, whether Chaldean or Hindu, have taught from all time that thoughts are formations: by his thought a human being has the power of giving birth to real, living and active entities.

And it should not be thought that this can be done only through some extraordinary and dangerous practice known as magic. Nothing of the kind.

Any thought that is at all strong and persistent, any desire that is at all intense — which is again a way of thinking — determine mechanically, so to say, in their own medium, a formation whose duration and power of action will depend on the force and intensity of the thought or desire which has given birth to it.

To make myself understood more clearly, I have brought you a few passages from an as yet unpublished philosophical volume.

“All that lives is substantial, but all that is substantial is living. Every state of substance is a world of living forces, of real forms.

“To restrict the real to the sole domain of the forms we perceive is to restrict the universal intelligence to its physical manifestation alone, all light to the one field of our vision.

“However, no space exists where there is no vibration of light, no depth exists where the essence of the intelligible does not assume appropriate forms.”

³ This introduction seems originally to have preceded the third talk on thought (pp. 83-92) and the talk on dreams (pp. 30-37).

Words of Long Ago

“So long as we imagine that the whole universal reality is confined to the one order of substance, to the one state of materiality perceived by our senses, we know nothing and can explain nothing.

“When science endeavoured to understand what light is, it had to break out of the too narrow space and too limited area of perceptible phenomena, and it postulated, under the name of ether, a subtle state of reality. But, in reaching this state, it has taken only its first steps on the path of infinite transcendence....

“Thus, we can now become aware that the realm of being which we know is merely the field of manifestation, of a more complete materialisation of its own distant and anterior modes, the last among the fields of life.”

“If we could perceive the living images which thoughts produce around us at each moment, if we could measure the force of their power of formation, we would understand what can be created by the concourse of our converging wills and the formidable concert of the collective ideas and beliefs of a people, a civilisation, a race.”

“Certainly, all ideas are not creative to the same degree. In fact, few minds are capable of thinking real thoughts; and most individual mental formations are no more than distortions, malformations of stereotypes formed by some anonymous thinker which have become common property. The forms they assume in the intellectual substance are usually crude and stupid; besides, they do not last long.

“But as soon as an idea becomes an idea-force, a true mental dynamism, it tends to produce and maintain its plastic representation in a more stable and precise form. And great thoughts, co-ordinated syntheses of intellectual force, are in actual fact, in the substance they have assumed, living creations and active entities.”

The Mother and Abdul Baha

(At this point, in this talk of 10 March, the Mother presented again some material already given in the third talk on thought, including the “description of the mental atmosphere of a city like Paris” (p. 83)—the “night” referred to in the sentence which follows.)

And yet we must kindle the stars that one by one will come to illumine this night. This is, from the mental point of view, what Abdul Baha expects from us all. This is the way to be intellectually an example to the world.

For such an action more than for any other, perhaps, the usefulness of meetings such as this one becomes clearly visible.

By uniting our thoughts for one or two hours around a very pure and lofty idea, in a common will for disinterested progress, we create a mental atmosphere that is ever more luminous and strong. But this is not enough; it would even be very little if, when leaving these meetings, we were to plunge back defenceless into this coarse and heavy atmosphere. For in the mental as in the physical domain we are in a state of perpetual interchange with the corresponding environment.⁴

10 March 1912

NOTES FOR A MEETING

What a true meeting should be.

Mr. Ber talked to us last Friday about mantras.

2 kinds of masters according to Ramakrishna:

The master who gives the mantra and who is thus an indirect means of spiritualisation.

The master who has had the deep experience of divine union and who by his presence alone transmits spirituality—Abdul Baha.

⁴ This talk continues with passages which have come already in *On Thought-III*, etc.

Words of Long Ago

What a single man can do by his spiritual power can be achieved by a group if it unites in a thought of goodwill:

Chaldean initiation:

“When you are twelve united in righteousness, you will manifest the Ineffable.”

Groups are subject to the same laws as individuals.

More favourable moments due to collective suggestions.

Renewals: the beginning of each new year, whatever date is chosen as a starting-point.

An opportunity is given to awaken in oneself the idea that all things can be new and the resolution to make them so.

Consequently, the usefulness of meeting at fixed times to make favourable resolutions together.

Reading.

3 January 1913

THE DEPARTURE OF ABDUL BAHÁ

Last Monday, Abdul Bahá took leave of us; in a very few days he will have left Paris, and I know many hearts which will feel a great void and will grieve.

Yet only the body is leaving us, and what is the body if not precisely that in which men are most alike, be they great or small, wise or ignorant, terrestrial or divine? Yes, you may rest assured that only his body is leaving us; his thought will remain faithfully with us, and his unchanging affection will enfold us, and his spiritual influence will always be the same, absolutely the same. Whether materially he is near or far matters little, for the divine forces elude completely the laws of the material world: they are omnipresent, always at work to satisfy every receptivity, every sincere aspiration.

So although it may be pleasant for our outer being to see his physical appearance or hear his voice, to dwell in his presence, we must truly tell ourselves that, inasmuch as it seems

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indispensable to us, this shows that we are still little conscious of the inner life, the true life.

Even if we do not attain to the marvellous depths of the divine life, of which only very rare individuals are constantly conscious, already in the domain of thought we escape the laws of time and space.

To think of someone is to be near him, and wherever two beings may find themselves, even if they are physically separated by thousands of kilometres, if they think of each other they are together in a very real way. If we are able to concentrate our thought sufficiently and to concentrate sufficiently in our thought, we can become integrally conscious of what we are thinking of, and if it is a man, sometimes see or hear him—in any case know his thought.

Thus separation no longer exists, it is an illusory appearance. And in France, in America, in Persia or in China, we are always near the one we love and think of.

But this fact is all the more real in a case such as ours, where we want to come into contact with an especially active and conscious thought, a thought which assumes and manifests an infinite love, a thought which enfolds the whole earth with a loving and fatherly solicitude that is only too glad to come to the help of those who entrust themselves to it.

Experience this mental communion and you will see that there is no room for sorrow.

Each morning when you get up, before you begin your day, with love and admiration and gratefulness hail this great family, these saviours of mankind who, ever the same, have come, come and will come until the end of time, as guides and instructors, as humble and marvellous servants of their brothers, in order to help them to scale the steep slope of perfection. Thus when you wake up, concentrate on them your thought full of trust and gratitude and you will soon experience the beneficial effects of this concentration. You will feel their presence responding to your call, you will be surrounded, imbued with their light and

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love. Then the daily effort to understand a little better, to love a little more, to serve more, will be more fruitful and easier at the same time. The help you give to others will become more effective and your heart will be filled with an unwavering joy.

9 June 1913

Part 4

*Prayers and meditations, some written between 1914 and 1916,
the rest undated but probably belonging to the pre-1920 period.*

Prayers and Meditations

IN SO FAR as the activities of the physical organism are ego-centric, it is both legitimate and necessary to separate the consciousness from it and to regard the body as a servant to be directed, guided and made obedient. As the terrestrial being grows more receptive to the divine forces and manifests them in its illumined activities, one can identify oneself with it once more and cease to distinguish between the instrument and the Doer. But since, by the very necessity of preservation, these two modes of activity inevitably coexist, both these points of view, both these ways of feeling must also coexist.

24 July 1914

True impersonality of the nervous being does not consist in an entire and absolute surrender to the Divine Will. This submission is but a preparation. Perfect impersonality—whether in the *prana* or in the other worlds of being—lies in identification with the terrestrial *prana*, or rather with the divine bliss deep within all sensations as within all universal activities. The result is that instead of feeling the joy of a sensation, one *is* this very sensation in all those who enjoy it. Then the individual *prana* no longer exists; but there is instead a force, at once impersonal and conscious, which manifests in all the organs that are capable of perceiving it.

For example, there is a subtle joy, both sweet and profound, in the sensation one feels while walking alone or with a companion with whom one is in perfect harmony, through seldom trod or virgin tracts of countryside unspoiled by any human atmosphere, where Nature is tranquil, vast, pure like an aspiration, holy like a prayer; on mountains, in forests, along stray paths beside limpid streams, or on the shores of a boundless ocean. So long as the *prana* remains individual, this joy can

Words of Long Ago

only be experienced when certain outer conditions are fulfilled. On the other hand, when the *prana* is truly impersonalised, universalised, *one becomes this delightful bliss in all those who feel it*; one no longer needs, in order to enjoy it, to be surrounded by certain specific material conditions.

With regard to the nervous plane, one is then perfectly free from all circumstances. One has attained liberation.

30 July 1914

I listened to the voice of the waves and it told me of many marvels. It spoke to me of the joy of life and of the ecstasies of movement. O Sea, in a song without end and ever renewed, thou didst tell me again of the power of love which makes all things true. Contemplating the splendour of thy invincible action, I perceived the irresistible surge that carries the universe towards the Supreme Reality. The force that lifts thee and changes thy surface into mountains is like the force that raises the world out of its inertia and awakens in it the aspiration for the Divine.

Then as I watched thee in the silence, thou didst speak to me more deeply still, and thou didst tell me of the great mystery of eternal Love that loves itself in all forms and is self-revealed in all activities. Already in my being this ineffable Love lived self-aware, but at that hour its life took on an exceptional intensity, or perhaps the individual perception was exceptionally clear. O adorable Lord, Sovereign Master of the world, Thou who, being all, possessest and delightest in all, didst Thou in that moment of Thy eternity cast a closer glance towards us, that we were thus bathed in such a magnificence of love? Or was it that Thou didst wish, in the humble instrument of this ephemeral and limited being, to taste more strongly and fully, with more intensity and precision, Thy own delight of being and self-manifestation? Suddenly all was lit with the inexpressible beauty of Thy Truth, and in the mirror of the individual consciousness Thou didst reflect all the infinitely varied modes of self-expression of Thy

Prayers and Meditations

being of Love. Pain and enjoyment united and fused in an ecstasy which seemed as if it must consume the whole being in its blaze. Oh, how well it understood Thee, this portion of Thyself that has crystallised into what I call my being, how powerfully it loved Thee in those unforgettable moments! All barriers of thought and sensation had vanished, consumed by the ardour of Thy divine fire, and indeed it was Thou who at that moment didst delight in Thy eternal and infinite presence in all things. Thou wast all actions and all resistances, all sensations and all thoughts, the one who loves and the one who is loved, that which gives itself and that which receives, in an inexhaustible and ever-moving harmony.

I listened to the song of the waves, and it told me of such great marvels....

March or April 1915

To know how to renounce the satisfaction of the present moment for the sake of realising one's ideal is the great art of those who want to make their transient, total existence yield its utmost.

There are innumerable categories of "successful" people; these categories are determined by the greater or lesser breadth, nobility, complexity, purity and luminosity of their ideal. One may "succeed" as a rag-picker or "succeed" as master of the world or even as a perfect ascetic; in all three cases, although on very different levels, it is one's more or less integral and extensive self-mastery which makes the "success" possible.

On the other hand, there is only one way of being a "failure"; and that happens to the greatest, to the most sovereign intelligence, as well as to the smallest, the most limited, to all those who are unable to subordinate the sensation of the present moment to the ideal they wish to achieve, but without having the strength to take up the path — identical for all in nature if not in extent and complexity — that leads to this achievement.

Between the extreme of an individual who has fully and

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perfectly realised all he had conceived and that of one who has been incapable of realising anything at all, there is, of course, an almost unlimited range of intermediate cases; this range is remarkably complex, because not only is there a difference in the degree of realisation of the ideal, but there is also a difference between the varied qualities of the ideal itself. There are ambitions which pursue mere personal interests, material, sentimental or intellectual, others which have more general, more collective or higher aims, and yet others which are superhuman, so to say, and strive to scale the peaks that open on the splendours of eternal Truth, eternal Consciousness and eternal Peace. It is easy to understand that the power of one's effort and renunciation must be commensurate with the breadth and height of the goal one has chosen.

At any level, from the most modest to the most transcendent, one rarely finds a perfect balance between the sum of self-control, the power of sacrifice available to the individual who has chosen a goal, and the sum of renunciations of every kind and nature which the goal requires.

When the constitution of an individual permits this perfect balance, then his earthly existence yields its utmost possible result.

23 April 1915

At times Thou kindlest in the being an ardent brasier; at such moments, all seems possible to it — the most extreme and the most supreme realisations as well as the most obscure and modest.

When there is not this ardent brasier, the being is like a heap of ashes; and Thou lightest rarely the brasier. Is it to spare this frail instrument?

The mind puts questions; but the integral being is satisfied; it asks for nothing else than what Thou willest.

But it knows itself to be poor and miserable, naked and worthless without Thy active Presence.

Prayers and Meditations

It is Thy Presence that always it calls and for that it waits.

9 December 1916

Silence comes and the flame of aspiration is lit, the body is suffused with warmth, and in this warmth there is a blissful impulse towards transformation; the song of divine harmony is heard, calm and smiling; it is a sweet symphony, almost imperceptible and yet full of power. Then silence returns, deeper and vaster, yes, vast unto infinity, and the being exists beyond all bounds of time or space.

O my sweet Lord, my beloved God, all my being cries out to Thee in an irresistible surge: "I love Thee! I love Thee! I love Thee!"... with a love no words can ever express. The whole being is aflame, fused in this intensity. Only my heart, so often disappointed, so cruelly deceived, murmurs timidly: "Wilt Thou not do as men have done? Wilt Thou not repulse this love as unworthy of Thee, or too heavy to bear?" O doubting heart! Dost thou not see that it is the adored One Himself who loves in thee and feeds this fire that will never die? No more timidity, no more vain reserve... the past fades away like a dream. All that remains is a marvellous Present made of sublime Eternity.... O my beloved God, Thou hast taken me into Thy arms that are so strong and so gentle, and nothing exists but Thy divine Ecstasy.

Art is the human language of the nervous plane, intended to express and communicate the Divine, who in the domain of sensation manifests as beauty.

The purpose of art is therefore to give those for whom it is meant a freer and more perfect communion with the Supreme

Words of Long Ago

Reality. The first contact with this Supreme Reality expresses itself in our consciousness by a flowering of the being in a plenitude of vast and peaceful delight. Each time that art can give the spectator this contact with the infinite, however fleetingly, it fulfills its aim; it has shown itself worthy of its mission.

Thus no art which has for many centuries moved and delighted a people can be dismissed, since it has at least partially fulfilled its mission — to be the powerful and more or less perfect utterance of that which is to be expressed.

What makes it difficult for the sensibility of a nation to enjoy the delight that another nation finds in one art or another is the habitual limitation of the nervous being which, even more than the mental being, is naturally exclusive in its ability to perceive the Divine and which, when it has entered into relation with Him through certain forms, feels an almost irresistible reluctance to recognise Him through other forms of sensation.

What is this “I” that speaks from time to time, perceiving its limitation in the very midst of the consciousness of the infinite? It is the point of concentration where the Will which is beyond becomes individually conscious so that it can manifest through the terrestrial instrument; in short, it is the individualised intermediary between the instrument and the thought of the worker, a kind of more or less skilled hand. The “I” knows itself to be completely independent of the present mode of manifestation — form, body, surroundings, education, sensory experiences; it is a constituent element of the All, an infinitesimal part of the universe; its duration as an “I” is identical to the duration of the universe and dependent on it. It knows that only That which is not an “I” can be free from this dependence, can be eternally. The “I” knows that it is perfectly surrendered to That which it cannot think, that it is moved by That, and therefore it does not say, “I want”, but “I have to want” or “I am made to

Prayers and Meditations

want”. And, surrendered to its Eternal Master, the Master of his temporary instrument, knowing that it will disappear at the same time as the work for which it was created, it accomplishes it joyfully, without impatience for its completion, nor any desire for its prolongation.

Part 5

Notes and Reflections

Found, with this title, among the Mother's manuscripts

On the Mysteries of the Ascent towards God

TO JUDGE the events of history, a certain distance is needed; similarly, if one knows how to rise high enough above material contingencies, one can see the terrestrial life as a whole. From that moment, it is easy to realise that all the efforts of mankind converge towards the same goal.

It is true that collectively or individually, men follow very different paths to reach it; some of these paths twist and turn so much that they seem at first sight to move away from the goal rather than to lead towards it; but all are going there, consciously or unconsciously, swiftly or more slowly.

What then is this goal?

It is one with the purpose of man's life and his mission in the universe.

The goal: "Call him what you will, for to the wise, he is the Possessor of all names."

The Tao of the Chinese — The Brahman of the Hindus —

The Law of the Buddhists — The Good of Hermes — That which cannot be named, according to the ancient Jewish tradition — The God of the Christians — The Allah of the Muslims — The Justice, the Truth of the materialists.

The purpose of man's life is to become conscious of That.

His mission is to manifest It.

All religions, all the teachings of all the sages are nothing other than methods to reach this goal.

They can be classified into three principal categories. First method — intellectual: The love of Truth, the search for the Absolute.

By discernment, study, reflection, analysis, control and concentration of the thought, one dispels the illusion of personality,

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a whirl of atoms in a single substance which is itself nothing but an appearance: a condensation of the ether.

When we say *myself* what do we speak of? The body? The sensations? The feelings? The thoughts? All this has no stability. The appearance of continuity comes from a rigorous determinism obtaining in each of these realms of the being; and into this determinism there enter as many external as internal agents. Where then is the self, that is to say, something permanent, constant, ever the same? In order to find it, to find this absolute, we must proceed from depth to depth, from relativity to relativity — for all that is in form is relative — until we reach That which is Unthinkable to our reason, Unutterable to our language, but knowable by identification — for we carry That in ourselves, it is the very centre and life of *our* being.

Second method — the love of God. It is the method of those who have a developed religious sense.

Aspiration towards the Divine Essence of all things that we have perceived in a moment of integral illumination.

Then self-consecration to this Divine Essence, to this Eternal Law, integral self-giving, at every moment, in all one's actions. Complete surrender: one is now only a docile instrument, a faithful servant before the Supreme Master. The Love is so complete that it causes a detachment from all that is not the Divine Absolute and perfect concentration on Him.

“Besides, it is not impossible to rise higher than that, for love itself is a veil between the lover and the Beloved.”

Identification.

Third method — the love of humanity.

As a consequence of a clear vision, an intense perception of the immense suffering of humanity, there arises the resolution to consecrate oneself entirely to making this suffering cease.

Self-oblivion in the giving of all one's thoughts, all one's energies, all one's activities to succour others, in however small a degree.

“With your hearts overflowing with compassion, go forth

On the Mysteries of the Ascent towards God

into this world torn by pain, be instructors, and wherever the darkness of ignorance rules, there light a torch.”

This consecration to humanity manifests in four domains. One can give to others in four ways:

Material gifts. Intellectual gifts: knowledge. Spiritual gifts: harmony, beauty, rhythm. The integral gift, which can be made only by those who have followed the three paths, who have synthesised within themselves all the methods of development, of becoming conscious of That which is Eternal: the gift of example. The example which is not self-conscious and which one gives because one *is*, because one lives in the Eternal Divine Consciousness.

Two Parallel Movements

THERE should be two parallel movements in the evolution of an individual; and it is because he generally neglects one or the other of these movements in order to concentrate on one alone, that his progress is so halting and so unbalanced.

One of these movements is to become conscious of all the constituent elements of the being, material and sensory as well as intellectual and spiritual; we must become acquainted with the mechanism of the life within us, with all its tendencies, qualities, faculties and varied activities, very impartially, that is, without any preconceived idea of good or evil, without any absolute or arbitrary judgment (for our judgments are inevitably lacking in clear-sightedness) about what should subsist and what should disappear, what should be encouraged and what should be suppressed. Our vision of what we are must be objective, without bias, if we want it to be sincere and integral: we are faced with a universe which we must explore down to its smallest details, know in its most obscure and infinitesimal elements, with a scientific attitude of perfect mental impersonality, that is, without any *a priori* judgments.

Whatever we may think, this work of observation, analysis and introspection is never completed. At all events, as long as we are on earth in a physical body, we should always study the immensely complex being that we are, so that no element may elude our knowledge and therefore our control: *for we can only master what we know and command what we have mastered.*

This brings us to the second movement which should exist parallel to and simultaneous with the first. It is the consecration, the constant and constantly repeated surrender of all the elements subject to our control to the Supreme and Divine Law.

Each element that has become conscious of itself, each ten-

Two Parallel Movements

dency, each faculty, must surrender to the Sovereign Guidance of the Eternal Essence of Being, with the simple trust of a child; She will order, classify and utilise all these elements in the right way; She and She alone can separate what can be used from what cannot, what must be encouraged from what must be eliminated; and, no doubt, as before Her all is of equal value, all can be used, since by Her all is transformed, illumined, transfigured: all that becomes conscious of Her and gives itself to Her becomes Herself and thus escapes all notions of good and evil, which are purely external and human.

One of these movements, one of these attitudes without the other is incomplete and one-sided. To consecrate our being in one block to the Supreme Essence is not enough: all the elements that we do not know and have not mastered elude this consecration and therefore follow their own law instead of conforming to the Eternal Law, and become the source of every disturbance, every unexpected revolt in one who had yet thought himself to be entirely a servant of The Law. But he was forgetful of all the unknown nooks in his being which also have a claim to life and activity and which are manifested in their turn, but in an activity that is disorderly and disharmonious relative to the being as a whole, since they elude the central will.

On the other hand, to become conscious of ourselves in our smallest details is vain and sterile, even dangerous, if it is not done for the sake of order, so that the Divine Essence can be made the Omnipotent ruler of all these elements, if we do not secure their unreserved surrender to Her supreme guidance, to The Sovereign Law.

Only in the balanced union of these two attitudes can one truly, integrally, call oneself a Servant of the Eternal.

Towards the Supreme Light

SOME people—nearly all—live in their sensations, to the extent of being conscious only of the present moment. They must be taught the consciousness of their whole life and shown the extent to which their feelings are transient and will be replaced, in the course of their existence, by innumerable contradictory sensations.

(The candle)

Those who have become conscious of their life in its entirety must be taught to identify their consciousness with that of the earth (to enter into a depth of their being which is one with the terrestrial destinies). What is the duration of one life compared with the duration of the earth?

(The gaslight)

Those who have become conscious of the terrestrial life must be taught to identify their consciousness with that of the universe, to find within themselves that which is one with the universe and will last as long as the universe. (What is the duration of the earth in comparison to that of the universe? One breath!)

(The electric light)

Those who have become conscious of the universal life, in all its forms, must be taught to identify their consciousness with That which is Eternal, with That which has never begun and will never end, with the Permanent, the Immutable, beyond Which there is nothing.

And for them will be kindled the undying Light.

(The Supreme Light)

Three Dreams

1

We were on the summit of a mountain, so high that the valleys were invisible. The sky was perfectly clear and colourless. The summit of the mountain was covered with rich pastures. In these pastures, four herds of cows were grazing, guarded by four cowherds. These herds were at an equal distance from one another, thus forming approximately the four corners of a square. Each guardian had his own very particular appearance and characteristics. "He" was seeking something that he wanted to express and make effective, and for this he lacked certain elements. These elements lay beyond the summit of the mountain and He was asking me if there was any way of going there to fetch them. The question was voiced aloud and all the cows of the herd that was nearest to us bounded towards Him, lowing with delight. The man who was leading them, tall, strong, stocky, clothed in animal skins, white-skinned and very hairy, with black, shaggy hair and a square face, went towards Him and said to Him in a loud voice, "I put myself entirely at your disposal, my cows want to serve you and so do I. I shall lead them to the place where the elements of knowledge you want to acquire are lying and we shall bring them to you."

While he was speaking, the herd which was on the right in the same line drew near, led by its guardian, who was interested and came to listen. He was tall, thin, sumptuously dressed, with smooth skin, an oval, elongated face and very black and silky hair falling to his shoulders. One part of his garment was red, but there were several other colours. He was friendly and well-disposed. But he did not offer his services.

2 August 1914

Words of Long Ago

2

We were advancing along the broad white highway which led to our goal, when at a fork in the road we saw a great number of people massing and huddling together with expressions of terror. We wonder why as we proceed on our way, when we hear ourselves being called by a shepherd dressed in white, who tells us to join the people on the bank by the roadside. And in answer to our enquiry, he tells us that an enormous herd of cows and bulls has been kept prisoner until now, but that the time has come to let them loose, that the rope which is holding them back will be removed, and that they are going to charge and are likely to destroy everything in their path. I reply, "Indeed these creatures are full of vigour and sometimes even of apparently blind violence, but for people such as we two who are walking straight on our way, there is nothing to fear; bulls have never done us any harm." But the shepherd insists, saying that it is really something exceptional and unprecedented. So as not to vex him we stop and stand by the roadside in front of the crowding people. But there again he insists, saying, "Not there, not there, you will be trampled down, behind." And he makes us stand behind all the others, back from the side of the road.

At that moment, in the distance, I catch sight of the immense herd of cows and bulls; the rope that held them back is removed and they surge forward, charging straight in front of them; and if anyone had been in their path, they would certainly have trampled him down. When all have passed, the leader of the herd, who had been kept until last, is let loose. He is a splendid, enormous white bull. Instead of following the same path as the others, he turns to the right, in front of us, following the descending path. But after a moment he stops, looking for something, does not find it, retraces his steps, and finally stations himself just in front of me. Then I see that it is a triple bull, composed of three bulls closely bound together. One of the three (the middle one, I think) was a little less white than the

Three Dreams

two others. To my left there was a priest who, at the sight of this enormous creature charging upon us and halting just in front of me, is seized with a great fear. And in his fright he begins to move restlessly. Then I say to him, "Well then, what about your faith in God? If He has decided that you are to be trampled down by this bull, won't you find that His will is good?" Rather ashamed of himself, he wants to look brave, so he starts talking to the bull and giving him friendly pats on the muzzle. But the powerful creature was beginning to lose patience. And I was thinking, "With his fear, this fool will really end up by causing a disaster." "We had better go away," I said, turning towards "Him". And without any further care for the bull, we set out on our way once more. We have scarcely taken a few steps on the road when we see the bull quietly passing beside us, calm and strong. A little farther on, I see another bull coming in the opposite direction, all reddish-brown, with a wild and ferocious look, charging with its huge horns pointed forward. I look back towards "Him", walking a few steps behind me, and I say to him, "This one is the really dangerous creature, the one that is alone and going in the opposite direction to the others. This one has evil intentions. It cannot even see us because we are on the straight path and are protected. But I am much afraid for the others." Still a little farther on we hear a galloping sound behind us, as if the ferocious bull were coming back with others. I feel that it is time for us to reach the goal. At that moment the road seems to be closed; in front of us there is a door that I want to open, but my hand slips on the knob and I cannot turn it. And yet time is pressing. Then I distinctly hear the deep Voice, "Look." I look up, and right in front of us, beside the closed door, I see a wide-open door leading into a square room which is the goal. And the voice resumes, "Enter. That is where all the doors are to be found and you will be able to open them all." With a feeling of great peace and tranquil strength I woke up.

1914 (*after August*)

Words of Long Ago

3

Lord, last night you gave me a dream.

This is what I remember of it:

At the top of a very high tower standing on a high mountain, in a room so vast that it seemed to be low, I was leaning against the far wall, and facing me was a window looking outside. On my left a raised throne with several steps, and on the throne sat the Lord of Nations. This I knew although I had not looked at him. To my right at the far end of the immense room, in a kind of alcove lit from above, sat a young woman—a nation. She was a small, dumpy child with very dark hair and a pale and mat complexion. She had put on a wedding-dress, with a crown of white flowers on her head (the dress was mostly white with some blue and a few touches of gold). I knew that I had helped this nation to dress in this way, and to climb the mountain and the tower to come up to the room. She had come to offer herself as a bride to the Lord of Nations, and for this purpose she was to undergo a series of ordeals that the Lord wanted to impose upon her in order to know whether she was worthy of him. These ordeals were the ordeals of Terror.

For the first ordeal he had a full glass as well as a decanter brought to her. And she was to drink the contents of both. To her they seemed to be blood—human blood newly shed. And He, from the height of his throne, was saying to her, “Drink this blood to show that you are not afraid.” The poor child was trembling with disgust and did not dare touch the ghastly beverage. But at that hour, Lord, You had given me the full consciousness and power of the Truth. From where I stood I could clearly see the transparent purity of the water which the glass and the decanter really contained. And while the child was still hesitating and the Lord was taunting her in a biting tone, “What! you are trembling already! This is yet only the first ordeal, the easiest of all, what will you do next?”...

Then, heedless of the consequences, I cried to the child *in*

Three Dreams

a language that the Lord did not understand, “You can drink without fear, it is only water, pure water, I swear it.” And the child, trusting in my word that dispelled the suggestion, began to drink calmly....

But because of the force with which I had spoken, the Lord suspected something and turned towards me in fury, rebuking me for speaking when I should not. To which I replied—still heedless of the consequences which I knew to be inevitable—“What I say is not your concern since You cannot understand the language I have used!”...

Then the memorable thing happened....

The room suddenly grew as dark as night and in this night a still darker form appeared, a form I perceived distinctly although no one else could see it.

This form of darkness was like the shadow of the light of Truth within me. And this shadow was Terror.

Immediately the fight began. The being, whose hair was like furious serpents, moving with hideous contortions and terrible gnashing of teeth, rushed upon me. If with only one of her fingers she were to touch my breast at the place of the heart *the great calamity for the world* would occur, and this had to be avoided at all costs. It was a fearful battle. All the powers of Truth were concentrated in my consciousness; and nothing less was needed to fight against so formidable a foe as Terror!

Her endurance and strength in combat were remarkable. At last came the supreme moment of the fight. We were so close to each other that it seemed impossible that we should not touch, and her outstretched finger drew nearer, threatening my breast...

At that precise moment the Lord of Nations, who could see nothing of the tragic battle, stretched out his hand to take something from a small table at his side. This hand—unawares—passed between my opponent and myself. I was then able to take support from it and Terror, for this time definitely vanquished, sank to the ground like a dark dust without power or reality....

Then, recognising the one who sat on the throne, and doing

Words of Long Ago

homage to his power, I leant my head upon his shoulder and said to him joyfully, “Together, we have conquered Terror!”

Such was my dream—and with it You gave me the full understanding of it.

For all this I give thanks to You, as for a priceless gift.

31 January–1 February [1915?]

The War

1

I have visited trains, each one bringing between five and six hundred wounded from the front. It is a moving sight, not so much because of all that these unfortunate men are suffering, but above all because of the noble manner in which most of them bear their sufferings. Their soul shines through their eyes, the slightest contact with the deeper forces awakens it. And from the intensity, the fullness of the powers of true love which could, in their presence, be manifested in perfect silence, it was easy to realise the value of their receptivity.

Then the mentality which takes pleasure in making constructions for realisation begins to imagine all that could be accomplished with the help of this receptivity. And scenes, both vast and complex, of possible realisations follow one after another, streaming endlessly in the splendour of their light and love.

Besides, at present, the smallest incident, the slightest contact with the outside world serves as a pretext for innumerable constructions which to the mentality appear vast, luminous, full of an intense life and a great power for realisation. They are like so many outer frames or forms of manifestation offered for the approval and the choice of That which wants to manifest — but at the side of the daring constructor stands the loving and docile child who, in an ardent aspiration towards the Supreme Principle of Truth, softly murmurs: "Lord, I am ignorant of Thy Will in its entirety, I construct events which are commensurate with my paltry individual limitations and which probably fit very badly into the immensity of Thy plan. But Thou knowest that they are nothing but fleeting constructions which are dissolved as soon as they are created and which in no way mar the purity of the mental mirror ready to reflect at each moment the appropriate transcription of what Thou willest the integral instrument to

Words of Long Ago

execute." And then the whole being, in a vast and luminous and objectless ecstasy, ceases to be "a being" and becomes the Boundless. And in the silence of contemplation the mentality knows that all these diverse constructions which present themselves to it are part of a whole which will be given to it to manifest progressively, perhaps through the medium of several bodily instruments. And the simultaneous vision of That which is and that which is becoming takes hold of this consciousness and does not leave it for many hours, hours ever more frequent and lasting.

12 May 1915

2

The entire nervous plane seems to have swept down upon earth; but in its form of power, of force, it is localised in the area of combat.

Elsewhere, behind the lines or in the neutral countries, this plane has embodied itself mainly in its form of weakness, nervous tension, feverishness, impatience, unruly imagination, frittering away all energies for action. All those who are not fighting feel bereft of the tremendous power which is driving — sometimes to the point of literally maddening them — those who are fighting and killing each other.

All those who go into the war zone — a clearly defined zone from the point of view of the active influences and atmosphere — are seized, carried away, impersonalised in a formidable current, as impetuous as a raging ocean. They are disindividualised, as it were, reduced to an elemental state, to the state of natural forces which, like the wind, the storm or the waters, accomplish their earthly work, moved by a Will of which they are unconscious. They are no longer men but masses that move and act; and even the innumerable instances which seem to spring from courage, from individual heroism, are yet akin to the heroism of bees or ants — almost mechanical gestures, instinctive gestures

The War

—induced in an isolated element by the collective consciousness of the genius of the race.

Discarding all mental constructions, sensing them to be poor and strengthless compared to the realising, destructive power at their command, they will be invincible instruments of the transforming Will; and until they have gone to the very end of their task nothing can possibly be attempted for future reconstructions.

At present these forces, for the major part at least, are closely linked to the divine Consciousness which is guiding their surging flood, directing the flow of their seemingly untamed and untamable torrent—indeed, because it is not subject to any mental guidance, they obey its impulsion: will they know how, will they be able to obey to the very end? Will they not let themselves be carried away by their own movement? Will not Kali, the longer she dances, lose control over her dance?...

All depends on the clarity with which the divine Will can be manifested upon earth; if it has been able in time to prepare for itself instruments which are sufficiently receptive and pure, instruments which are consciously immersed in its Essence while maintaining an effective contact with the active nervous power, then this monstrous and sublime outpouring of unbridled energies will yield its utmost results for the transformation of earth and man.

Paris, 28 October 1915

Part 6

Essays, letters, etc. written in Japan between 1916 and 1920

Woman and the War

YOU HAVE asked me what I think of the feminist movement and what will be the consequences of the present war for it.

One of the first effects of the war has certainly been to give quite a new aspect to the question. The futility of the perpetual oppositions between men and women was at once made clearly apparent, and behind the conflict of the sexes, only relating to exterior facts, the gravity of the circumstances allowed the discovery of the always existent, if not always outwardly manifested fact, of the real collaboration, of the true union of these two complementary halves of humanity.

Many men were surprised to see how easily women could replace them in most of the posts they occupied before, and to their surprise was added something of regret not to have found sooner a real partner of their work and their struggles in her whom more often they had only considered as an object of pleasure and distraction, or at best as the guardian of their hearth and mother of their children. Certainly woman is that and to be it well requires exceptional qualities, but she is not only that, as the present circumstances have amply proved.

In going to tend the wounded in the most difficult material conditions, actually under the enemy's fire, the so-called weak sex has proved that its physical energy and power of endurance were equal to those of man. But where, above all, women have given proof of exceptional gifts is in their organising faculties. These faculties of administration were recognised in them long ago by the Brahmanic India of before the Mohammedan conquest. There is a popular adage there which says: "Property governed by woman means prosperous property." But in the Occident Semitic thought allied to Roman legislation has influenced

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customs too deeply for women to have the opportunity of showing their capacity for organisation.

It is true that in France one frequently sees the woman absolute mistress of the administration of her house even from the pecuniary point of view, and the proverbial riches of the French *petite bourgeoisie* proves that the system has a good side. It was rare however to see the feminine faculties utilised to direct undertakings of great importance, and until now the confidential posts of public administration had always been closed to them. The present war has shown that in refusing the co-operation of women the governments deprived themselves of precious help. I will cite you an event as example.

A few months after the outbreak of the war, when the Germans had almost entirely occupied the Belgian territory, the inhabitants of the invaded regions were in indescribable misery. Fortunately, thanks to the initiative of several rich American men and women, a Society was founded to supply the most urgent needs of the sorely tried populations. As the result of certain military operations a fairly large group of small villages were suddenly deprived of all food. Famine was imminent. The American Society sent a message to some similar English Societies asking that five vans of the most indispensable supplies should be dispatched immediately. These vans must reach their destination in three days. The men to whom this request was addressed replied that it was quite impossible to comply with it. Luckily a woman heard of the matter. It seemed terrible to her that in such tragic circumstances one could use the word "impossible". She belonged to a group of women who aided the wounded and sufferers of the war. Immediately they promised the American Society they would satisfy it and in three days the numerous obstacles were overcome though some of the difficulties, especially those concerning transport, seemed truly unsurmountable. A powerful organising mind, an ardent will, had done the miracle: the provisions arrived in time and the dreadful misery of famine was thus avoided.

Woman and the War

This is not to say that only woman's exceptional qualities have been revealed by the present war. Her weaknesses, her faults, her pettiness have also been given the opportunity of display, and certainly if women wish to take the place they claim in the governing of nations they must progress much further in the mastery of self, the broadening of ideas and points of view, in intellectual suppleness and oblivion of their sentimental preferences in order to become worthy of the management of public affairs.

It is certain that purely masculine politics have given proof of incapacity; they have foundered too often in their search of strictly personal interest, and in their arbitrary and violent action. Doubtless women's politics would bring about a tendency to disinterestedness and more humanitarian solutions. But unfortunately, in their present state, women in general are creatures of passion and enthusiastic partisanship; they lack the reasoning calm that purely intellectual activity gives; the latter is undoubtedly dangerous because hard and cold and pitiless, nevertheless it is unquestionably useful to master the overflow of sentiment which cannot hold a predominant place in the ruling of collective interests.

These faults which would be serious if the activity of women had to replace that of men, could form, on the contrary, by a collaboration of the two sexes, an element of compensation for the opposite faults of men. That would be the best means of leading them gradually to mutual perfecting. To reduce the woman's part to solely interior and domestic occupations, and the man's part to exclusively exterior and social occupations, thus separating what should be united, would be to perpetuate the present sad state of things, from which both are equally suffering. It is in front of the highest duties and heaviest responsibilities that their respective qualities must unite in a close and confident solidarity.

Is it not time that this hostile attitude of the two sexes facing one another as irreconcilable adversaries should cease? A severe, a painful lesson is being given to the nations. On the ruins piled

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up now, new constructions more beautiful and more harmonious can be erected. It is no longer the moment for frail competitions and self-interested claims; all human beings, men or women, must associate in a common effort to become conscious of the highest ideal which asks to be realised and to work ardently for its realisation. The question to be solved, the real question is then not only that of a better utilisation of their outer activities, but above all that of an inner spiritual growth. Without inner progress there is no possible outer progress.

Thus the problem of feminism, as all the problems of the world, comes back to a spiritual problem. For the spiritual reality is at the basis of all others; the divine world, the Dhammata of Buddhism, is the eternal foundation on which are built all the other worlds. In regard to this Supreme Reality all are equal, men and women, in rights and in duties; the only distinction which can exist in this domain being based on the sincerity and ardour of aspiration, on the constancy of the will. And it is in the recognition of this fundamental spiritual equality that can be found the only serious and lasting solution for this problem of the relation of the sexes. It is in this light that it must be placed, it is at this height that must be sought the focus of action and new life, around which will be constructed the future temple of Humanity.

7 July 1916

Woman and Man

LET US first take for granted that pride and impudence are always ridiculous: only stupid and ignorant people are arrogant. As soon as a human being is sufficiently enlightened to have a contact, however slight, with the all-pervading mystery of the universe, he becomes necessarily humble.

Woman, by the very fact of her passivity, having more easily than man the intuition of the Supreme Power at work in the world, is more often, more naturally humble.

But to base the fact of this humility on need is erroneous. Woman needs man not more than man needs woman; or rather, more exactly, man and woman have an equal need of one another.

Even in the mere material domain, there are as many men who depend materially upon women as there are women who depend upon men. If humility were a result of that dependency, then, in the first case, the men ought to be humble and the women to have the authority.

Besides, to say that women should be humble because it is thus that they please men, is also erroneous. It would lead one to think that woman has been put on earth only for the purpose of giving pleasure to man — which is absurd.

All the universe has been created to express the Divine Power, and human beings, men or women, have for special mission to become conscious of and to manifest that Eternal Divine Essence. Such is their object and none other. And if they knew and remembered that more often, men and women would cease to think of petty quarrels about priority or authority; they would not see a greater mark of respect in the fact of being served than of serving, for all would consider themselves equally as servitors of the Divine, and would make it their honour to serve ever more and ever better.

Impressions of Japan

YOU ASK me for my impressions about Japan. To write on Japan is a difficult task; so many things have been already written, so many silly things also... but these more on the people than on their country. For the country is so wonderful, picturesque, many-sided, unexpected, charming, wild or sweet; it is in its appearance so much a synthesis of all the other countries of the world, from the tropical to the arctic, that no artistic eye can remain indifferent to it. I believe many excellent descriptions have been given of Japan; I shall not then attempt to add mine, which would certainly be far less interesting. But the people of Japan have, in general, been misunderstood and misinterpreted, and on that subject something worth saying remains to be said.

In most cases foreigners come in touch with that part of the Japanese people which has been spoiled by foreigners,—a Japan of money-makers and imitators of the West; obviously they have proved very clever imitators, and you can easily find here a great many of those things which make the West hateful. If we judge Japan by her statesmen, her politicians and her businessmen, we shall find her a country very much like one of the Powers of Europe, though she possesses the vitality and concentrated energies of a nation which has not yet reached its zenith.

That energy is one of the most interesting features of Japan. It is visible everywhere, in everyone; the old and the young, the workmen, the women, the children, the students, all, save perhaps the “new rich”, display in their daily life the most wonderful storage of concentrated energy. With their perfect love for nature and beauty, this accumulated strength is, perhaps, the most distinctive and widely spread characteristic of the Japanese. That is what you may observe as soon as you reach that land of

Impressions of Japan

the Rising Sun where so many people and so many treasures are gathered in a narrow island.

But if you have — as we have had — the privilege of coming in contact with the true Japanese, those who kept untouched the righteousness and bravery of the ancient Samurai, then you can understand what in truth is Japan, you can seize the secret of her force. They know how to remain silent; and though they are possessed of the most acute sensitiveness, they are, among the people I have met, those who express it the least. A friend here can give his life with the greatest simplicity to save yours, though he never told you before he loved you in such a profound and unselfish way. Indeed he had not even told you that he had loved you at all. And if you were not able to read the heart behind the appearances, you would have seen only a very exquisite courtesy which leaves little room for the expression of spontaneous feelings. Nevertheless the feelings are there, all the stronger perhaps because of the lack of outward manifestation; and if an opportunity presents itself, through an act, very modest and veiled sometimes, you suddenly discover depths of affection.

This is specifically Japanese; among the nations of the world, the true Japanese — those who have not become westernised — are perhaps the least selfish. And this unselfishness is not the privilege of the well-educated, the learned or the religious people; in all social ranks you may find it. For here, with the exception of some popular and exceedingly pretty festivals, religion is not a rite or a cult, it is a daily life of abnegation, obedience, self-sacrifice.

The Japanese are taught from their infancy that life is duty and not pleasure. They accept that duty — so often hard and painful — with passive submission. They are not tormented by the idea of making themselves happy. It gives to the life of the whole country a very remarkable self-constraint, but no joyful and free expansion; it creates an atmosphere of tension and effort, of mental and nervous strain, not of spiritual peace like that which can be felt in India, for instance. Indeed, nothing in

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Japan can be compared to the pure divine atmosphere which pervades India and makes of her such a unique and precious country; not even in the temples and the sacred monasteries always so wonderfully situated, sometimes on the summit of a high mountain covered with huge cedar trees, difficult to reach, far from the world below.... Exterior calm, rest and silence are there, but not that blissful sense of the infinite which comes from a living nearness to the Unique. True, here all speaks to the eyes and mind of unity — unity of God with man, unity of man with Nature, unity of man with man. But this unity is very little felt and lived. Certainly the Japanese have a highly developed sense of generous hospitality, reciprocal help, mutual support; but in their feelings, their thoughts, their actions in general, they are among the most individualist, the most separatist people. For them the form is predominant, the form is attractive. It is suggestive too, it speaks of some deeper harmony or truth, of some law of nature or life. Each form, each act is symbolical, from the arrangement of the gardens and the houses to the famous tea ceremony. And sometimes in a very simple and usual thing you discover a symbol, deep, elaborated, willed, that most of the people know and understand; but it is an exterior and learnt knowledge — a tradition, it is not living truth coming from the depth of spiritual experience, enlightening heart and mind. Japan is essentially the country of sensations; she lives through her eyes. Beauty rules over her as an uncontested master; and all her atmosphere incites to mental and vital activity, study, observation, progress, effort, not to silent and blissful contemplation. But behind this activity stands a high aspiration which the future of her people will reveal.

9 July 1917

The Children of Japan

IN MY last letter¹ I spoke of the sense of duty which gave to the Japanese people a great self-constraint, but no joyful and free expansion. I must make an exception to this rule and this exception is in favour of the children.

We could quite well call Japan the paradise of children — in no other country have I seen them so free and so happy. After months of residence in Japan I have yet never seen a child beaten by a grown-up person. They are treated as if all the parents were conscious that the children are the promise and the glory of the future. And a wonderful thing is that, environed by so much attention, so much care, — indeed, such a devotion, they are the most reasonable, good and serious children I have ever met. When they are babies, tied up in an amusing fashion on their mothers' backs, with their wide open black eyes they seem to consider life with gravity and to have already opinions on the things they look at. You scarcely hear a child cry. When, for instance, he has hurt himself and the tears burst out of his eyes, the mother or the father has but to say a few words in a low voice, and the sorrow seems to be swept away. What are those magic words which enable children to be so reasonable? Very simple indeed: "Are you not a Samurai?" And this question is sufficient for the child to call to him all his energy and to overcome his weakness.

In the streets you see hundreds of children, in their charming bright "*kimono*",² playing freely, in spite of the "*kuruma*"³ and the bicycles, at the most inventive and picturesque games, pleased with little, singing and laughing.

When older, but still very young, you may see them in the

¹ "Impressions of Japan".

² Traditional wide-sleeved gown.

³ A word applied to many vehicles, here probably a carriage or a rickshaw.

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tram cars, dressed with foreign clothes, the student cap on the head, the knapsack on the back, proud of their importance, still prouder at the idea of all they are learning and will learn. For they love their studies and are the most earnest students. They never miss an opportunity of adding something to their growing knowledge; and when the work for the school leaves them some liberty they occupy it in reading books. The young Japanese seem to have a real passion for books. In Tokyo one of the main streets is nearly entirely occupied by secondhand book-sellers. From the beginning to the end of the year these shops are full of students, and it is not often novels they are seeking for!

They are, as a rule, very anxious to learn foreign languages and when they come to meet foreigners, though they are in general very timid, they make use of that acquaintance as much as they can to...⁴

A country where such are the children and so they are treated is a country still ascending the steps of progress and of mastery.

⁴ This sentence was left incomplete.

To the Women of Japan

TO SPEAK of children to the women of Japan is, I think, to speak to them of their dearest, their most sacred subject.

Indeed, in no other country in the world have the children taken such an important, such a primordial place. They are, here, the centre of care and attention. On them are concentrated — and rightly — the hopes for the future. They are the living promise of growing prosperity for the country. Therefore, the most important work assigned to women in Japan is child-making. Maternity is considered as the principal role of woman. But this is true only so long as we understand what is meant by the word maternity. For to bring children into the world as rabbits do their young — instinctively, ignorantly, machine-like, that certainly cannot be called maternity! True maternity begins with the conscious creation of a being, with the willed shaping of a soul coming to develop and utilise a new body. The true domain of women is the spiritual. We forget it but too often.

To bear a child and construct his body almost subconsciously is not enough. The work really commences when, by the power of thought and will, we conceive and create a character capable of manifesting an ideal.

And do not say that we have no power for realising such a thing. Innumerable instances of this very effective power could be brought out as proofs.

First of all, the effect of physical environment was recognised and studied long ago. It is by surrounding women with forms of art and beauty that, little by little, the ancient Greeks created the exceptionally harmonious race that they were.

Individual instances of the same fact are numerous. It is not rare to see a woman who, while pregnant, had looked at constantly and admired a beautiful picture or statue, giving birth to a child after the perfect likeness of this picture or statue. I met

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several of these instances myself. Among them, I remember very clearly two little girls; they were twins and perfectly beautiful. But the most astonishing was how little like their parents they were. They reminded me of a very famous picture painted by the English artist Reynolds. One day I made this remark to the mother, who immediately exclaimed: "Indeed, is it not so? You will be interested to know that while I was expecting these children, I had, hanging above my bed, a very good reproduction of Reynolds' picture. Before going to sleep and as soon as I woke, my last and first glance was for that picture; and in my heart I hoped: may my children be like the faces in this picture. You see that I succeeded quite well!" In truth, she could be proud of her success, and her example is of great utility for other women.

But if we can obtain such results on the physical plane where the materials are the least plastic, how much more so on the psychological plane where the influence of thought and will is so powerful. Why accept the obscure bonds of heredity and atavism — which are nothing else than subconscious preferences for our own trend of character — when we can, by concentration and will, call into being a type constructed according to the highest ideal we are able to conceive? With this effort, maternity becomes truly precious and sacred; indeed with this, we enter the glorious work of the Spirit, and womanhood rises above animality and its ordinary instincts, towards real humanity and its powers.

In this effort, in this attempt, then, lies our true duty. And if this duty was always of the greatest importance, it certainly has taken a capital one in the present turn of the earth's evolution.

For we are living in an exceptional time at an exceptional turning point of the world's history. Never before, perhaps, did mankind pass through such a dark period of hatred, bloodshed and confusion. And, at the same time, never had such a strong, such an ardent hope awakened in the hearts of the people. Indeed, if we listen to our heart's voice, we immediately perceive that we are, more or less consciously, waiting for a new reign

To the Women of Japan

of justice, of beauty, of harmonious good-will and fraternity. And this seems in complete contradiction with the actual state of the world. But we all know that never is the night so dark as before the dawn. May not this darkness, then, be the sign of an approaching dawn? And as never was night so complete, so terrifying, maybe never will dawn have been so bright, so pure, so illuminating as the coming one.... After the bad dreams of the night the world will awaken to a new consciousness.

The civilisation which is ending now in such a dramatic way was based on the power of mind, mind dealing with matter and life. What it has been to the world, we have not to discuss here. But a new reign is coming, that of the Spirit: after the human, the divine.

Yet, if we have been fortunate enough to live on earth at such a stupendous, a unique time as this one, is it sufficient to stand and watch the unfolding events? All those who feel that their heart extends further than the limits of their own person and family, that their thought embraces more than small personal interests and local conventions, all those, in short, who realise that they belong not to themselves, or to their family, or even to their country, but to God who manifests Himself in all countries, through mankind, these, indeed, know that they must rise and set to work for the sake of humanity, for the advent of the Dawn.

And in this momentous, endless, many-sided work, what can be the part of womanhood? It is true that, as soon as great events and works are in question, the custom is to relegate women to a corner with a smile of patronising contempt which means: this is not your business, poor, feeble, futile creatures.... And women, submissive, childlike, lazy perhaps, have accepted, at least in many countries, this deplorable state of things. I dare to say that they are wrong. In the life of the future, there shall be no more room for such division, such disequilibrium between the masculine and the feminine. The true relation of the two sexes is an equal footing of mutual help and close collaboration. And from now, we must reassume

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our veritable position, take again our due place and assert our real importance — that of spiritual former and educator. Indeed, some men, perhaps a little vainglorious of their so-called advantages, may despise the apparent weakness of women (although even this exterior weakness is not quite certain) but: “Do what he may, the superman will have to be born of woman all the same”, someone said very rightly.

The superman shall be born of woman, this is a big unquestionable truth; but it is not enough to be proud of this truth, we must clearly understand what it means, become aware of the responsibility it creates, and learn to face earnestly the task which is put before us. This task is precisely our most important share in the present world-wide work.

For that, we must first understand — at least in their broad lines — what are the means by which the present chaos and obscurity can be transformed into light and harmony.

Many means have been suggested: political, social, ethical, even religious.... Indeed, none of these seem sufficient to face with any reliable success the magnitude of the task to be done. Only a new spiritual influx, creating in man a new consciousness, can overcome the enormous mass of difficulties barring the way of the workers. A new spiritual light, a manifestation upon earth of some divine force unknown until now, a Thought of God, new for us, descending into this world and taking a new form here.

And here we come back to our starting point, to our duty of true maternity. For this form meant to manifest the spiritual force capable of transforming the earth's present conditions, this new form, who is to construct it if not the women?

Thus we see that at this critical period of the world's life it is no longer sufficient to give birth to a being in whom our highest personal ideal is manifested; we must strive to find out what is the future type, whose advent Nature is planning. It is no longer sufficient to form a man similar to the greatest men we have heard of or known, or even greater, more accomplished and gifted than they; we must strive to come in touch mentally,

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by the constant aspiration of our thought and will, with the supreme possibility which, exceeding all human measures and features, will give birth to the superman.

Once again Nature feels one of her great impulses towards the creation of something utterly new, something unexpected. And it is to this impulse that we must answer and obey.

Let us try first to discover where this impulse of Nature will lead us. And the best way for that is to look back on the lessons given to us by the Past.

We see that each progress of Nature, each manifestation of a new capacity and principle upon earth is marked by the appearance of a new species. In the same way, the progressive forms of the life of races, of peoples, of individuals, follow each other through the human cycles, ceaselessly inspired, fecundated, renewed by the efforts of the guides of humanity. And all these forms aim at the same goal, the mysterious, the glorious goal of Nature.¹

It is to this call of Nature that we must answer, to this

¹ *It seems that the following paragraphs from an earlier draft were intended for insertion here:*

Which is this goal? Toward what unexpected realisation of the future does Nature aim? What does she seek since her dark origins?

Each form that she creates is a fresh affirmation of that which through her will be born, of that which it is her mission to manifest.

Each species preparing the others, making them possible, bears witness to her untiring perseverance, is a proof of her solemn vow; in each one is a little more matter transfigured, announcing future dawns of intelligence. Through innumerable cycles how many paths has she had to follow in order to reach at last the cave of the anthropoid, the primitive man?

It is before him that will open the royal avenue leading to the palace of spirit. But how many races, how many generations will pass on the earth without discovering it, how many wrong paths will Nature follow in the footsteps of man. For, believing himself the masterpiece of the universe, he knows not that he has a further stage to pass through.

Could the idea of man be conceived, before he existed, in the obscure brain of even the nearest of his ancestors? Can the idea of the superman, before he exists, penetrate into the brain of man?

And yet, in every child of man which comes into the world, in every growing intelligence, in every effort of the emerging generations, in every attempt of human genius, Nature seeks the way which, once again, will lead her further.

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magnificent, to this grandiose work that we must devote ourselves. Let us try to make as clear as we can the steps of our advance on this difficult and as yet unexplored path.

First of all we must be careful, in our attempt to conceive the future man or superman, not to adopt an actual type of man, perfecting or aggrandising him. To avoid as much as possible this mistake we should study the teachings of life's evolution.

We have already seen that the appearance of a new species always announces the manifestation on earth of a new principle, a new plane of consciousness, a new force or power. But, at the same time, while the new species acquires this formerly unmanifested power or consciousness, it may lose one or many of the

Fifteen hundred million men since perhaps fifteen hundred centuries wander without finding this way.

Among the multitude of the ways over which all the efforts of their progress are scattered, in this domain as in all the others, only one is good: it is the way of synthetic perfections. Where to discover it?

And who among men dares to venture elsewhere than on the easy and well-beaten tracks? Who, knowing that there is another path which goes further, accepts to lose all in order to find it perhaps, to lose all in walking alone, in thinking alone, always apart among the others, not even certain of attaining what he seeks.

Try not to discover this one among the men who excel and shine, for these excel and shine only in being, somewhat more perfectly, similar to their own kind.

Precious stones also excel and shine among all the other stones, but the most beautiful gem is outside the series of chemical combinations from whence comes forth life. In the same way, ascending the series of forms, the most beautiful tree of the forest is outside the lines of evolution which lead the biological process up to the animal, up to man.

And once again, among men, the most admired, the most famous, the most artistic, the most learned, the most religious, may well find himself far off the way leading from man to superman.

Each race, each civilisation, each human society, each religion, represents a new attempt of Nature, one more effort adding to the long series of those she multiplied during countless time.

Now, as among all the animal forms there was one from which man was to come forth, so also, among the social and religious species, must one be born from which some day will come forth the superman.

For it is this which Nature seeks in all her successive attempts, from the first germination of life until man, until the God who shall be born of him.

In the multitude of men she seeks the possibility of the superman; and in each one of them, she aims towards the realisation of the divine.

To the Women of Japan

perfections which were the characteristics of the immediately preceding species. For instance, to speak only of the last step of Nature's development, what are the greatest differences between man and his immediate predecessor, the ape? In the monkey we see vitality and physical ability reaching the utmost perfection, a perfection that the new species had to abandon. For man, there has been no more of that marvellous climbing up trees, somersaults over abysses, jumps from summit to summit, but in exchange he acquired intelligence, the power of reasoning, combining, constructing. Indeed with man it is the life of mind, of intellect which appeared on earth. Man is essentially a mental being; and if his possibilities do not stop there, if he feels in himself other worlds, other faculties, other planes of consciousness beyond his mental life, they are only as promises for the future, in the same way as the mental possibilities are latent in the monkey.

It is true that some men, very few, have lived in that world beyond, which we may call the spiritual; some have been, indeed, the living incarnations of that world on earth, but they are the exceptions, the forerunners showing the way to the race, leading it towards its future realisation, not the average man. But that which was the privilege of a few beings scattered through time and space, shall become the central characteristic of the new type which is to appear.

At present, man governs his life through reason; all the activities of the mind are of common use for him; his means of knowledge are observation and deduction; it is by and through reasoning that he takes his decision and chooses his way — or believes he does — in life.

The new race shall be governed by intuition, that is to say, direct perception of the divine law within. Some human beings actually know and experience intuition — as, undoubtedly, certain big gorillas of the forests have glimpses of reasoning.

In mankind, the very few who have cultivated their inner

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self, who have concentrated their energies on the discovery of the true law of their being, possess more or less the faculty of intuition. When the mind is perfectly silent, pure like a well-polished mirror, immobile as a pond on a breezeless day, then, from above, as the light of the stars drops in the motionless waters, so the light of the supermind, of the Truth within, shines in the quieted mind and gives birth to intuition. Those who are accustomed to listen to this voice out of the Silence, take it more and more as the instigating motive of their actions; and where others, the average men, wander along the intricate paths of reasoning, they go straight their way, guided through the windings of life by intuition, this superior instinct, as by a strong and unfailing hand.

This faculty which is exceptional, almost abnormal now, will certainly be quite common and natural for the new race, the man of tomorrow. But probably the constant exercise of it will be detrimental to the reasoning faculties. As man possesses no more the extreme physical ability of the monkey, so also will the superman lose the extreme mental ability of man,² this ability to deceive himself and others.

Thus, man's road to supermanhood will be open when he declares boldly that all he has yet developed, including the intellect of which he is so rightly and yet so vainly proud, is now no longer sufficient for him, and that to uncase, discover, set free this greater power within, shall be henceforward his great preoccupation. Then will his philosophy, art, science, ethics, social existence, vital pursuits be no longer an exercise of mind and life for themselves, in a circle, but a means for the discovery of a greater Truth behind mind and life and the bringing of its power into our human existence. And this discovery is that of our real, because our highest self and nature.

² *Alternative ending (from earlier draft):* perhaps all of the power of reasoning; and, even, the organ itself may become useless, disappear little by little as the monkey's tail, which was of no use for man, disappeared from his physical body.

To the Women of Japan

However, that self which we are not yet, but have to become, is not the strong vital Will hymned by Nietzsche, but a spiritual self and spiritual nature. For as soon as we speak of supermanhood we must be careful to avoid all confusion with the strong but so superficial and incomplete conception of Nietzsche's superman.

Indeed, since Nietzsche invented the word superman, when someone uses it to speak of the coming race, willingly or not, it evokes at the same time Nietzsche's conception. Certainly, his idea that to develop the superman out of our present very unsatisfactory manhood is our real business, is in itself an absolutely sound idea; certainly, his formula of our aim, "to become ourselves", implying, as it does, that man has not yet found all his true self, his true nature by which he can successfully and spontaneously live, could not be bettered; nevertheless, Nietzsche made the mistake we said we ought to avoid: his superman is but a man aggrandised, magnified, in whom Force has become super-dominant, crushing under its weight all the other attributes of man. Such cannot be our ideal. We see too well at present whither leads the exclusive worshipping of Force — to the crimes of the strong and the ruin of continents.

No, the way to supermanhood lies in the unfolding of the ever-perfect Spirit. All would change, all would become easy if man could once consent to be spiritualised. The higher perfection of the spiritual life will come by a spontaneous obedience of spiritualised man to the truth of his own realised being, when he has become himself, found his own real nature; but this spontaneity will not be instinctive and subconscious as in the animal, but intuitive and fully, integrally conscient.

Therefore, the individuals who will most help the future of humanity in the new age, will be those who will recognise a spiritual evolution as the destiny and therefore the great need of the human being, an evolution or conversion of the present type of humanity into a spiritualised humanity, even as the animal man has been largely converted into a highly mentalised humanity.

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They will be comparatively indifferent to particular belief and form of religion, and leave men to resort to the beliefs and forms to which they are naturally drawn. They will only hold as essential the faith in the spiritual conversion. They will especially not make the mistake of thinking that this change can be effected by machinery and outward institutions; they will know and never forget that it has to be lived out by each man inwardly or it can never be made a reality.

And among these individuals, woman must be the first to realise this great change, as it is her special task to give birth in this world to the first specimens of the new race. And to be able to do this she must, more or less, conceive what will be the practical results of this spiritual conversion. For if it cannot be effected simply by exterior transformations, it can neither be realised without bringing forth such transformations.

These will certainly not be less in the moral and social domains than in the intellectual.

As religious beliefs and cults will become secondary, so also the ethical restrictions or prescriptions, rules of conduct or conventions will lose their importance.³

Actually, in human life, the whole moral problem is concentrated in the conflict between the vital will with its impulses

³ This paragraph and the two which precede it replace the following passage of an earlier draft:

But among these individuals woman, as we have already said, will have one special task to accomplish, that of giving birth in this world to the first specimens of the new race. And to be able to do this we must, more or less, conceive first in our thought the ideal of what the superman can be.

Of course, nothing is more difficult than to draw a picture of what will be the new race; it is an almost unrealisable attempt, and we shall certainly not try to enter into details; for we cannot ask of our mind to grasp with any certainty or accuracy this creation of the supermind, of the spirit.

But as we have already seen that the replacing of mental reason by intuitive knowledge will be one of the characteristic features of the future being, in the same way, morally and socially what can be the standard of the new race's life?

From the ethical point of view, for the individual of the new race there will certainly be no more restrictions or prescriptions, rules of conduct or conventions.

To the Women of Japan

and the mental power with its decrees. When the vital will is submitted to the mental power, then the life of the individual or of the society becomes moral. But it is only when both, vital will and mental power, are equally submissive to something higher, to the supermind, that human life is exceeded, that true spiritual life begins, the life of the superman; for his law will come from within, it will be the divine law shining in the centre of each being and governing life from therein, the divine law multiple in its manifestation but one in its origin. And because of its unity this law is the law of supreme order and harmony.

Thus the individual, no more guided by egoistical motives, laws or customs, shall abandon all selfish aims. His rule will be perfect disinterestedness. To act in view of a personal profit, either in this world or in another beyond, will become an unthinkable impossibility. For each act will be done in complete, simple, joyful obedience to the divine law which inspires it, without any seeking for reward or results, as the supreme reward will be in the very delight of acting under such inspiration, of being identified in conscience and will with the divine principle within oneself.

And in this identification the superman will find also his social standard. For in discovering the divine law in himself he will recognise the same divine law in every being, and by being identified with it in himself he will be identified with it in all, thus becoming aware of the unity of all, not only in essence and substance but also in the most exterior planes of life and form. He will not be a mind, a life or a body, but the informing and sustaining Soul or Self, silent, peaceful, eternal, that possesses them; and this Soul or Self he will find everywhere sustaining and informing and possessing all lives and minds and bodies. He will be conscious of this Self as the divine creator and doer of all works, one in all existences; for the many souls of the universal manifestation are only faces of the one Divine. He will perceive each being to be the universal Divinity presenting to him many faces; he will merge himself in That and perceive his own mind,

Words of Long Ago

life and body as only one presentation of the Self, and all whom we, at present, conceive of as others will be to his consciousness his own self in other minds, lives and bodies. He will be able to feel his body one with all bodies, as he will be aware constantly of the unity of all matter; he will unite himself in mind and heart with all existences; in short, he will see and feel his own person in all others and all others in himself, realising thus true solidarity in the perfection of unity.

But we must limit to these indispensable hints our description of the superman, and push no further our attempt to picture him, as we are convinced that any endeavour to be more precise would prove not only vain but useless. For it is not a number of imaginings, more or less exact, which can help us in the formation of the future type. It is by holding firm in our heart and mind the dynamism, the irresistible impetus given by a sincere and ardent aspiration, by maintaining in ourselves a certain state of enlightened receptivity towards the supreme Idea of the new race which wills to be manifested on earth, that we can take a decisive step in the formation of the sons of the future, and make ourselves fit to serve as intermediaries for the creation of those who shall save Humanity.⁴

⁴ *Alternate ending (from an earlier draft):* of the saviours of the world.

The earlier draft closes with the following additional paragraph: For, in truth, saviours they will be, as each being of this new type will not live either for himself or for State or society, for the individual ego or the collective ego, but for something much greater, for God in himself and for God in the world.

Remembrances

WE ARE so fond of remembrances because they already belong to the Universal; they bear in themselves something of the sap of Infinitude.

That which in the daily events has been perceived by the exterior sensitiveness, egoistical and limited,—the sensitiveness which suffers and rejoices,—vanishes rapidly as a cloud of illusions. But behind that ignorant perception,—often veiled by it,—lies the other, the perception of the real Soul which communes, through all things, with the Universal Soul and enjoys in all Its perfect bliss.

These perceptions are kept in the depths of our being as remembrances, and when one of them emerges to the memory, it comes back dressed with the golden garb of Divine Felicity.

What we at first called, in our ignorant perception, suffering and pain, reappears embellished, transformed, glorified, adorned with the same dress of magnificence as that which we had called pleasure and happiness. Indeed, sometimes the splendour of the former memories is even more intense and vast than that of the latter, the joy they give us much more profound and pure.

So, little by little, we learn to distinguish between the Reality of things and the false interpretation of our blind senses.

That is why remembrances are such precious teachers; that is why we are so fond of remembrances: by them we come in touch with Eternity.

Myself and My Creed

IBELONG to no nation, no civilisation, no society, no race,
but to the Divine.

I obey no master, no ruler, no law, no social convention,
but the Divine.

To Him I have surrendered all, will, life and self; for Him I
am ready to give all my blood, drop by drop, if such is His Will,
with complete joy; and nothing in His service can be sacrifice,
for all is perfect delight.

Japan, February 1920

Part 7

Tales of all Times

These stories were written to help children to discover themselves and follow a path of right and beauty.

*The Mother
February 1950*

One

Self-Control

A WILD horse can be tamed but one never puts a bridle on a tiger. Why is that? Because in the tiger there is a wicked, cruel and incorrigible force, so that we cannot expect anything good from him and have to destroy him to prevent him from doing harm.

But the wild horse, on the other hand, however unmanageable and skittish he may be to begin with, can be controlled with a little effort and patience. In time he learns to obey and even to love us, and in the end he will of his own accord offer his mouth to the bit that is given to him.

In men too there are rebellious and unmanageable desires and impulses, but these things are rarely uncontrollable like the tiger. They are more often like the wild horse: to be broken in they need a bridle; and the best bridle is the one you put on them yourself, the one called self-control.

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Hussein was the grandson of the Prophet Mohammed. His home was beautiful and his purse well filled. Whoever offended him offended a rich man, and heavy is the anger of the rich.

One day a slave carrying a bowl of boiling hot water was passing by Hussein as he dined. By misfortune a little water fell upon the grandson of the Prophet who let out a cry of rage.

Falling to his knees, the slave had the presence of mind to recall an appropriate verse of the Koran:

“Paradise is for those who bridle their anger,” he said.

“I am not angry,” broke in Hussein, touched by these words.

“... and for those who forgive men,” continued the slave.

Words of Long Ago

"I forgive you," said Hussein.

"... for Allah loves the merciful," the servant added.

In the course of this exchange, all Hussein's anger had vanished. Now wholly at peace with himself he made the slave rise and said:

"From now on you are free. Here, take these four hundred pieces of silver."

In this way Hussein learnt how to bridle his temper which was as generous as it was hasty. Since his noble character was neither wicked nor cruel, it was worthy of being controlled.

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So if your parents or your teacher sometimes urge you to control your nature, it is not because they think that your faults, whether great or small, are incorrigible; but, on the contrary, it is because they know that your quick and fiery spirit is like a young thoroughbred which must be held in check.

If you were offered the choice of living in a sordid hut or in a palace, which would you choose? The palace, most likely.

We are told that when Lord Mohammed visited Paradise, he saw great palaces built on a height overlooking the entire countryside.

"O Gabriel," said Mohammed to the angel who was showing him all these things, "for whom are these palaces?" The angel replied:

"For those who control their anger and know how to forgive offences."

Well, a mind at peace and free from rancour is indeed like a palace, but not so a vindictive and turbulent mind. Our thought is a dwelling-place that we can, if we choose, make clean, sweet and serene, full of harmonious notes; but we can also make it into a dark and dreadful lair filled with mournful sounds and discordant cries.

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Self-Control

In a town in the North of France I once knew a boy who was frank by nature but impetuous and always liable to lose his temper. I said to him one day:

“Which do you think is more difficult for a strong boy like you, to give blow for blow and to let fly your fist in the face of a friend who insults you or at that moment to keep your fist in your pocket?”

“To keep it in my pocket,” he replied.

“And which do you think is more worthy of a brave boy like you, to do the easier or the more difficult thing?”

“The more difficult thing,” he said after a moment’s hesitation.

“Well then, try to do it the next time you get an opportunity.”

Some time later, the young boy came to tell me, not without legitimate pride, that he had been able to do “the more difficult thing”. He said:

“One of my work-mates, who is known for his bad temper, struck me in a moment of anger. Since he knows that normally I am not one to forgive and that I have a strong arm, he was preparing to defend himself when I remembered what you had told me. It was harder for me than I thought, but I put my fist in my pocket. And as soon as I did that, I felt no more anger in me, I only felt sorry for my friend. So I held out my hand to him. That surprised him so much that he stood looking at me for a moment, open-mouthed, without speaking. Then he seized my hand, shook it vigorously and said with emotion: “Now you can do what you like with me, I am your friend for ever.”

This boy had controlled his anger as Caliph Hussein had done.

But there are many other things that also need to be bridled.

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Words of Long Ago

The Arabian poet, Al Kosai, lived in the desert. One day he came across a fine Naba tree and from its branches he made a bow and some arrows.

At nightfall he set out to hunt wild asses. Soon he heard the hoof-beats of a moving herd. So he shot his first arrow. But he had bent the bow with such strength that the arrow, passing right through the body of one of the animals, dashed against a nearby rock. When he heard the sound of wood on stone Al Kosai thought he had missed his mark. So then he shot his second arrow and once more the arrow passed through an ass and struck the rock. Again Al Kosai thought he had missed his mark. In the same way he shot a third arrow, and a fourth, and a fifth, and each time he heard the same sound. When it happened for the fifth time, he broke his bow in rage.

At dawn he saw five asses in front of the rock.

If he had been more patient and waited until daybreak, he would have kept his peace of mind and his bow as well.

* * *

It should not be thought, however, that we have a high regard for a training which weakens the character by depriving it of all its drive and vigour. When we put a bridle on a wild horse, we do not want the bit to tear his mouth and break his teeth. And if we want him to do his work well, we must tighten the reins to guide him, but we must not pull on them so hard that he can no longer move forward.

Unfortunately there are only too many weak characters who can, like sheep, be driven by a mere bark.

There are slavish and insensitive natures, lacking in spirit and more forbearing than they should be.

Abu Otman al-Hiri was known for his excessive patience. One day he was invited to a feast. When he arrived, the host told him: "You must excuse me, I cannot receive you. So please go back home, and may Allah have mercy on you."

Self-Control

Abu Otman went back home. No sooner was he there than his friend appeared and invited him once more.

Abu Otman followed his friend as far as his doorstep, but there the friend stopped and again asked to be excused. Abu Otman went away without a murmur.

A third time and a fourth the same scene was repeated, but in the end his friend received him and said to him before the whole company:

"Abu Otman, I behaved in this way in order to test your good temper. I admire your patience and forbearance."

"Do not praise me," replied Abu Otman, "for dogs practise the same virtue: they come when they are called and go when they are sent away."

Abu Otman was a man and not a dog. And it could do no one any good that he should thus, of his own accord, without dignity or good cause, submit to the mockery of his friends.

Did then this man who was so meek have nothing in him to control? Oh, yes he did! It was the most difficult thing of all to control — the weakness of his character. And it was because he did not know how to control himself that everyone controlled him as they pleased.

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A young Brahmacharin was clever and knew it. He wished to add to his talents more and more so that everyone would admire him. So he travelled from land to land.

With an arrow-maker he learned to make arrows.

Further on he learnt how to build and sail ships.

In another place he learnt how to build houses.

And in other places he acquired various other skills.

In this way he visited sixteen different countries. Then he returned home and proudly declared, "What man on earth is as skilful as I?" The Lord Buddha saw him and wanted to teach him a nobler art than any he had learnt before. Assuming the

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appearance of an old Shramana he presented himself before the young man with a begging bowl in his hand.

“Who are you?” asked the Brahmacharin.

“I am a man who is able to control his own body.”

“What do you mean?”

“The archer can aim his arrows,” the Buddha replied. “The pilot guides the ship, the architect supervises the construction of buildings, but the wise man controls himself.”

“In what way?”

“If he is praised his mind remains unmoved, if he is blamed his mind remains equally unmoved. He loves to follow the Right Law and he lives in peace.”

Children of goodwill, you too should learn to control yourselves, and if a tough bridle is needed to control your nature, do not complain.

A spirited young horse which will gradually become well-behaved is of much more value than a placid wooden horse which will always remain placid whatever you may do, and on which you put a bridle only for the fun of it.

Two

Courage

YOU FALL into the water. You are not daunted by the great watery mass. You make good use of your arms and legs, grateful to the teacher who taught you how to swim. You grapple with the waves and you escape. You have been brave.

You are asleep. "Fire!" The cry of alarm has awakened you. You leap from your bed and see the red glare of the blaze. You are not stricken with mortal fear. You run through the smoke, the sparks, the flames, to safety. This is courage.

Some time ago I visited an infant school in England. The little school-children were between three and seven years old. There were both boys and girls, who were busy knitting, drawing, listening to stories, singing.

The teacher told me, "We are going to try the fire-alarm. Of course there is no fire, but they have been taught to get up and go out promptly at the alarm-signal."

He blew his whistle. Instantly the children left their books, pencils and knitting-needles, and stood up. On a second signal they filed out into the open air. In a few moments the classroom was empty. These little children had learned to face the danger of fire and to be brave.

For whose sake did you swim? For your own.

For whose sake did you run through the flames? For your own.

For whose sake would the children resist the fear of fire? For their own.

The courage shown in each case was for the sake of self. Was this wrong? Certainly not. It is right to take care of your life and to defend it bravely. But there is a greater courage, the

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courage which is shown for the sake of others.

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Let me tell you the story of Madhava as it was recorded by Bhavabhuti.

He is kneeling outside a temple and hears a cry of distress.

He finds a way to enter and looks into the sanctuary of the goddess Chamunda.

A victim is about to be slain in honour of this terrible goddess. It is poor Malati. The girl has been carried away in her sleep. She is all alone with the priest and priestess, and the priest raises his knife just as Malati is thinking of Madhava whom she loves:

*O Madhava! Lord of my heart,
Oh, may I after death live in thy memory.
They do not die whom love embalms in long and fond
remembrance.*

With a shout, brave Madhava leaps into the chamber of sacrifice and engages the priest in mortal combat. Malati is saved.

For whom did Madhava show courage? Was he fighting for himself? Yes — but that was not the only reason for his courage. He was fighting also for the sake of another. He had heard a cry of distress and it had touched the brave heart in his breast.

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If you give it some thought, you will recall having seen similar deeds. You have surely seen a man, woman or child helped by another human being who came running in response to the cry of alarm.

You must also have read in the newspapers or in history about similar acts of bravery. You have heard about firemen who

Courage

rescue people from blazing houses; of miners who go down into deep shafts to bring out their companions imperilled by flood, fire or poisonous gas; of men who venture into houses shaken by earthquake and who in spite of the danger from crumbling walls, pick up and carry out the helpless people who would otherwise die beneath the ruins; and of citizens who for the sake of their town or their country confront the enemy and undergo hunger, thirst, wounds or death.

So we have seen what is courage to help oneself and what is courage to help others.

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I shall tell you the story of Vibhishan the hero. He braved a danger that was greater than the danger of death: he braved the fury of a king and gave him the wise advice that others dared not voice.

The demon-king of Lanka was Ravana of the Ten Heads.

Ravana had stolen lady Sita away from her husband and carried her off in his chariot to his palace on the island of Lanka.

Sumptuous was the palace and delightful the garden in which he imprisoned the princess Sita. Yet she was unhappy and every day she would shed tears, not knowing whether she would ever see her Lord Rama again.

Glorious Rama learnt from Hanuman the monkey-king where his wife Sita was held captive. He set out with noble Lakshman, his brother, and a great army of heroes to the rescue of the prisoner.

When the demon Ravana learnt of the arrival of Rama, he trembled with fear.

The advice he received was of two kinds. A crowd of courtiers thronged around his throne saying:

“All is well; have no fear, O Ravana. Gods and demons you have conquered: you will have no difficulty in conquering Rama and his companions, the monkeys of Hanuman.”

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When these noisy counsellors had left the king, his brother Vibhishan entered, knelt and kissed his feet. Then he rose and sat at the right hand of the throne.

"O my brother," he said, "if you wish to live happily and keep the throne of this beautiful island of Lanka, give back the lovely Sita, for she is the wife of another. Go to Rama and ask his forgiveness, and he will not turn away his face. Be not arrogant and foolhardy."

A wise man, Malyavan, heard these words and was glad. He exclaimed to the king of demons:

"Take your brother's words to heart, for he has spoken the truth."

"Both of you have evil designs," replied the king, "for you take the side of my foes."

And the eyes of his ten heads flashed with such fury that Malyavan fled from the room in terror. But Vibhishan, in the bravery of his soul, remained.

"Sire," he said, "in the heart of each man there is both wisdom and foolishness. If wisdom dwells in his breast, life goes well with him; if it is foolishness, all goes ill. I fear that you harbour foolishness in your breast, O my brother, for you give ear to those who give bad advice. They are not your true friends."

He fell silent and kissed the feet of the king.

"Wretch!" cried Ravana. "You too are one of my enemies. Speak no more senseless words to me. Talk to the hermits in the woods but not to one who has been victorious over all the enemies he has fought."

And as he shouted he kicked his brave brother Vibhishan.

So, with a heavy heart, his brother rose and left the king's house.

Knowing no fear, he had spoken frankly to Ravana; and since the ten-headed one would not listen, Vibhishan had no choice but to leave.

Vibhishan's act was one of physical courage, for he did not

Courage

fear his brother's blows; but it was also an act of mental courage, for he did not hesitate to utter words that the other courtiers, physically as brave as he, would not have let fall from their lips. This courage of the mind is known as moral courage.

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Such was the courage of Moses, the leader of Israel, who demanded from the Pharaoh of Egypt the freedom of the oppressed Jewish people.

Such was the courage of Mohammed, the Prophet, who imparted his religious thought to the Arabs, and who refused to be silenced even though they threatened him with death.

Such was the courage of Siddhartha, the Blessed One, who taught the people of India a new and noble path, and was not terrified by the evil spirits who assailed him under the Bo-tree.

Such was the courage of Christ, who preached to the people: "Love one another," and was not intimidated by the pontiffs of Jerusalem who forbade him to teach, nor by the Romans who crucified him.

So we have noted three kinds, three degrees of courage:

Physical courage for oneself.

Courage for the near one, the friend, the neighbour in distress, the threatened motherland.

Finally, the moral courage that enables one to stand up to unjust men, however powerful they may be, and to make them listen to the voice of right and truth.

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The Rajah of Almora, in order to repel some invaders who had raided his mountain country, enrolled a number of men in a new regiment and provided each one with a good sword.

"Forward, march!" commanded the Rajah.

Instantly the men unsheathed their swords with a great clang

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and flourished them with loud cries.

"What is this?" demanded the Rajah.

"Sire," they replied, "we want to be ready so that the enemy does not take us by surprise."

"You can be of no use to me, you nervous and excitable men," he told them. "Go home, all of you."

You will notice that the Rajah was not impressed by all this noise and waving of swords. He knew that true bravery needs no clamour and clash.

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In the following story, on the other hand, you will observe how calmly the people behaved and yet how brave they were in face of mortal peril at sea.

Towards the end of March 1910, a Scottish vessel was carrying passengers from Australia to the Cape of Good Hope. There was no trace of a cloud in the sky and the sea was calm and blue.

Suddenly the ship struck a reef six miles off the west coast of Australia.

Immediately the whole crew was on the move, each man hurrying as whistles were blown. But this noise was not the result of confusion and panic.

An order rang out: "Man the boats!"

The passengers put on their life-belts.

A blind man led by his servant walked across the deck. Everyone made way for him. He was helpless and all wanted him to be the first to be saved.

A short time later the ship had been evacuated, and soon it sank.

On one of the life-boats a woman began to sing. And in spite of the sound of the waves which at times drowned her voice, the oarsmen could hear the refrain which put strength into their arms:

Courage

*Pull for the shore, sailors,
Pull for the shore.*

The shipwrecked people reached the shore at last and were taken in by some good fishing folk.

Not one passenger had been lost. In this way four hundred and fifty people had saved themselves by their quiet courage.

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Let me tell you more about this calm courage that accomplishes useful and noble things without show or flourish.

A deep river ran past an Indian village of five hundred houses.

The people of this village had not yet heard the teachings of Lord Siddhartha, and the Blessed One decided to go to them and speak to them of the Noble Path.

He sat beneath a great tree which spread its branches over the riverside, and the villagers gathered on the opposite bank. Then he began to speak and preached his message of love and purity. And his words were carried over the flowing waters as if by miracle. Yet the people of the village refused to believe in what he taught them, and murmured against him.

Only one of them wanted to know more and wished to come closer to the Blessed One.

There was neither bridge nor ferry. And the old legend tells that, strong in his courage, the man began to walk upon the deep water of the river. And so he reached the Master, greeted him and listened to his words with great joy.

Did this man really cross the river, as we are told? We do not know. But in any case he had the courage to take the path that leads towards progress. And the people of his village, touched by his example, then paid heed to the teachings of the Buddha; and their minds were opened to nobler thoughts.

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Words of Long Ago

There is a courage which can make you cross rivers and another that enables you to take the right path; but even more courage is needed to stay on the right path than to enter it.

Listen to the parable of the hen and her chicks:

Siddhartha, the Blessed One, used to instruct his disciples to do their best and then to trust that the best would bear its fruit.

“Just as,” he said, “a hen lays eggs and broods on them and never thinks of fretting: ‘Will my little chicks be able to break out of their shells with their beaks and see the light of day?’ you too should have no fear: if you are persistent in the Noble Path, you also will come to the light.”

And this is true courage: to walk the straight path, to brave storm, darkness and suffering and to persevere, moving ever forward, in spite of everything, towards the light.

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Long, long ago, when Brahmadatta ruled in Benares, one of his enemies, king of another land, trained an elephant to wage war on him.

War was declared. The splendid elephant bore the king his master up to the walls of Benares.

From the top of the walls, the people of the besieged city hurled down boiling hot liquids and shot stones with their slings. At first the elephant retreated before this terrifying rain.

But the man who had trained him ran towards him crying:

“O elephant, you are a hero! Act like a hero and pull the gates to the ground!”

Encouraged by these words, the great creature charged and burst through the gates, leading his king to victory.

This is how courage triumphs over obstacles and difficulties and opens the gates to victory.

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* * *

Courage

And see how an encouraging word can give help to man and animal alike.

A good Muslim book gives us an example of this in the story of Abu Saïd, the poet with a brave heart.

His friends, who had learnt that he lay sick with fever, came one day to ask for news of his health. His son received them at the door of the house, a smile on his lips, for the patient was feeling better.

They came in and sat down in the sick man's room and were surprised to hear him chatting with his usual good humour. Then, as it was a hot day, he fell asleep, and so did all the others.

Towards evening, they all awoke. Abu Saïd ordered refreshments to be served to his guests and incense to be lit so that the room might be filled with fragrance.

Abu Saïd prayed for a while, then he rose and recited a little poem of his own composition:

*Despair not in your grief, for a joyous hour will come
and take it all away;
The burning simoon may blow, and yet change into a
gentle breeze;
A dark cloud may rise, but it passes away and brings
no flood;
A fire may kindle and yet be smothered, leaving chest
and casket untouched;
Pain comes but also goes.
Therefore be patient when troubles come, for Time is
the father of wonders;
And from the peace of God hope for many blessings to
come.*

They all returned to their homes delighted and strengthened by this beautiful poem of hope. And so it was that a sick man helped his friends in good health.

Whosoever is courageous can give courage to others, just as

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the flame of one candle can light another.

Brave boys and girls who read this story, learn how to encourage others, and be courageous yourselves.

Three

Cheerfulness

ONE AFTERNOON, in a large town in a rainy country, I saw seven or eight vehicles full of children. That morning, they had been taken into the country to play in the fields, but the bad weather had made them return home early in the rain.

And yet they were singing, laughing and waving merrily to the passers-by.

They had kept their cheerfulness in this gloomy weather. If one of them had felt sad, the songs of the others would have cheered him. And for the people hurrying by, who heard the children's laughter, it seemed that the sky had brightened for a moment.

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Amir was a prince of Khorasan, and he lived in a grand style. When he set out to war, three hundred camels would carry the pots and pans and plates for his kitchen.

One day he was taken prisoner by the Caliph Ismaïl. But misfortune does not exempt a man from hunger. So when Amir saw his chief cook nearby, he asked the good man to prepare him a meal.

The cook had one piece of meat left which he put in a pot on the fire. Then he went to find some vegetables to give a little taste to the stew.

A passing dog sniffed at the meat and put his nose in the pot. Then, feeling the heat of the fire, he drew back sharply. But he was so clumsy that the pot stuck on his head and he ran off in a panic, unable to get rid of it.

Amir burst out laughing at the sight.

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"Why," demanded the officer on guard, "are you laughing when you have every reason to be sad?"

But Amir showed him the dog streaking away from the camp and said, "I am laughing at the thought that this very morning it took three hundred camels to transport my kitchen and now one dog is enough to carry it all away!"

Amir took pleasure in being cheerful though he took no trouble to bring cheerfulness to others. However, we should give him credit for his light-heartedness. If he was able to joke in the midst of such serious difficulties, is it not in our power to smile in the face of lesser worries?

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In Persia, there was a woman who used to sell honey. She had a very pleasant manner, and customers thronged around her stall. And the poet who tells her story declares that even if she had sold poison, people would still have bought it from her as if it were honey.

A sour-tempered man saw what a great profit she made from her sweet wares and decided to take up the same trade.

So he set up a stall, but behind the rows of honey-pots his face was like vinegar. All those who came near were sullenly treated. And so everyone passed by, leaving him his wares. "Not even a fly ventured on his honey," says the poet. By evening he had still earned nothing. A woman noticed him and said to her husband, "A bitter face makes bitter honey."

Did the woman who sold honey smile only to attract customers? Let us rather hope that her cheerfulness came from her good nature. We are not in this world only to buy or sell; we should be here as comrades one to another. The good woman's customers felt that she was something more than a honey-seller: she was a cheerful citizen of the world.

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Cheerfulness

In the next story I shall tell you, the joyous spirit bubbles up like water from a beautiful spring. The person it tells of had nothing to do with the desire for custom or gain: he was the famed and glorious Rama.

Rama slew Ravana the ten-headed and twenty-armed demon-king. I have already told you the beginning of the story. It had been the most terrible of all battles. Thousands of monkeys and bears had been killed in the service of Rama, and the corpses of their demon enemies were piled one upon another. Their king lay lifeless on the ground. But how hard it had been to fell him! Time and again Rama had cut off his ten heads and his twenty arms, but they all grew back immediately so that he had to cut them off many times over; they were so numerous that at last it seemed as if the sky was raining down arms and heads.

When the terrible war was ended the monkeys and bears who had been slain were brought back to life, and all stood like a great army awaiting orders.

Glorious Rama whose manner remained simple and calm after the victory, looked kindly upon his faithful friends.

Then Vibhishan, who was to succeed Ravana on the throne, had a chariot-load of jewels and rich robes brought for the warriors who had fought so valiantly.

"Listen, friend Vibhishan," said Rama, "rise high in the air and scatter your gifts before the army."

The king did as he was told, and from his chariot in midair strewed glittering jewels and brightly coloured robes.

The monkeys and bears tumbled over one another as they rushed to seize the falling treasures. It was a merry scuffle.

And Rama laughed heartily and his wife, the lady Sita, and his brother Lakshman laughed with him.

For those who are courageous know how to laugh like this. There is nothing more cordial than a good and hearty cheerfulness. And the word 'cordial' has the same origin as the word 'courage'. In difficult moments, the cheerfulness that comes from

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a cordial spirit is truly a kind of courage.

Surely it is not necessary to be always laughing; but liveliness, serenity, good humour are never out of place. And how helpful they are! With them the mother makes the home happy for her children; the nurse hastens the recovery of her patient; the master lightens the task of his servants; the workman inspires the goodwill of his comrades; the traveller helps his companions on their hard journey; the citizen fosters hope in the hearts of his countrymen.

And you, happy boys and girls, is there anything your cheerfulness cannot accomplish?

Four

Self-Reliance

HATIM Tai had a great reputation among the Arabs of old for the lavishness of his gifts and alms.

"Have you ever met anyone more excellent than yourself?" his friends once asked him.

"Yes," replied Hatim Tai.

"Who was he?"

"One day I had forty camels sacrificed and I offered a feast to whoever would like to come and share in it. Then I set out with several chiefs to invite guests from far and wide. On the way we came across a woodcutter who had just cut a bundle of thorns. This was the way he earned his livelihood. Seeing that he was poor, I asked him why he did not go to the many feasts given by Hatim Tai. 'Those who earn their living,' he answered me, 'have no need of the bounty of Hatim Tai.' "

Why then did Hatim Tai declare that the woodcutter was a better man than himself?

It was because he thought it nobler to work and to provide for oneself than to give others gifts which cost no effort or sacrifice and which, moreover, discourage them from being self-reliant.

Of course it is quite natural that friends should give presents to their friends; it is good that strong arms should come to the help of the poor and the needy; but an able-bodied man should work with his hands, not hold them out for alms. Of course this implies no reflection on those who consecrate themselves entirely to the contemplative life and the search for wisdom.

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Words of Long Ago

Though the woodcutter's conduct was noble, yet it was less so than that of the Persian prince whose story I shall tell you.

He was a prince of ancient times and his name was Gushtasp.

He was much annoyed that his father did not treat him as heir to the throne, so he left his native land and wandered to the West. Alone and hungry, he realised that from then on he would have to work for his living. So he went to the sovereign of the land and said to him:

"I am a skilled writer and I should be happy to be employed as a scribe."

He was told to wait for a few days, for no scribes were needed at the moment. But he was too hungry to wait, so he went to the camel-drivers to ask for work. They did not need any new helper; however, seeing his dire need, they gave him something to eat.

A little further on, Gushtasp stopped at the door of a forge and offered his services to the smith.

"Here," said the man to him, "you can help me to hammer this piece of iron." And he placed a hammer in Gushtasp's hands.

The prince had tremendous strength. He lifted the heavy hammer, brought it down on the anvil and smashed it at the first stroke. The smith was furious and immediately turned him out.

And so Gushtasp started wandering once more in great distress.

Whichever way he turned, there was no way in which he could show his usefulness.

At last he met a farmer working in a cornfield, who took pity on him and gave him food and shelter.

One day there came the news that the daughter of the king of Rum was of an age to marry and that all young men of princely family were invited to the royal banquet. Gushtasp decided to go there and sat at table among all the others. Princess Kitaban saw him, loved him and gave him a bunch of roses as a token of her favour.

Self-Reliance

The king took a violent dislike for Gushtasp in his poverty. He dared not forbid his daughter to marry him, but as soon as they were married he drove them out of his palace. So they went to live in the heart of the forest and built their hut not far from a river.

Gushtasp was a great hunter. Each day he would cross the river by boat, catch an elk or a wild ass, give half to the boatman and take the rest home to his wife.

One day the boatman brought a young man named Mabrin to see Gushtasp.

"My Lord," said Mabrin, "I wish to marry the second daughter of the king, your wife's sister, but I cannot unless I kill the wolf who is ravaging the king's lands. And I do not know how to do it."

"I will do it for you," said Gushtasp the hunter.

He went out into the desert and when he found the monster, he shot it down with two arrows and then cut off its head with his hunting knife.

The king came to see the dead beast, and in his joy gave his second daughter to Mabrin.

Some time later, the boatman brought another young man named Ahrun to see Gushtasp. Ahrun wished to marry the third daughter of the king, but first he had to kill a dragon. Gushtasp promised that he would accomplish this new feat.

He took some knives and made them into a ball bristling with sharp points. Then he set out on his quest and found the dragon with fiery breath. He shot many arrows at the body of the monster, leaping from side to side to avoid its claws. Then he fastened the ball of knives to the end of a pike and thrust it down the dragon's throat. The dragon closed its jaws and fell. Then the prince dispatched it with his sword.

Thus Ahrun married the third daughter of the king.

You will not be surprised to hear that in the course of time such a valiant prince became the king of Persia in succession to his father. It was during the reign of Gushtasp that the holy

Words of Long Ago

prophet Zerdusht, or Zoroaster, taught the Persians faith in Ormazd, Lord of light and sun and fire and of righteousness and justice.

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However, you can see that Gushtasp did not immediately find his place and work in the world.

He tried many things without success, and even at first incurred the enmity of many men, for example that of the good smith.

At last, however, he gained his true station in life and was able to help others until the time came for him to govern them wisely. And it was precisely in helping others that he was better than the woodcutter of whom we have just spoken; for, according to the story, the woodcutter was content to work for himself. Gushtasp was also better than the generous Hatim Tai, for instead of giving from the excess of his wealth, the Persian prince gave the strength of his arm and even risked his life for the sake of others.

None is more worthy of respect than one who, relying on himself, is able by his own effort not only to provide for all his needs, but to increase the well-being and the prosperity of those around him.

Respect the father, engineer or woodcutter, writer or labourer, tradesman, smith or explorer, who by his work, whatever it may be, earns a good living and increases the well-being of his family.

Respect the worker who, in order to serve both his own interests and those of his comrades, joins with them to organise co-operative stores or workshops, or trade-unions which enable each one to assert his rights by raising the powerful voice of the many instead of the weak and pleading voice of an isolated individual.

These workers' associations teach workmen to rely on their own strength and to help one another.

Self-Reliance

And you too, school-children, learn to enrich your intelligence by concentrating on the task your master gives you. And, while you mount the steps of knowledge as best you can, learn also to help, when need arises, the friend who is less alert and skilful than yourself.

In fairy-tales, one has only to utter a word or rub a lamp or wave a wand for genies to appear and carry people through the air, build palaces in the twinkling of an eye and cause armies of elephants and horsemen to spring from the ground.

But personal effort brings about still greater marvels: it covers the soil with rich harvests, tames wild beasts, tunnels through mountains, erects dykes and bridges, builds cities, launches ships on the ocean and flying machines in the air; in short it gives more well-being and security to all.

By personal effort man becomes more noble, more just, more kind: this is the true progress.

Five

Patience and Perseverance

THE PEOPLE of the Punjab have a song which goes like this:

*The bulbul does not always sing in the garden,
And the garden is not always in bloom;
Happiness does not always reign,
And friends are not always together.*

The conclusion to be drawn from this song is that we cannot expect to be always happy, and that to know how to be patient is most useful. For there are few days in our lives which do not give us the opportunity to learn greater patience.

You want to see a very busy man to ask him something. You go to his house. Already many visitors are there and he keeps you waiting a very long time before seeing you. You stay there quietly, perhaps for several hours. You are patient.

Another time, the person you wish to see is not at home when you arrive. You return again the next day, but his door is still closed. You go back a third time, but he is sick and cannot see you. You let a few days go by and then return once more. And if something new again prevents you from meeting him, nevertheless you are not discouraged, but renew the attempt until at last you see him. This kind of patience is called perseverance.

Perseverance is an active patience, a patience that marches on.

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The famous Genoese sailor Columbus set sail from Spain to cross the unknown seas of the West.

Patience and Perseverance

For days and weeks on end, in spite of the murmurs of his companions, he persisted in his will to reach a new land; in spite of delays and difficulties, he would not give up until he had reached the first American islands. Thus he discovered the New World.

What did he ask of his companions? He asked them only to have patience, for they had simply to rely on him and quietly allow him to lead them. But what did he himself need to reach his goal? He needed the sustained energy and the unremitting will that we call perseverance.

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The celebrated potter, Bernard Palissy, wanted to recover the lost secret of beautiful old glazed china enamelled in rich colours.

For months and years on end, he untiringly pursued his experiments. His attempts to find the glaze remained fruitless for a long time. He devoted all he had to his search; and for days and nights together he watched over the kiln he had built, endlessly trying out new processes for preparing and firing his pottery. And not only did no one give him any help or encouragement, but his friends and his neighbours called him a madman, and even his wife reproached him for what he was doing.

Several times he had to suspend his experiments for lack of resources, but as soon as he could, he would take them up again with renewed courage. Finally one day he did not even have the wood he needed to stoke his kiln; so, disregarding the cries and threats of his household, he threw his own furniture, to the very last stick, into the fire. And when everything was burnt, he opened the kiln and found it full of the brightly glazed pottery which made him famous and which he had sacrificed so many years to discover.

What was it that his wife and friends lacked that they could not wait for his hour of success to come, without harassing him and making his task more difficult? Simply patience. And what

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was the only thing he himself never lacked, the only thing that never failed him and which enabled him in the end to triumph over all difficulty and scorn? It was precisely perseverance, that is to say, the mightiest force of all.

For nothing in the world can prevail against perseverance. And even the greatest things are always an accumulation of small and untiring efforts.

Enormous boulders have been completely destroyed, worn by raindrops falling one after another on the same spot.

A grain of sand is nothing very powerful, but when many come together, they form a dune and check the ocean.

And when you learn about natural history, you will hear how mountains have been formed under the sea by little animalcules piled one upon another, who by their persistent efforts have made magnificent islands and archipelagos rise above the waves.

Don't you think that your small, repeated efforts could also achieve great things?

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The famous sage Shankara whose name brought glory to the land of Malabar, and who lived about 1200 years ago, had resolved from childhood to become a Sannyasi.

For a long time his mother, although she appreciated the nobility of his wish, did not allow him to devote himself to that way of life.

One day mother and child went to bathe in a river. Shankara dived in and felt his foot suddenly seized by a crocodile. Death seemed close at hand. But even at that dreadful moment the brave child thought only of his great project and cried out to his mother, "I am lost! A crocodile is dragging me down. But let me at least die a Sannyasi!"

"Yes, yes, my son," his mother sobbed in despair.

Shankara felt such joy that he found the strength to free his foot and throw himself ashore.

Patience and Perseverance

From that moment he grew in learning as in years. He became a guru, and remained true to his great work of teaching philosophy to the very end of his wonderful life.

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All who love India know the beautiful poem of the Mahabharata.

It was written in Sanskrit many hundreds of years ago. Until recent times, no European could read it unless he knew Sanskrit, and that was rare. A translation into one of the European languages was needed.

Babu Pratap Chandra Rai decided to devote himself to this work. In his own land he was able to find a learned friend, Kishori Mohan Ganguly, who could translate the Sanskrit book into English, and its hundred parts were published one by one.

For twelve years Pratap Chandra Rai went on with the task he had set himself. He devoted all his resources to the publication of the book. And when he had nothing left he travelled all over India to ask help from all who were willing to give. He received help from princes and peasants, from scholars and simple folk, from friends in Europe and America.

In the course of one of his journeys he caught the pernicious fever from which he died. During his sickness all his thoughts were turned towards the completion of his work. And even when it became painful for him to speak, he would still say to his wife:

“The book must be finished. Don’t spend money on my funeral rites if it is needed for the printing. Live as simply as you can so as to save money for the Mahabharata.”

He died full of love for India and her great poem.

His widow, Sundari Bala Rai, faithfully carried out his great wish. One year later the translator completed his work, and the eleven volumes of the Mahabharata were presented to the European public who could now know and admire the eighteen Parvas of the splendid epic poem. And reading it, they would

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learn to respect the great skill and wisdom of the profound thinkers who were the poets of ancient India.

Such are the fruits borne by the efforts of all those who, like Pratap Chandra Rai and so many other useful men, know how to persevere.

And you, brave children, will you not join the great army of men and women who never tire of doing good and never abandon their task until they have completed it?

In this wide world, there is no lack of noble work to be accomplished, nor is there any lack of good people to undertake it; but what is very often lacking is the perseverance which alone can carry it through to the end.

The Simple Life

THE PROPHET Mohammed, who devoted his life to teaching the Arab people, cared not for ease or riches.

One night he slept on a hard mat, and when he awoke his skin bore the marks of the knots and fibres of his bed.

A friend said to him, "O Messenger of Allah! This bed was too hard for you, and if you had asked me I would joyfully have prepared a softer one, so that your rest might have been better."

The Prophet replied, "A soft bed is not for me. I have a work to do in the world. When my body needs rest, I give it rest, but only as a horseman who ties his horse for a little while under the shade of a tree, to spare him from the heat of the sun, and soon sets off once more."

"I have a work to do in the world," said the Prophet. That is why his noble life was a simple one. Believing in his mission, he wanted to instruct the whole of Arabia. He did not care for luxuries: his heart was set on loftier thoughts.

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The following story from Arabia shows that to a healthy soul the simple life offers more happiness than any other.

Maisun was a daughter of the tribe of Kalb; she had spent her early years in tents in the desert.

One day, she was married to Caliph Muawiyah, but although he was rich and had many slaves, she was not happy with him; and in spite of all the luxury around her, she could find no peace of mind. Often when she was alone, she would sing softly to herself verses she had composed in Arabic:

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*Brown garments of camel's hair are fairer in my eyes
than the robes of a queen.*
*The desert tent is lovelier to dwell in than the grand
chambers of a palace.*
*The young colts that run about the Arab camp are
lovelier than the mules weighed down by their rich
trappings.*
*The voice of the watch-dog who barks at an approach-
ing stranger sounds sweeter than the ivory horn of
the palace-guard.*

Her song was heard by the Caliph and he banished her from his court. So the poetess returned to her tribe, happy to see no more of the rich dwelling that made her sad.

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In all countries, many people are beginning to understand that a simple life is more desirable than a life of extravagance, vanity and show.

There are more and more men and women who though they can afford to buy costly things for themselves, feel that their money can be put to a better use. They take a healthy diet instead of rich foods, and prefer to decorate their homes with furniture that is simple, strong and in good taste, rather than with cumbersome, ornate and useless articles meant only for display.

In every age, the best and most energetic servitors of earth's progress have known how to lead a quiet and frugal life, which keeps the body in good health and enables man to take a more active part in working for the common good. Their example will always put to shame all those who pile up useless treasures and become slaves to their vast quantities of servants, clothes and furniture.

You cannot make a heap without making a hole; and too often the luxury of some represents the poverty of many others.

The Simple Life

There are too many beautiful, great and useful things to be done in the world for those who are not wholly devoid of intelligence to be allowed to waste their time, money and thought in futile pastimes.

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Saint Francis was an apostle of the Good Life. He did not teach in order to earn money. His life was simple and his greatest joy was to instruct the people by his example and his preaching. And he was content with whatever food he was given.

One day, as he and his companion, Brother Masseo, were passing through a town, Masseo went down one street while Francis took another. Masseo was tall and handsome, whereas the saint was short and plain-looking. People gave generously to Masseo, but Francis collected only very little.

When they met outside the gates of the town, they sat by a large stone on the bank of a clear stream that ran nearby, and put together the alms they had received.

“O Brother Masseo,” cried Saint Francis with a joyful face, “we are not worthy of so great a feast.”

“Indeed,” replied Masseo, “but what is there to call a feast in these few pieces of bread? We have no knife, no dishes, no cloth, no servant.”

“Is it not a feast,” replied the saint, “to have good bread on a good table when one is hungry, and fresh water from a limpid spring to drink when one is thirsty?”

This does not mean to say that poor people should always be resigned to their miserable fare. But in any case it shows how the contentment that comes from a noble life and the cheerfulness native to beautiful souls can make up for the absence of material possessions and outer riches.

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Words of Long Ago

One thing is certain, that a simple life has never harmed anyone, while the same cannot be said for luxury and over-abundance. Most often, the things which are of no use to men are also those which cause them harm.

In the reign of the famous Akbar, there lived at Agra a Jain saint named Banarasi Das. The Emperor summoned the saint to his palace and told him:

“Ask of me what you will, and because of your holy life, your wish shall be satisfied.”

“Parabrahman has given me more than I could wish for,” replied the saint.

“But ask all the same,” Akbar insisted.

“Then, Sire, I would ask that you do not call me again to your palace, for I want to devote my time to the divine work.”

“Let it be so,” said Akbar. “But I in my turn have a favour to ask you.”

“Speak, Sire.”

“Give me some good counsel that I may bear in mind and act upon.”

Banarasi Das thought for a moment and said:

“See that your food is pure and clean, and take good care, especially at night, over your meat and drink.”

“I will not forget your advice,” said the Emperor.

In truth the advice was good, for healthy food and drink make a healthy body, fit to be the temple of a pure mind and life.

But it so happened that the very day on which the saint visited the Emperor was a fast-day. And therefore Akbar would only have his meal several hours after midnight. The palace cooks had prepared the dishes in the evening and had placed them in plates of gold and silver, until the time of fasting should be over.

It was still dark when Akbar had them brought before him. Despite his haste to take some nourishment, he suddenly remembered the words of Banarasi Das: “Take care over your meat and

The Simple Life

drink." So he examined the plate before him carefully and found that the food was covered with brown ants. In spite of all precautions, these ants had crept in and spoiled the Emperor's meal.

Akbar had to send away the dishes, and this incident strongly impressed on his mind the useful advice he had received.

For you will understand that Banarsi Das had not intended to warn Akbar merely against brown ants, but against anything in his diet that might not be good for the health of his body or mind.

Many diseases come from an unhealthy diet.

One who knowingly sells unwholesome products is in fact making an attack on the lives of his fellow-citizens. And unwholesome products are not only those that are adulterated or spoilt but all those that may be in any way harmful to eat.

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The story does not tell us that Akbar found brown ants in his cup as well, and yet Banarsi Das advised him to be careful about his drink. For there are indeed cups which look bright to the eye and which seem to contain a pleasant and cheering drink but which are nevertheless full of danger for men. Foremost among them are those which contain alcohol.

The Prophet Mohammed taught that there was sin in wine and gambling; and therefore all who respect the words of the Koran abstain from wine and gambling to their profit.

But on the other hand there are many good people all over the world who find it right to take spirits. We respect their opinions. But these same people cannot assert that it is wrong not to take alcohol.

If, then, there are people who think that it is wrong to take fermented drinks, and others, on the contrary, who think that it is good, yet there is no one to maintain that it is wrong not to take any. It is also debatable whether or not it is useful to drink, but no one would dream of claiming that it is harmful not to do

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so. And everyone would agree that in any case it is cheaper.

In every country there are societies for temperance or even total abstinence, whose members undertake not to touch spirits. And in certain towns it is even forbidden to sell them.

But in other places, the use of alcohol, formerly unknown, is spreading. In India, for example, where abstinence had reigned for so many centuries, alcohol has been introduced, more terrible than any demon in the ancient legends. For the terrible Rakshasas of which they speak could be harmful only to the body, whereas alcohol has even the power to kill thought and destroy character. So first of all it hurts the body. It hurts the children of parents who drink to excess. It hurts the intelligence of man and enslaves those who should be the servitors of humanity.

For every one of us should be a servant of humanity; and if by our food or our drink we weaken our minds or bodies, we are then only bad servants unable to perform their task.

What happens to the soldier when his weapon is broken, to the sailor when his ship has lost its masts, to the horseman when his horse is lamed? And what can a man do if he loses possession of his most precious faculties?

He no longer even has the worth of a good animal, for the animal at least avoids eating and drinking things that may harm it.

The Roman poet Virgil liked to live in the countryside. He admired the powerful bullock that draws the plough and cuts the furrow where the next harvest will spring up. Strong is his body, powerful his muscles and hard is his labour year in and year out.

And Virgil adds: "Wine and too much feasting are unknown to him. He feeds on grass, quenches his thirst from running rivers and crystal streams; and no care disturbs his peaceful slumber."

Be temperate to be strong.

You would be offended if someone were to tell you, "Be weak."

The Simple Life

Moderation increases the strength of the strong and preserves the strength of the weak.

Remember the advice of Banarasi Das:

*Take good care over the dish.
Take good care over the glass.*

Seven

Prudence

“**G**OOD shot!” The cry rang out as the young Indian let fly his arrow and hit his mark.

“Yes,” someone said, “but it is broad daylight. The archer can see his target. He is not so skilled as Dasaratha.”

“And what does Dasaratha do?”

“He is Sabdabhedi.”

“What is that?”

“He shoots by sound.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, he can shoot in the dark. At night he goes out into the jungle and listens, and when he has judged, from the sound of wings or footsteps, what kind of game he has encountered he lets fly his arrow and hits it as surely as if he had shot by day.”

Thus the reputation of Dasaratha, prince of the city of Ayodhya, was noised abroad.

He was proud of his skill as Sabdabhedi, and pleased with the praise of the people. At dusk he would go out alone in his chariot to lie in wait in the heart of the forest. Now he would hear the tread of a buffalo or an elephant coming to drink at the river, now the light-footed deer or the stealthy approach of a tiger.

One night as he lay among the bushes, listening for the sound of leaves or water, he suddenly heard something moving on the shore of the lake. He could see nothing in the darkness, but was not Dasaratha a Sabdabhedi? The sound was enough for him: it was most certainly an elephant. He shot an arrow. Immediately a cry rang out which made him leap up.

“Help! Help! Someone has shot me!”

Prudence

The bow fell from Dasaratha's hands; he suddenly felt dizzy with horror. What had he done? Wounded a human being instead of a wild beast? He rushed through the jungle towards the lake. On the bank a young man was lying in his own blood, all dishevelled, holding in his hand a pitcher which he had just been filling.

"O sir," he groaned, "was it you who shot the fatal arrow? What harm have I done you that you should treat me so? I am a hermit's son. My aged parents are blind; I look after them and provide for their needs. I came to draw water for them, and now I shall no longer be able to serve them! Follow this path to their hut and tell them what has happened. But first pull out this shaft from my breast, for it gives me great pain."

Dasaratha removed the arrow from the wound. The young man breathed a last sigh and died.

Then the prince filled the pitcher with water and followed the path the dying youth had shown him. As he came near, the father called out:

"My son, why have you taken so long? Was it to swim in the lake? We feared that some harm had befallen you. But why do you not answer?"

With a trembling voice Dasaratha said:

"I am not your son, O holy hermit. I am a Kshatriya, and until now I was proud of my skill with a bow. This night as I lay in wait I thought I heard an elephant drinking at the water's edge. I shot my arrow. Alas! It was your son I struck. Oh, tell me how to atone for my fault."

Then the old couple cried out and wept. They bade the prince lead them to the spot where their son lay, their only son. They recited sacred hymns over his body and sprinkled the water of the funeral rites. Then the hermit said:

"Listen, Dasaratha! Through your fault we shed tears over our dear son. One day, you also shall weep over a beloved son. Before that many years will pass; but the punishment shall surely come."

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They made a pyre to burn the dead body, then threw themselves into the flames and perished also.

Time passed. Dasaratha became king of Ayodhya and married the lady Kausalya. And his son was the glorious Rama.

Rama was loved by all in the city, except Queen Kaikeyi, the king's second wife, and her maid. These two women plotted the downfall of noble Rama, and because of them he was sent into exile for fourteen years.

Then Dasaratha mourned his son, as the aged parents had mourned in the jungle for the young man who had died at midnight by the lakeside.

Dasaratha had once been so proud of his skill that he had lacked prudence and given no thought to the risk of wounding someone in the darkness. It would have been better for him only to draw his bow in full daylight than to trust so rashly in his skill as Sabdabhedi. He meant no harm, but he lacked foresight.

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A merchant of the city of Benares once took pity on two old vultures who were poor and miserable. He took them to a dry place, lit a fire and fed them with pieces of meat from the pyre where people burnt dead cattle.

When the rainy season came, the vultures, now strong and well, flew away towards the mountains.

But in their gratitude to the merchant of Benares, they decided to pick up all the clothes they could find lying about so as to give them to their kindly friend. They flew from house to house, from village to village, snatched up all the garments drying out in the open and took them to the merchant's house.

He appreciated their good intentions, but he neither used nor sold the stolen clothes; he simply put them away carefully.

However, traps had been set everywhere for the two vultures, and one of them was caught. He was brought before the king, who asked him:

Prudence

“Why are you robbing my subjects?”

“One day a merchant saved the lives of my brother and myself; in order to repay our debt, we have collected these clothes for him,” the bird replied.

The merchant was summoned before the king and questioned in his turn.

“Sire,” he said, “the vultures did indeed bring me many clothes, but I have kept them all safely and I am ready to give them back to their owners.”

The king pardoned the vultures, for they had acted out of gratitude, though without discernment; and thanks to his prudence, the merchant too was spared.

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The Japanese have a picturesque way of expressing their idea of prudence.

They have in one of their temples an image of a meditating Buddha seated on a lotus-blossom. In front of him are three little monkeys, one with its hands over its eyes, another over its ears, and the third covering its mouth. What do these three monkeys signify? By its gesture the first one says:

“I do not see evil and folly.”

The second one says:

“I do not hear them.”

And the third:

“I do not speak them.”

In the same way, the wise man is prudent in what he looks at, in what he listens to, and in what he says.

He considers the consequences, thinks of the morrow, and if he does not know his way, he asks.

Eight

Sincerity

ALION, a wolf and a fox went out hunting together. They killed an ass, a gazelle and a hare.

Seeing this catch, the lion said to the wolf:

"Kindly tell me, friend wolf, how we should divide this game."

"There is no need," replied the wolf, "to cut up the three animals. You take the ass, let the fox take the hare, and for my part I shall be content with the gazelle."

The lion's only answer was a roar of fury, and with a single blow, as reward for his advice, he crushed the wolf's head with his claw. Then the lion turned to the fox and said:

"And, my dear friend, what do you suggest?"

"Oh, Sire," the fox replied with a deep bow, "it is a very simple matter. You should have the ass for your breakfast, the gazelle for your evening meal, and eat the hare as a light snack in between."

"Very well," said the lion, pleased to have all the game for himself. "And who taught you to speak with such wisdom and justice?"

"The wolf," the fox replied slyly.

Why did the fox speak in this way? Was it to say what he really thought? Oh, certainly not! Was it then a sincere wish to please the lion? Certainly not that either. He spoke like that because he was afraid, and we can surely make allowances for him. But nevertheless we must admit that his words were not truthful — merely artful. And if the lion approved of them, it was because he loved meat, not truth.

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Sincerity

A Muslim writer, Abu Abbas, tells us of the glory of King Solomon, who reigned in Jerusalem, the holy city of the Hebrews.

In his throne room there were six hundred seats, half of which were occupied by sages, the other half by Jinns or genies who assisted Solomon by their magic power.

Throughout the sittings of the Council, a multitude of great birds would appear at a word from the king and spread their wings to shade the people in the six hundred seats. And at his command, each morning and evening, a powerful wind would arise, lifting up the whole palace and instantaneously transporting it a month's journey away. In this way, the king was at hand to govern the distant lands that belonged to him.

Besides, Solomon made the most marvellous throne one could ever dream of. And this throne was designed in such a way that no one would dare to utter an untruth in the presence of the king.

It was made of ivory, inlaid with pearls, emeralds and rubies, and around it stood four golden date-palms on which the dates were also emeralds and rubies. At the top of two of these palms were golden peacocks, and on the two others were golden vultures. On each side of the throne there were also two golden lions between two pillars of emerald. And golden vines bearing ruby grapes twined around the trunks of the trees.

The elders of Israel were seated at Solomon's right hand and their seats were of gold, the genies sat at his left hand and their seats were of silver.

When the king held his court of justice the people were allowed into his presence. And each time that a man bore witness on another, if he deviated ever so little from the truth, an amazing thing would happen. At the sight of him, the throne bearing the king, the lions, the palm-trees, the peacocks and the vultures, would instantly turn round on itself. Then the lions would thrust forward their claws, lashing the ground with their tails; the vultures and the peacocks would flap their wings.

Words of Long Ago

And so the witnesses would tremble with terror and would not dare to tell a single lie.

And this was no doubt very convenient, and must have considerably lightened the king's task. But fear is always a wretched thing, which consorts ill with truth.

Even when by chance, as in the story of Abu Abbas, it forces a man to speak the truth, that does not make him truthful; for, at the very next moment, fear may drive him to speak without frankness, as did the fox in our previous tale. And that is what most often happens.

An honest man does not need the marvels of Solomon's throne to learn to speak the truth. The throne of truth dwells within his own heart; the rectitude of his soul cannot but inspire him with words of rectitude. He speaks the truth not because he is afraid of a teacher, a master or a judge, but because truth is the characteristic of an upright man, the stamp of his nature.

Love of truth makes him face all fears. He speaks as he should, no matter what happens to him.

* * *

A rich and mighty king named Vishwamitra, who longed for greater esteem, resolved to practise Tapasya (austerities) in order to rise from his own caste of Kshatriya to the highest of all, that of a Brahmin.

He did all that he thought was needed and led a life of apparent austerity which made everyone say, "The king deserves to be a Brahmin."

But the Brahmin Vasishtha did not think so, for he knew that Vishwamitra had acted out of vanity; his renunciation was not sincere. And so he refused to address him as a Brahmin.

In his fury the king had a hundred children of Vasishtha's family put to death. But in spite of all his grief, Vasishtha persisted in his refusal to say what he did not think was true.

So the king resolved to kill this truthful man as well. One

Sincerity

night he went to Vasishtha's hut to carry out the evil deed.

When he came near to the door, he heard the Brahmin talking with his wife, and as his own name was mentioned, he stopped to listen. Saintly and pure, full of forgiveness for him were the words he heard. This touched the king's heart. Full of repentance he threw away his weapon, then went in and bowed at the hermit's feet.

"Brahmarshi," Vasishtha welcomed him affectionately, when seeing the king's present state of mind.

"Why did you not acknowledge my Tapasya before?" Vishwamitra asked humbly.

"Because," replied Vasishtha, "you claimed the title of Brahmin in the name of an arrogant power, but now that you are repentant, you come in the true spirit of a Brahmin."

Vasishtha knew how to speak the truth without fear. And he also spoke it without rancour.

* * *

Is it not noble to speak the truth in this way, even when there is some danger in doing it?

Besides, very often, things turn out better for those who brave this danger than it might have seemed at first. The success of falsehood is only short-lived, whereas in most cases, to be sincere is the cleverest thing to do.

One morning, the Emperor of Delhi sat on his throne to confer honours on those he considered worthy. As the ceremony was drawing to a close, he noticed that one of the people he had summoned, a young man named Syed Ahmed, had not yet made his appearance.

The Emperor stepped down from his throne and got into a sedan chair which was used to carry him through his vast palace.

Just at that moment the young man hurried in.

"Your son is late," said the Emperor to Syed's father, who was his friend.

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"Why?" asked the Emperor, looking sternly at the young man.

"Sire," Syed replied frankly, "it is because I overslept."

The courtiers looked at the young man in amazement. How dare he admit so shamelessly to the Emperor that he had no better excuse? How tactless of him to speak like that!

But the Emperor, after pondering a moment, felt respect for the young man because of his sincerity; and he gave him the necklace of pearls and the jewel of honour to place on his brow.

Such was the reward of Syed Ahmed, who loved the truth and spoke it to all, prince or peasant.

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It is quite certain that to be able to tell the truth without difficulty, it is best always to act in such a way that we have no need to conceal anything we do. And for that, in our actions of every moment, we should remember that we are in the presence of the Divine.

For straightforwardness of speech also demands straightforwardness of actions; and a sincere man is one who shuns all falsehood in what he says and all hypocrisy in what he does.

At Amroha a special kind of pottery is made, known as Kagazi pottery, decorated with silver designs. These pots are very pretty, but they are so light and fragile that they break with the slightest use. Although they look just as serviceable as any other earthenware, they are only good to look at.

Many people are like Kagazi pottery. They have a beautiful appearance; but if you try to put them to any kind of test, you will see that everything about them is ornament. Do not put the slightest trust in them, for this would be too heavy a weight for their fragile nature to bear.

A Brahmin sent his son to Benares to study under the guidance of a Pundit.

Sincerity

Twelve years later the young man returned to his home town, and many people hurried to see him, thinking that he had become a very profound scholar. They placed before him a book written in Sanskrit and said:

“Explain the doctrine to us, honourable Pundit.”

The young man stared at the book. In truth, he did not understand a single word of it. In Benares he had learnt nothing but the alphabet. And even then the letters had been written very large on the blackboard, so that by seeing them every day he might get them little by little into his head.

So he remained silent in front of the book, his eyes brimming with tears.

“O Pundit,” said the visitors, “something has touched your heart. Tell us what you have found in the book.”

“The letters,” he said at last, “were big in Benares, but here they are small!”

Was not this Pundit like the Kagazi pots?

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A wolf had his den in the rocks on the bank of the river Ganges. When the snows melted, the water began to rise. It rose so high that it surrounded the wolf’s rock on every side. So one day he was unable to go out in search of food.

“Oh well!” he said when he saw that he had nothing left to eat, “today shall be a holy day, in honour of which I proclaim a fast.”

He sat on the edge of the rock and put on a very solemn air to celebrate the holy day and the fast.

But no sooner had he done this than a wild goat came bounding across the water, from rock to rock, and reached the place where the wolf was sitting full of devotion.

“Oho!” he exclaimed when he saw it. “Here is something to eat.”

He pounced on the goat and missed it, he pounced once

Words of Long Ago

more and missed it again. Finally the goat escaped by leaping across the stream.

“Oh well!” said the wolf, resuming his saintly pose, “I shall not be so impious as to eat goat’s flesh on a holy day. No, no—no meat for me on a fast day!”

What do you think of the wolf, his devotion and his respect for the holy day? You laugh at his roguery. But how many people there are whose sincerity is like this, who adorn themselves with fine sentiments because it suits their interests, and pose as little saints because they are unable to give free rein to their vices. But in spite of all their cunning, do you think that these tricksters can prevail for very long against one who is right and just?

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The monkeys and bears of Hanuman’s army fought for Lord Rama and his brother Lakshman against Ravana the ten-headed demon.

Weakening under the blows of the warriors who were attacking him from every side, Ravana made use of his magic power.

Suddenly, at his side, among the demons, many Ramas and many Lakshmans magically appeared. They were in truth nothing but false and deceptive appearances, but the monkeys and the bears, taking them for real people, halted in confusion: how could they continue the fight and go on throwing trees and rocks against Rama and Lakshman, their beloved leaders? Seeing their dismay, the demon Ravana gave a smile of cruel delight. Rama smiled too: what pleasure he would take in destroying such a falsehood, in exposing the trickery, in gaining victory for the truth! He fitted an arrow to his mighty bow and shot. The arrow whizzed through the misleading shadows, which immediately dissolved. At last Hanuman’s army could see clearly and their courage revived.

Similarly, every straight word from a sincere man is like an

Sincerity

arrow that can destroy much falsehood and hypocrisy.

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There is a legend in South India which tells of a prince, the Jasmine King, whose laugh alone would fill the land for leagues around with the sweet fragrance of jasmine. But for that his laugh must come from the joyful and spontaneous gaiety of his heart. It would have been no use if he had tried to laugh without true merriment. When his spirit was full of joy, his laughter would bubble up like a fragrant spring.

The quality of this laughter came wholly from its sincerity.

The tables in Duryodhana's palace were laid with an extremely rich display of vessels of gold and silver, ornamented with rubies and emeralds and diamonds sparkling with many colours. Lord Krishna was invited to the feast but did not go. Instead he went that night to the house of a poor Sudra, who had also invited him. The meal was simple, the dishes were plain. And yet Krishna chose this one in preference to the other, for the feast which the Sudra offered him was full of sincere love, whereas the sumptuous banquet of King Duryodhana had been given only for show.

It is also said that the glorious Rama once sat at the table of a very humble woman, whose husband was a fowler. All she could put before the famous hero was a few fruits, for she had nothing else. But she gave the best she had with such a good heart that Rama was touched and wished that the memory of this gift from a sincere soul should not be forgotten, and that is why it is still spoken of after so many centuries.

Jalal was a wise and famous teacher. One day two Turks who wished to hear his teachings came to see him with an offering. As they were very poor, their gift was small — only a handful of lentils. Some of the sage's disciples looked at this present with scorn. But Jalal told them:

Words of Long Ago

“Once the Prophet Mohammed needed riches to carry out one of his undertakings. So he asked his followers to give him what they could spare. Some brought half of their possessions, others a third. Abu Bakar gave all his wealth. In this way Mohammed got a large quantity of animals and weapons. Then came a poor woman who in her turn offered the Prophet three dates and a wheat-cake; and that was all she had. Many smiled at this sight, but the Prophet told them that he had had a dream in which he had seen the angels take a pair of scales and put the gifts of all the people in one of the pans and into the other only the dates and the bread of the poor woman. And the scale stood balanced, for this pan was as heavy as the other.” And Jalal added:

“A small gift offered with a sincere heart has as much value as costly presents.”

On hearing this the two Turks were full of joy and no one dared laugh any more about the handful of lentils.

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A poor man of low caste hunted for a whole day to feed his family, but could not catch anything. At nightfall he was still in the forest, alone, hungry and worn out by his vain attempts. In the hope of finding a nest he climbed up a Bel tree, whose three-lobed leaves are offered to the great Shiva by his devotees. But he found no nest. He thought of his wife and his little children waiting at home for their father and their food, and wept for them.

Tears of pity, the legend says, are very heavy. They are far more precious than the tears shed by those who are sorry for their own pain.

The hunter’s tears fell upon the leaves of the Bel tree and bore them down towards the stone of offering standing at the foot of the tree in honour of Shiva. At that moment the man was bitten by a snake and died. The spirits immediately carried

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his soul to the house of the gods and brought it before the great Shiva.

“There is no place here for this man’s soul,” the dwellers in heaven cried out together. “For he was of low caste, he did not know the holy laws, he ate impure food and did not offer the customary gifts to the gods.”

But Shiva said to them:

“He gave me Bel leaves, and above all, he offered me sincere tears. There is no low caste for hearts that are true.” And he received him into his heaven.

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All these stories show us that in every age and in every land, both men and gods have given honour to sincerity; they love honesty and truth in all things.

One who lives in falsehood is an enemy of mankind.

All human sciences — philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, chemistry, physics — are seekings for truth. But in the smallest things as in the greatest, truth is necessary.

Little children, do not wait to be grown up before you learn to be truthful: that cannot be done too early; and to remain truthful, it is never too soon to acquire the habit.

Sometimes it is so difficult for men to speak the truth even if they want to, for to do so, it must first of all be known and sought out, and that is not always so easy.

There were four young princes of Benares who were brothers. Each one of them said to their father’s charioteer:

“I want to see a Kimsuka tree.”

“I will show you,” said the charioteer, and he invited the eldest to go for a ride.

In the jungle he showed the prince a Kimsuka. It was the time of year when there are neither buds, nor leaves, nor flowers. So the prince saw only a trunk of dark wood.

A few weeks later, the second prince was taken for a drive

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in the chariot and he also saw the Kimsuka tree. He found it covered with leaves.

A little later in the season, the third brother saw it in his turn; it was all pink with flowers.

At last the fourth saw it; its fruits were ripe.

One day when the four brothers were together, someone asked:

“What does the Kimsuka tree look like?”

The eldest said: “Like a bare trunk.”

The second: “Like a flourishing banana-tree.”

The third: “Like a pink and red bouquet.”

And the fourth: “Like an acacia laden with fruit.”

Being unable to agree, they went together to their father the king for him to decide between them. When he heard how one after the other the young princes had seen the Kimsuka tree, the king smiled and said:

“All four of you are right, but all four of you forget that the tree is not the same in all seasons.”

Each one was describing what he had seen and each one was ignorant of what the others knew.

In this way, most often, men know only a fraction of the truth, and their error comes precisely from the fact that they think they know it all.

How much less this error would be if they had learnt at an early age to love truth so much that they would always seek it more and more.

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The King of Kumaon, in the region of the Himalaya mountains, was hunting one day on the hill of Almora, which at that time was covered by thick forest.

A hare ran out of the thickets and the king began to chase it. But this hare suddenly changed into a tiger and soon disappeared from his sight.

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Struck by this strange occurrence, the king assembled the wise men in his palace and asked them what such a thing might mean.

"It means," they replied, "that on the spot where you lost sight of the tiger, you should build a new city. For tigers only flee from places where men come to live in great numbers."

So workmen were engaged to build the new town. A thick iron rod was driven into the earth to test the firmness of the ground. By chance, at that very moment a slight earth-tremor occurred.

"Stop!" cried the wise men. "The point has pierced the body of Seshanaga, the world-serpent. The town must not be built here."

And, indeed, the legend tells that when the iron rod was drawn out of the ground, it was found to be all red with the blood of Seshanaga.

"This is most unfortunate," said the king, "but since we have decided to build the city there, we shall build it all the same."

The wise men were furious and they predicted dire misfortunes for the city, and the early end of the king's race.

The soil was fertile and the water abundant. For six hundred years, the town of Almora has stood on its rock, and the surrounding fields produce rich harvests.

Thus, in spite of their wisdom, the wise men were mistaken in their predictions. Doubtless they were sincere and thought they were speaking the truth, but men are very often mistaken in this way and take for realities what is nothing but superstition.

Little children, the world is full of superstitions, and the best means given to man to discover more of the truth is to remain always sincere and to become always more so in thought, deed and word; for it is when we avoid deceiving others in all things that we also learn to deceive ourselves less and less.

Right Judgment

CHOOSE a good straight stick and dip it half-way into some water: the stick will appear to be bent in the middle. But that is an illusion, and if you were to think that the stick was actually bent, your judgment would be wrong. Pull out the stick and you will see that in fact it is still straight.

On the other hand, it is possible for a stick that is actually bent in the middle to appear straight if it is carefully placed in a particular way in the water.

Well, men are often like sticks. If you look at them from a certain angle, you may not see them as straight as they are, and sometimes too, they may have a deceptive appearance and seem straight when they are crooked. That is why you should trust appearances as little as possible and never judge anyone lightly.

In India, a mendicant monk was going across the country asking for alms. In a meadow he met a ram. The furious animal got ready to rush at him, and to do so, took a few steps back and lowered its head.

“Ah!” said the monk, “here is a good and intelligent animal. He has recognised that I am a man full of merit, and he is bowing down before me to greet me.”

Just then the ram rushed forward and knocked the virtuous man to the ground with one blow of its head.

So it can happen that one judges too respectfully and trusting those who least deserve it. For sometimes there are people who are like the wolf that the good La Fontaine speaks of—the wolf whom the sheep took for the shepherd because it had put on his cape; or else like the ass who was taken at first for a

Right Judgment

dangerous animal because it had put on a lion's skin.

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But if one can make mistakes like this by trusting to appearances, it more often happens, on the contrary, that one is tempted to make hasty and uncharitable judgments on others.

The Shah of Persia Ismail Sefevi had just conquered the land of Khorasan and was returning to his capital.

As he was passing by the home of the poet Hatifi, he thought he would visit him. He did not have the patience to go as far as the gate of the house, so great was his desire to see the famous man, so, catching sight of the branch of a tree overhanging the wall, he caught hold of it, jumped over the enclosure and into the poet's garden.

What would you have thought if someone had suddenly entered your house like this? You would probably have taken him for a thief and given him a very poor welcome.

Hatifi did well not to judge by appearances or according to the first impression of the moment. He gave a warm welcome to his odd visitor. And later he wrote new poems on the exploits that the Shah had been so eager to tell him.

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In general nothing is easier than to see in others what is least to their advantage; each one has his faults, to which his neighbours give more attention than he does. But what we should look for in every man, if we do not want to judge him too unjustly, is what is best in him. "If your friend has but one eye," says the proverb, "look at his good side."

A friend of yours may seem awkward or slow, and yet be the most hardworking student of the class.

And your teacher whom you find strict and severe probably loves you much and desires only your progress.

Words of Long Ago

A friend who sometimes seems so boring or so surly to you, may after all be the best friend you have.

And how many people who are looked upon as wicked and are treated harshly, carry deep in their hearts something which no one has been able to perceive.

A great wolf was causing terror in the woods and fields around the town of Gubbio, so that the people dared not even venture on the roads. The monster was killing men and animals alike.

At last the good Saint Francis decided to face the frightful creature. He went out of the town, followed at a distance by many men and women. As he drew near to the forest, the wolf suddenly sprang at the saint with wide open jaws. But Francis calmly made a sign and the wolf lay down peacefully at his feet like a lamb.

“Brother Wolf,” Saint Francis told him, “you have done much harm in this land, and you deserve a murderer’s death. All men hate you. But I would gladly make peace between you and my friends of Gubbio.”

The wolf bowed his head and wagged his tail.

“Brother Wolf,” Francis went on, “I promise you that if you will keep peace with these people, they will be kind to you and give you food every day. So, will you promise to do no more harm from now on?”

Then the wolf bowed his head very low and put his right paw in the saint’s hand. In this way they made a pact together, in good faith.

Then Francis led the wolf into the marketplace of Gubbio and repeated before the assembled citizens what he had just said to the wolf, and once more the wolf put his paw in the saint’s hand as a pledge of his good behaviour for the future.

The wolf lived in the town for two years and did no harm to anyone. Each day the townsfolk would bring him his food, and they all mourned him when he died.

However bad the wolf may have seemed, in truth there was

Right Judgment

something in him which no one had discovered until the saint had called him his brother. In this legend the wolf no doubt represents some great offender much hated by other men. It is intended to show that even in those who seem lost beyond hope, there still remain some seeds of good that can be awakened with a little love.

All good cabinet-makers know that there is no plank, however rotten, in which one cannot find some sound fibres. The bad workman will throw away the plank in ignorance and contempt, but the good workman will take it up, remove what is worm-eaten and carefully plane the rest. And out of the hardest knots in the wood, the artist can shape the most heart-stirring figures.

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In the cheerless land of Guiana, which is so fatal to Europeans, prisons have been established for convicts sentenced to hard labour or transportation. Some years ago, a military warder was taking a working party to Cayenne when by accident he fell into the harbour just as the tide was coming in.

At certain times, at low tide, this harbour is almost completely covered with sand, so that it is impossible to disembark. On the other hand, at full tide, it is flooded by extremely swift currents, bringing the sharks, which infest the entire coast, in great numbers.

The warder who had fallen into the water was in a very critical situation, for he hardly knew how to swim. Every second that passed increased his danger of being snapped up by one of these voracious creatures. Suddenly one of the convicts, heeding only his nobler feelings, threw himself into the water. He was able to catch hold of the warder and after a great effort, to save him.

This man was a criminal, and normally those who saw him pass by in his convict's uniform, marked with ignominious letters and the number which now took the place of his name, would turn away in contempt, thinking him unworthy of a single glance

Words of Long Ago

or word of compassion. And yet their judgment was quite unjust, for in him there was compassion. In spite of all his faults, there was nobility in his heart: he was ready to sacrifice himself for the sake of the very man who was bound by duty never to show him any mercy.

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Here is yet another story about convicts that will show you how mistaken one can be if one judges men by appearances.

Two released convicts had been hired by a gold-prospector from the Upper Maroni. Every year he would entrust them with the gold grains and the nuggets obtained by "placer mining", which they were to take to the nearest gold-market, thirty days' journey by canoe down river.

One day the two ex-convicts decided to escape.

For when convicts have completed their sentence, they are not free to return home, but have to stay in the penal colony, usually for the rest of their lives. However, as Guiana is a wild and uninhabited country, full of virgin forests and swamps, where the ex-convicts are in continual danger of dying of fever or starvation, most of them try to escape as soon as the opportunity arises.

So, wishing to take advantage of the canoe at their disposal, the two hired convicts decided to make for the Dutch colony on the opposite bank of the river.

But first, they placed the stock of gold belonging to their master in a safe spot, and sent him a letter indicating the place where his property lay.

"You have always been good to us," they said, "and while we are escaping, we feel some scruples about robbing you of what you entrusted to our care."

These two convicts had once been sentenced for theft. The gold they were carrying meant quite a small fortune for them, but something in them was honest and straightforward. To everyone

Right Judgment

who knew their story and judged them according to their past, they were nothing but vile and worthless criminals; but for the sake of the man who was able to trust them, they could, in spite of everything, become trustworthy once more.

Little children, let us be prudent and charitable in our thoughts; let us be careful not to judge our fellow-men too hastily; and even let us refrain from judging them at all when we can avoid it.

Ten

Order

MEN IN ancient India had a very poetic idea about the earth and the world—an idea intended to express order.

The land inhabited by men was called Jambu Dvipa and it was surrounded by a sea of salt. Then came a ring of land and then a sea of milk. Another ring of land, and a sea of butter. More land, and a sea of curds. Land again, and a sea of wine. More land, and after that a sea of sugar. Still more land, and at last, the seventh and final ring of pure water: the sweet, the sweetest of all seas!

If you look at a map of the world like the ones we now use in schools, you will not find the sea of sugar, or the sea of milk, or the others. Nor did the Indians think that these seas really existed, but for them it was an original way of expressing a profound idea.

The ancient legend meant among other things that everything in the world is made to be arranged in an orderly way; that the earth will truly become a place of rest, a reasonable place, and a dwelling fit to live in, only when each thing has found its right place. Indeed, how could one enjoy even the best things, salt, milk, butter, wine, sugar, water, if instead of being kept apart in an orderly way they were to form the frightful mixture you can imagine?

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All the religious books of mankind, by means of the most varied images, teach this law of order.

The Hebrew Book of Genesis, in its own way, also tells a story of order.

Order

In the beginning there was chaos, that is, disorder and darkness. And the first act of God was to throw light upon this disorder, just as a man shines the light of his lamp into the gloom of the dark and dirty cellar he wants to enter.

After that the Bible tells how, day by day, things emerged from the chaos in an orderly way until at last the human race appeared.

It is the glory of man to create order and to discover it everywhere.

The astronomer looks up towards the stars and makes a map of the heavens; he studies the regular paths of the heavenly bodies and names them, he calculates the motions of the planets around the sun and forecasts the moment when the moon, passing between the earth and the sun, will cause what we call an eclipse. The whole science of astronomy depends on a knowledge of order.

Arithmetic is also a science of order. Even a very small child takes delight in repeating numbers in the right order. He soon discovers that there is no meaning in saying: one, five, three, ten, two, as he counts his fingers or his marbles. He counts: one, two, three, four; and all mathematics comes from that.

And without order, what would become of that lovely thing, music? There are seven notes in the scale: do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si. If you play these notes one after another, it is all right, but if you strike them all together, and mix their sounds, it will make a frightful noise. They can produce a harmonious sound together only when they are played in a certain order. Do, mi, sol, do, for example, sounded together, form what is known as a “chord”. The whole science of music is based on that order.

And it could be shown that order is also the basis of every other science and of all the arts that man can invent.

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But is it not equally indispensable in everything?

Words of Long Ago

If you went into a house and found the furniture and ornaments all topsyturvy and scattered about, and covered with a thick layer of dust, you would exclaim, "What dirt and disorder!" For dirt itself is nothing but disorder. There is a place for dust in the world, but not on the furniture.

Similarly, the place for ink is in the ink-pot and not on your fingers or on the carpet.

Everything is clean when each thing is in its place. And your books at school, your clothes and toys at home should each have a place which is really its own and which no other thing can claim. Otherwise, battles will follow and your books will get torn, your clothes stained and your toys lost. Then it will cost you much trouble and patience to find your way in this muddle and put everything right. Whereas it is so convenient when things are kept in order.

The life and work of men, and even the wealth and prosperity of nations, all depend on this same principle of order.

And that is why one of the main occupations of the government of a country is to maintain good order. From the emperor, king or president, down to the ordinary policeman, each one must contribute to this task as best he can. And all the citizens, whatever their occupations may be, should also take part in this work of maintaining order; for in this way each one can contribute to the organisation of a strong and prosperous nation.

Think of the serious consequences that the slightest disorder can sometimes have.

What regularity and precision there must be among the multitude of railwaymen, gate-keepers, engine-drivers and points-men so that the numerous trains which run in all countries can leave and arrive on time, at the exact minute calculated to avoid all congestion. And if by accident or negligence this order is disrupted even for a moment, what unfortunate incidents can happen! How many things can be upset by a simple delay: friends miss each other, employees and businessmen arrive late at their offices or for their appointments, passengers miss their

Order

boats. And you cannot imagine all the other troubles that will follow.

Think of the sad state things would be in if order and regularity suddenly ceased to exist in the world.

See how the whole routine of the house is disturbed simply when a clock stops giving its charming example of regularity and begins to go slow or else to go madly fast. If it cannot be put right, then the best thing to do is to get rid of it.

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In the parlour of an old farmhouse there was an antique grandfather clock which for more than a hundred and fifty years had never ceased ticking faithfully. Every morning at daybreak when the farmer came down, the first thing he would do was to visit the clock to be sure that it was right. Now it happened one morning that as he went into the parlour as usual, the clock began to speak:

“For more than a century and a half,” it said, “I have been working without a stop and keeping perfect time. Now I am tired; don’t I deserve to take a rest and stop ticking?”

“Your complaint is unjustified, my good clock,” the shrewd farmer replied, “for you are forgetting that between each tick you have a second’s rest.”

After a moment’s thought, the clock began to work again as usual.

Children, what does this story show? That in orderly work fatigue and rest balance each other, and that regularity avoids much pain and effort.

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How greatly orderliness increases the power in each thing! Are not the most powerful machines the ones in which each part, each cog, each lever fulfils its function with order and precision?

Words of Long Ago

And in a machine like that, even the smallest screw, when it keeps to its proper place, can claim to be as useful as the majestic flywheel.

Similarly a little child who carefully carries out his task makes a useful contribution to the order of his school, of his home, of his own small world within the greater world.

At first it may take some pains to acquire order. Nothing can be learnt without an effort; nor is it easy to learn to swim, to row, to do gymnastics; but success comes little by little. In the same way, after a certain time, we can learn to do things in an orderly way without the least difficulty. And more and more, we find disorder painful and disagreeable.

When you first learnt to walk, you often stumbled, you fell, you bumped yourself, you cried. Now you walk without giving it a thought and you run skilfully. Well, the movements of walking and running are a splendid example of the orderly functioning of your nerves, your muscles and all your organs.

Thus order always in the end becomes a habit.

And above all, don't imagine that being orderly, regular, punctual, must prevent you from being happy and smiling. It is not necessary to pull a long face when carrying out a task exactly. And to prove it to you, we shall end this lesson on order with a little laughter.

Listen to this example of punctuality, which should not be copied.

An Arab lady had a servant. She sent him to a neighbour's house to fetch some embers to light her fire.

The servant met a caravan going towards Egypt. He began talking with the men and decided to go with them. And he stayed away a whole year.

On his return, he went into the neighbour's house to fetch the embers. But as he was carrying them, he tripped and fell. The burning coals dropped and went out. Then he cried:

"What a nuisance to be in a hurry!"

Eleven

Building and Destroying

CHILDREN, you all know what it is to build and to destroy.

Weapon in hand, the warrior goes forth to destroy.

The builder draws up plans, digs foundations, and the toiling hands of men build a farmhouse for the peasant or a palace for a prince.

It is better to build than to destroy, and yet destroying is sometimes necessary.

You, children, who have strong arms and hands, do you only build? Do you never destroy? And if you do, what do you destroy?

Listen to this account of an Indian legend:

A new-born baby lay in a grove. You might think that he was sure to die, for his mother had laid him there and gone away never to return. But it so happened that honey-sweet drops fell from the beautiful flowers of the Illupay tree and nourished the tiny child until a good woman passed on her way to worship great Shiva in the temple near the grove.

At the sight of the infant, her heart was moved with pity; she took him up and carried him to her husband who welcomed him gladly, for he had no son of his own.

The couple adopted the unknown child from the Illupay grove. But very soon the neighbours began to mock them, reproaching them for taking care of a child without caste. So, for fear of displeasing them by looking after the baby themselves, they put him in a hammock hung from the beams of a stable, and entrusted him to an outcaste family.

A few years later the boy, strong in body and bright in mind, said farewell to those who had showed him kindness and set out

Words of Long Ago

alone to travel. After walking for some time, he sat down to rest at the foot of a palm-tree. And it happened that the tree took care of him and seemed to love him like the woman who had once taken him up in the Illupay grove. For though it might seem impossible that a tree with such a tall trunk could shelter someone in the shade of its leaves throughout one whole day, the story tells that the shadow did indeed keep still and shield the boy with its coolness for as long as he wished to sleep.

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Now why should it have happened like that?

Why was the child saved from his very birth and why did the palm-tree shelter him from the heat of the sun? Because his life was precious: this child was one day to become the noble Tiruvalluvar, the famous Tamil poet and author of the sweet verses of the Kural.

Thus there are things and beings who must be protected, for they bring messages to the world.

Let us be glad to have strong arms so that we can enfold with their strength what is beautiful, good, true, and guard it from evil and death.

And it is to guard these things that we must sometimes fight and destroy.

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Tiruvalluvar, who gave golden words to the people, could also fight and kill. He slew the demon of Kaveripakam.

In Kaveripakam there lived a farmer who owned a thousand head of cattle and vast fields of corn. But a demon had been terrifying the countryside; he uprooted the crops from the soil, and slew cattle and men. And the hearts of the people of Kaveripakam were distressed.

“I will give house, land and money to the hero who will rid

Building and Destroying

us of this demon," said the wealthy farmer.

For a long time no hero appeared, and the farmer asked the sages who lived on the mountain what he ought to do.

"Go to Tiruvalluvar," said the sages of the mountain.

So he went to visit the young poet and asked for his help. Then Tiruvalluvar took some ashes and spread them on the palm of his hand and on it wrote five sacred letters, uttered some mantras, then threw the ashes into the air. And the power of the letters and the mantras fell upon the demon, so that he died. This filled the people of Kaveripakam with joy.

Later, when Tiruvalluvar came to the town of Madura, many people gathered together to hear him recite lines from his beautiful poem, and they were enchanted by the verses composed by the child from the Illupay grove:

*Hard it is to find in this world
A greater good than kindness.*

But on a bench, beside a pool where lotus flowers floated on the tranquil waters, some very learned poets were sitting in a row.

These men on the bench had no intention of making room for a fellow-poet of low birth, but they tried to confound him with their questions and to catch him out in some mistake. At last they said:

"O Pariah, put your poem on this bench, and if it is truly a work of beauty, the bench will hold nothing but the Kural."

Tiruvalluvar placed his writings next to them, and the legend says that the bench at once shrank until it was just large enough to hold only the poem. So the proud and jealous poets of Madura tumbled into the water of the pool! Yes, the forty-nine envious men fell into the pool amid the lotuses. They came out dripping and ashamed. And from that day, all who speak the Tamil language have a great love for the Kural.

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Words of Long Ago

Children, do you find it sad that the demon of Kaveripakam was slain? And do you think it was a pity that the forty-nine bad poets of Madura fell into the water?

In this world there are both good and evil things; and we should cherish and defend only the good, fight and undermine the evil.

All wise men, like Tiruvalluvar the noble poet, know and are able to do this. And the wiser they are, the better they do it. But even little children who are not yet very wise or very strong can emulate them and thus grow in valour.

This is how Avvai, the sister of Tiruvalluvar, emulated her brother.

One day as she was sitting on the ground in a narrow street of Urayur, three men passed by: one was a king and the other two were poets.

As the king approached, she drew up one of her feet as a mark of respect.

When the first poet came, out of regard for him, Avvai drew back her other foot.

But when the second poet came near, however, she suddenly stretched out both her legs, barring his way.

This behaviour seemed rude, but Avvai knew very well what she was doing, for the second poet was a pretentious man who claimed talent though he had none.

And since he seemed irritated and asked why she had treated him so, she replied:

“Then make me a couplet in which the word ‘wit’ occurs thrice!”

Seeing that people had gathered round, the poet wanted to show his skill, but he was quite unable to make the prescribed word fit into the lines more than twice.

“What have you done then,” laughed Avvai, “with the last wit you have left, which cannot find a place in your lines?” And so she put the pretentious man to shame.

Do you think that she took pleasure in being rude? Certainly

Building and Destroying

not. But to her, pretension did not seem worthy of respect. She knew how to distinguish between what should be respected and what should not.

"Good people," she would say, "go towards what is good, just as the swan goes towards the lake where the lotus blooms. But the wicked seek what is bad, just as the vulture, attracted by the smell, swoops down upon its dreadful food."

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So, brave children of every land, what are the evil things that you should learn to fight? What are the things that man must master or destroy?

All that threatens his life and is harmful to his progress, all that weakens or degrades him, all that makes him unhappy.

Let him harness the power of the flood by bridging the raging torrents and building dykes along the swelling rivers.

Let him build strong ships able to withstand the fury of the wind and waves.

Let him drain and dry the fatal swamps where the demon of fever hides in the damp.

Let him make war on wild beasts wherever they are a danger to him.

Let him train skilful doctors to drive out pain and sickness everywhere.

Let him strive to conquer poverty, the cause of hunger, which makes so many mothers grieve because their children have no bread.

Let him abolish wickedness, envy, injustice, which make life miserable for all.

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And what are the things that man should cherish and defend? All those that give him life and make him better, stronger and more joyful.

Words of Long Ago

So let him watch over every child that comes into the world,
for its life is precious.

Let him protect the friendly trees and grow plants and
flowers for his food and his delight.

Let him build dwellings that are strong, clean and spacious.

Let him preserve with care the holy temples, statues, pic-
tures, vases, embroidery, as well as beautiful songs and poems,
and all that increases his happiness with its beauty.

But above all, children of India and other lands, let men
cherish the heart that loves, the mind that thinks honest thoughts
and the hand that accomplishes loyal deeds.

Appendix

Stories not published in previous editions of Tales of All Times

Twelve

The Giver

RANTIDEVA who was a king, became a hermit in the forest. He had given his wealth to the poor and lived a simple life in the solitude of the jungle. He and his family had only the bare necessities of life.

One day, after a fast of forty-eight hours, a light meal of rice with milk and sugar was prepared for him.

A poor Brahmin came up to the door of the hut and asked for food. Rantideva gave him half of his rice. Then came a Sudra begging for help and Rantideva gave him half of what remained.

Then he heard a dog barking; the poor beast seemed to be starving. Rantideva gave him what was left. Last of all came a Pariah who stopped at the hermit's door and asked for help. Rantideva gave him the milk and the sugar, and continued to fast.

Then came four gods who said to him:

"It was to us, Rantideva, that you gave food, for we assumed the forms of a Brahmin, a Sudra, a dog and a poor outcaste. You were good to us all and we praise you for your loving thoughts."

A kind heart treats all men and even animals as members of one family, one humanity.

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Do we not meet people every day who know less than we do? It is in our power to tell them things which may be useful on matters such as food, clothing, exercise, work and recreation.

It is our duty to give them knowledge as it is our duty to give bread to the hungry.

An ignorant man does harm to himself and he does harm to

Words of Long Ago

those around him, just as the bad flute-player made the Brahmin suffer. Did you ever hear how that happened?

One day a Brahmin was walking through the countryside when he was surprised to hear a voice coming from a pipal-tree. The voice spoke to him several times bidding him not to bathe in a tank, not to perform his evening worship, not to eat and not to go away.

So he cried out:

"Who are you to forbid me to do things which have no harm in them?"

The voice from the pipal-tree replied:

"I am a Brahma-Rakshasa. In my last life I was a Brahmin and very learned in the art of music, but I was unwilling to impart my learning to others. I kept my knowledge to myself. And now I am doomed to be a Brahma-Rakshasa and every day I have to listen to a piper, and I cannot tell you how badly he plays. It is terrible. How often I have wished I could come out of the tree, snatch away his instrument and show him how to use it, where to place his fingers, how to use his breath. But it is not possible and I am forced to hear his awful tunes.... "

I cannot tell you the rest of the story here, except to add that fortunately a way was found to rescue him from his torment. But you see how miserable we can be as a result of the bad work, the bad art, the bad music of people around us.

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If a man is hungry, what is the only thing that will relieve him? Food. If a man is thirsty, what will relieve him? Water. If a man is ignorant, what is the only thing that will help him? Knowledge.

It is good to give bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, knowledge to the ignorant.

The five sons of Pandu, the five noble Pandavas, were staying in a palace which at first sight seemed beautiful and comfortable. But it had been built by an enemy, Purochana, and he had made

The Giver

the floors and the walls and the roofs of very inflammable material; he intended to set fire to it one night while the Pandavas were asleep, so as to be rid of the five princes whom he hated.

Such was his villainy. For this wicked purpose, he made use of his skill in building and his cleverness in plotting.

One day a very skilful miner came to the palace. He said secretly to the princes:

“One of your friends sends me here to serve you. I am a miner. Tell me how I can help you. I know for sure that your enemy, Purochana himself, will try to burn you all alive in this house.”

Then the eldest of the Pandavas said to the miner:

“Use your skill in mining, good sir, to make us an underground passage so that even if the gates are guarded we may escape, for we shall get away through the secret passage dug by your spade and made passable by your art.”

In the floor at the very centre of the palace the miner began to dig. The Pandavas kept planks ready to place over the hole and covered the planks with carpets whenever Purochana came near. So the deceiver was deceived.

At last the five princes were informed that the passage was ready. It led from the house to a lovely spot in the forest.

One night the princes set fire to the palace and then with their mother Kunti, they made their escape through the underground passage. It was dark but safe. When strong Bhima noticed that his companions were not fleeing fast enough, he put his mother on his shoulders, took two of his brothers on his hips and the other two under his arms, and with this burden ran like a wind that cannot be stopped, away from the deadly fire.

Purochana’s trick had been foiled by the good miner’s skill. The miner was not content merely to dig the ground to discover treasures for himself alone; he dug for others. He helped others with his knowledge; he shared his science.

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Words of Long Ago

Even the greatest people on earth does not know everything. We should learn from one another, man from man, nation from nation, one part of the world from another; each nation, each man should be glad to teach what he knows.

The peoples of the West bring to the East their knowledge of science, technology, economics, etc.

From all time the peoples of the East have given to the West their philosophical and ethical knowledge. Thus India has given to other countries the knowledge contained in the Vedas and the teachings of the Buddha on the Noble Path as well as in all her sacred books.

Even a child can give knowledge. One child can teach the alphabet to another. One child can teach another how to do simple arithmetic, or to tell the North from the South, the East from the West, or to tie a knot, to play a game, to sow a seed, etc.

We can all be givers. A holy book says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Thirteen

The Conquest of Knowledge

THE GREAT Rishi, Bhrigu, shining in splendour, sat on the summit of Mount Kailas, and Bharadwaja questioned him:

“Who made the world?

How wide is the sky?

Who gave birth to water? To fire? To the wind? To the earth?

What is life?

What is good?

What is there beyond the world?”

And so on. Great were the questions and great must be the Rishi who could answer them all!

But Bharadwaja’s mind was the mind of a man who asks and asks ever and again, and never knows enough.

The child is the supreme questioner, he is always asking, “What is this? What is that? How is it made? What makes this thing move? What makes the lightning flash? Why are there tides? Where does gold come from? And coal? And iron? How is a book printed?...” And many more questions besides.

Both children and men ask questions. They also reply. When we know something, we can answer questions. We can teach, we can spread knowledge.

What shall we learn? What shall we teach? Shall we try to learn everything that has happened throughout the ages? Shall we attempt to learn every word that man can pronounce?

In the poem of the Mahabharata, the following words are used to describe the various kinds of arrows shot by the Pandava brothers and other warriors: sara, ishu, sayaka, patri, kanda, vishikha, naracha, vishatha, prushatka, bhalla, tomara, ishika, silimukha, anjalika. We certainly do not need to learn all these

Words of Long Ago

names for arrows. And there are many other names of things that we do not need to learn.

We speak of the news: we think of shipwrecks, murders, robberies, quarrels, lawsuits, wars, fires, concerts, weddings, funerals and thousands of other things that we read of in a few minutes and forget about immediately afterwards.

We open the Koran and at the head of the chapters of this sacred book we read the word “News” and immediately we think of shipwrecks, murders... but wait!

The Prophet Mohammed was neither a frivolous person who took pleasure in news of evil deeds nor a gossip who taught nothing noble. Let us read the beginning of the chapter on "News":

Thus the Prophet kindled hope in the hearts and minds of men and made them think of greater things, things that have a lasting

The Conquest of Knowledge

beauty, things that teach man how noble is the world of life.

So we agree that there are words and things and certain kinds of news that are not worth hearing and repeating. But other things, on the contrary, are worth hearing and repeating, even though it may cost us much time, trouble and effort to find them out.

Man's power lies within his thought. The limbs, the hands that are so skilful, are the slaves of his thought which decides and directs.

And since the human race first dwelt on earth, how great have been man's conquests over Nature!

We can see this power pictured in the tale of Rama's crossing over the sea.

When he reached the shores of India, and learned that his dear wife Sita was a captive in the island of Ceylon, he prepared to cross the waters. Vast was his army, but it was made up of monkeys and bears. How could they cross the turbulent waters?

Rama's intelligence was profound, his sagacity keen and his heart full of courage.

First he spoke gently to the old Ocean and said:

"Great Sea, I beseech you, let my army pass." But after he had waited three days, there was still no reply from the waves.

Then Rama called his brother:

"Lakshman, bring me my bow and arrows. I have wasted my words on this sea, just as a man wastes good seeds by sowing them in sand."

Rama, the divine hero, shot an arrow into the deep waters and the shaft gave a fiery pain to the ocean, and all the fish were full of fear. Then the spirit of the ocean took the form of a Brahmin who knelt before the Lord with a golden dish full of jewels as an offering.

The Ocean clasped the lotus-feet of Rama and said:

"Great Lord, forgive my sin. I am like my kin of the air, the earth and the fire. They are heavy and slow and so accustomed to power that they do not answer the call of a Lord like you. No

Words of Long Ago

hero before you has ever made me obey his will. In you I see my master. Do what seems good to you."

Lord Rama smiled:

"Tell me," he said, "how my army may cross over your realm of waves and storms."

"My waters," said the sea, "will bear on their breast the rocks which your soldiers will throw on them and in that way a bridge will be built between India and Lanka."

Rama turned to his army:

"Let the bridge be built," he said.

"Glory to Rama," shouted all the warriors.

They uprooted trees and rocks and even great cliffs, and brought them to the two master-builders, Nala and Nila. And Nala and Nila fastened the wood and stone together so that everything floated firmly on the surface of the sea. Then the army marched across it.

Rama sat on a mountain of India and watched the countless troops moving across the bridge.

Just as Rama forced the spirit of the ocean to obey him, so does man's thought, the glory of humanity, conquer the sea, and many other things besides. Man masters the wind, since he makes it blow his sailing ships and turn his windmills. He conquers the ice and the snow, for explorers have travelled to the frozen lands of the North Pole and the South Pole and have climbed the highest mountains. He conquers the beasts, for all over the world he slays the animals that are a danger to him and his family: lions, tigers, wolves, snakes and even sharks. Although he has less power over the great ocean, he has made his strength felt on land. And while he has rid himself of the animals that are harmful to him, he has kept and bred the animals that are useful to him: the ox, the horse, the sheep, the elephant, etc.

But all this is the conquest of things by his hands and by his tools and weapons. And hands and tools and weapons are the servants of his thought.

The Conquest of Knowledge

Man conquers by knowledge. And he conquers knowledge: he asks and asks again and again, and perseveres until he really knows.

Some men of whom history tells are known as conquerors: Alexander the Great who conquered Western Asia and Egypt, Julius Caesar who conquered France and England, the emperor Baber who conquered the North of India, Napoleon who became for a time the master of Europe.

But there are other ways of being a conqueror.

You also can be a conqueror. There are things in the world which need to be known and learnt. Ask, seek, learn and conquer. Then you can call yourself a conqueror.

Fourteen

Modesty

WHO IS this coming to the door of this Japanese house? It is the flower-artist, the man who is skilled in arranging flowers.

The master of the house brings a tray with some flowers, a pair of scissors, a knife, a little saw, and a beautiful vase.

“Sir,” he says, “I cannot make a bouquet beautiful enough for such a beautiful vase.”

“I am sure you can,” replies the master politely as he leaves the room.

Left alone, the artist sets to work, cutting, snipping, twisting and tying until a beautiful bunch of flowers fills the vase—a delight to the eyes.

The master and his friends enter the room; the artist stands to one side and murmurs, “My bouquet is too poor, let it be taken away.”

“No,” replies the master, “it is good.”

To one side of the table, near the vase, the artist has left a pair of scissors. By this he means that if there is any flaw in the bouquet, anyone can take the scissors and cut away what offends the eye.

The artist has done a fine piece of work, but he would not dream of exalting its merits. He admits that he may have made mistakes. He is modest.

Perhaps the Japanese artist really thinks that his work deserves compliments. I cannot tell his thoughts. But at any rate he does not boast and his behaviour is pleasing.

On the other hand, we smile at people who are vain.

Suleiman, Caliph of Damascus, was like that. One Friday, coming out of his hot bath, he dressed himself in green clothes,

Modesty

put on a green turban, sat on a green couch, and even the carpet all around was green. And then looking into a mirror and feeling pleased with himself, he said, "The Prophet Mohammed was an apostle, Ali Bakr was a faithful servant of the truth, Omar could distinguish the true from the false, Otman was modest, Ali was brave, Muawiyah was merciful, Yazid was patient, Abdul-Malik a good governor, Walid a powerful master, but I am young and handsome."

The flowers in the vase are beautifully arranged and our eyes are delighted. But it is for us and not for the artist to praise them.

Suleiman is handsome. It is true that there is no harm in his knowing it, but we laugh at his vanity when he gazes at himself in a mirror and tells himself that his good looks make him a finer man than Omar the truthful or Yazid the patient.

* * *

Still more absurd was the vanity of the man who thought that the earth was not large enough for his glory and that he must soar into higher regions.

This is the story.

A king of Persia named Kai Kaus had waged many wars and won many battles. He was so rich with the spoils of his enemies that he built two palaces in the Elburz mountains; and the gold and silver in the chambers were so plentiful that the brightness of the polished metal rivalled the light of day.

Kai Kaus was filled with presumptuous pride; he thought that he was the greatest king on earth.

Iblis, the evil spirit, observing the high opinion the king had of himself, resolved to trick him. He sent a demon disguised as a servant to the palace, with a bunch of flowers to present to the king.

The servant kissed the ground before Kai Kaus and said:

"Sire, no king in the world is like unto you. And yet one realm remains for you to conquer, the upper world, the kingdom

Words of Long Ago

of the sun, the moon, the planets and the secret corners of the heavens. Follow the birds, O King, and ascend to the sky."

"But how can I ascend without wings?" asked the king.

"Your wise men will tell you, Sire."

So King Kai Kaus asked the astrologers how he might fly to the upper regions, and they invented a novel plan. They suggested ordinary methods but the king would not hear of them.

They took four young eagles from a nest, fed and trained them until they were big and strong.

They made a square wooden frame; at each corner they fixed a pole and on each pole a piece of goat's meat. One of the four eagles was tied to each corner.

The king's throne was attached to the frame and a jar of wine was placed at the side of the throne. The king sat down.

The four eagles tried to catch hold of the meat and in order to do so flew upwards, at the same time lifting up the frame, which rose into the air to the amazement of the crowd. The eagles went up and up, nearer and nearer to the moon, until, wearied by their flight, they stopped beating their wings. Then the frame, the throne, the king, the wine-jar and all fell with a crash into the wilderness of China. The king lay all alone, bruised, hungry and wretched, until messengers came and took him back to the palace.

The king himself now saw how stupid and vain he had been. He decided not to attempt any more flights beyond his power. He settled down to the work of his kingdom and ruled it so justly that all men praised him.

This is how he came down from the high places of vanity to the honesty of the good, firm earth.

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Sometimes we feel contempt for vain people who not only admire themselves too much, but boast. No one likes a braggart; even braggarts despise braggarts.

Modesty

We are not surprised to learn that Ravana the terrible foe of Rama, whose wife Sita he had stolen away, was a braggart; it was quite natural for such a monster.

In the last great battle between Rama and the demons of Lanka, the glorious lord stood in his chariot face to face with the demon king, also in his chariot. It was a single combat. The army of demons and the army of monkeys and bears watched the fight.

Then with a dreadful voice, Ravana the king of Lanka cried:

"Today, O Rama, this war will come to an end unless you save yourself by running away from the battlefield. Today, wretch, I shall give you over to death. It is with Ravana that you must fight."

Rama smiled calmly. He knew that Ravana's doom was near and he said:

"Yes, I have heard of all your might, O Ravana, but now I want to see as well as hear. I beg you to remember that there are three kinds of men in this world, who are like three kinds of trees: the dhak, the mango and the bread-fruit. The dhak tree bears flowers. It is like the man who only speaks. The mango tree has both flowers and fruits. It is like a man who both speaks and acts. The bread-fruit tree bears only fruit. It is like the man who speaks not but acts."

The demon laughed at these wise words. But before long his boasting tongue was silent for ever.

* * *

You have heard of great Solomon who was the King of Israel many years ago. There are many stories in the Bible and in other books which tell of his glory and his majesty. I shall tell you one story about him.

He was very rich. He had a magnificent throne, his plates were of gold, and in his palace silver was as common as stones in the city of Jerusalem. Merchants were constantly bringing him gold, silver, ivory, peacocks, monkeys, beautiful clothes, armour,

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spices, horses, mules and many other riches. King Solomon built a splendid temple in honour of the God of his fathers and his nation. But before the temple was built, while the timber for it was still growing in the form of cedar-trees on the mountains, Solomon had a dream in which his God appeared to him and said:

“Ask of me what you wish me to give you.”

Solomon answered:

“My father David was a just and truthful man and now I have succeeded to his throne. The work that lies before me is great. I feel like a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. I do not even know how to rule this people of which I am king. Therefore my desire is to have knowledge, so that I may know good from evil.”

And God replied:

“Because you have not asked for long life or riches but have desired knowledge and a heart which can distinguish justice from injustice, I will give you this wise mind so that none shall surpass you in understanding; and long life and riches will be yours also.”

You will notice the modest words spoken by the king, “I am but a little child.”

Do we think less of Solomon because he spoke humbly of himself?

On the contrary, it is a real joy to see greatness that is modest.

*
* * *

I shall tell you three stories about the modesty of the Prophet Mohammed.

It is said that the Prophet of Islam was always willing to ride on an ass, while prouder men would only be content with a horse. And sometimes he would invite someone to ride behind him. And he would say:

Modesty

"I sit at meals as servants do and I eat like a servant, for in truth I am a servant."

Here is the second story. One day the Prophet was at a meeting-place where many people were gathered, and there was not much room to sit. So he sat with his legs folded under him.

An Arab of the desert was present, and knowing that Mohammed was a great leader of men, he was surprised that the Prophet was not seated like a lord upon a throne.

"Is this the way to sit?" he scoffed.

"Verily," said Mohammed, "Allah has made me a humble servant and not a proud king."

Here is the third story. Mohammed was deep in conversation with the chief of a tribe of Quraish, when a blind man named Abdullah, not knowing that someone was with the Prophet, suddenly interrupted the conversation and asked to hear some verses from the Koran.

Mohammed spoke to him very roughly and ordered him to be silent. But afterwards he felt sorry that he had been so harsh and very humbly apologised for it. And from that time he treated Abdullah with great respect and even conferred honorable posts on him.

* * *

After these stories of the king and the prophet, I shall tell you one about a famous man of science, the Englishman Isaac Newton.

Newton was born in 1642 and died in 1727. In the course of his long life he studied Nature; the universal force of attraction called gravitation, the effect of the sun and the moon on the tides; the light of the sun and how its white ray is broken up into the seven colours of the rainbow; and many other things besides. Everyone marvelled at the wisdom of this man who was so skilled in reading the works and wonders of Nature. One day a lady spoke to Newton of his learning and knowledge and he replied:

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“Alas! I am only like a little child picking up pebbles on the shore of the great ocean of truth.”

You will understand that the ocean of truth means the laws of Nature which even the most learned men hardly know at all. A little child collects pebbles on the sea-shore, but how much vaster is the sea than the child thinks! And how much vaster still is the universe compared to our little thoughts!

And do we think less of Newton because he compared himself to a little child? Certainly not. We honour him for his modesty.

* * *

Many years ago a great singer, who had won a world-wide reputation for her wonderful voice and outstanding talent, happened to be at a party. There, a little girl with a beautiful voice was asked to sing. The piece she was ready to sing was a duet, a piece of music for two voices. The child was to sing the main part, but no one wanted to sing the accompaniment. All the grown-ups thought that it was beneath them to sing the second voice to a child. There was a pause; no one offered to accompany the child.

Then the famous singer said:

“I will sing the second voice if you wish.”

And she did so. The duet was sung to the audience; the little girl's voice rose high and clear, with the voice of the most famous singer of her time following sweetly, making a lovely harmony.

Noble was the heart of the modest lady who was willing to give her service to a child.

* * *

In 1844 the Sanskrit College of Calcutta needed a teacher of grammar, and the post was offered to Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. At that time he was earning fifty rupees a month, and in this new

Modesty

position he could earn ninety. But he thought that his friend Tarkavachaspati was a better grammar teacher than himself and he said so. So it was decided that his friend should take the post. Vidyasagar was very happy. He walked some distance from Calcutta to find his friend and tell him the news.

Tarkavachaspati was struck by the noble modesty of the scholar and exclaimed, "You are not a man, Vidyasagar, but a god in human form!"

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Now here is the story of a conceited glow-worm.

A man looked up at the glorious sun and exclaimed:

"How bright!"

"Like all the rest of us shining ones," answered a voice.

The man looked all around him and saw a glow-worm in the shade of a bush.

"Was it you who spoke?"

"Yes," replied the glow-worm. "I said that the sun and I are shining ones."

"The sun and you, really!" laughed the man.

"Yes, the sun, the moon, the stars, and me," insisted the glow-worm complacently.

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Four men were climbing a mountain in Italy. All four of them were monks: St. Francis was leading three brothers of his order. The mountain-side was covered with trees, and at the top there was an open flat space where St. Francis wished to pray, in the hope of having a new vision of things divine. The saint was well known and revered by rich lords and poor villagers alike.

The day was hot and the path steep. Francis was too tired to walk. So one of the monks went to a peasant and asked him to lend his ass for Francis to ride.

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The peasant willingly agreed; the saint mounted the ass and the monks walked by his side while the peasant followed behind.

"Tell me," asked the peasant, "are you Brother Francis?"

"Yes," he replied.

"Then," said the peasant, "try to be as good as people think you are, so that men may keep their faith in you."

When he heard this, St. Francis was not at all displeased, for he would take advice from anyone, whether prince or poor peasant. He got down from the ass, bowed down before the countryman and thanked him for his good advice.

Fifteen

The Family

A TRAVELLER in Morocco noticed that in the evening when the flocks of ewes and the flocks of lambs were brought together after having been separated all day, the good creatures ran eagerly here and there as if they were looking for something. In fact, each ewe was looking for its lamb, each lamb was looking for its mother.

A monkey had young ones and she loved them, but her love was like a fountain, giving drink not only to her own children, but pouring out on all. She found other little monkeys and was kind to them. Not only that, she took puppies and kittens with her as if she had adopted them. And when she had food to give, she shared it between her own little ones and the ones she had adopted.

The mother bird sits on her eggs to keep them warm and the father bird goes in search of food for her and her brood.

The gorilla of Africa lives with his mate and his offspring as a real family. Chimpanzees do the same and the father makes a rough nest in a tree to shelter the mother and her children, and he watches through the night to protect his family from the prowling leopard.

If our animal kindred can show affection for their young and protect them, it is no wonder that even primitive men form groups or families consisting of a man, a woman and children.

When does the mother begin to love her child? At the beginning of his life.

When does the child begin to love his mother? Not at the same time. First he must learn to feel, to think and act. Then he learns to love his mother and his father as well.

We are told about a little girl of seventeen months who ran

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to meet her father when he returned after a few days' absence, and stroked and kissed his face and gave him all her toys.

People are always happy to receive gifts. We read in the history of the Muslims that Caliph Mamun gave his wife a golden carpet on which he poured a heap of pearls; and after her ladies had each taken a pearl there still remained a sparkling pile of these precious gems.

And what does the mother give to her child? She gives him good health, straight limbs, the power of speech, the power to love what is right.

For if a mother neglects her child, his health will suffer, his legs will be crooked, his tongue will not speak good words and he will not learn to behave well and think well. And are not all these gifts infinitely more precious than a golden carpet and many pearls?

The mother who gives these beautiful presents to her child feels that her own life is in her son or daughter. And just as her heart is full of joy when her child is well, so it is full of sorrow when he is sick or when he dies. Listen to the voice of a mother in a Tamil song:

*He lives in my heart; where has he fled?
Alas, my child, my child!
Who has taken my idol of gold?
Alas, my child, my child!
In a pretty voice he called me Amma,
Alas, my child, my child!
I have never seen such a pretty face,
Alas, my child, my child!
He played gracefully on my lap,
Alas, my child, my child!
His father lifted him up with delight,
Alas, my child, my child!
On his brow were the lines of good fortune,
Alas, my child, my child!*

The Family

*Oh, evil on the evil eye that looked at him!
Alas, my child, my child!
Stay, my child, or let me go with you,
Alas, my child, my child!
Come back, come back, do not leave me alone,
Alas, my child, my child!*

The good father's heart also lives in the life of his child and is wounded by his death.

How cruelly Mohammed suffered when he lost his little son Ibrahim. The old books say that the child died at the age of fifteen or sixteen months.

But there is a very famous play called *Hasan and Husain* in which Ibrahim seems older. In this play, Azrael the Angel of Death comes to Mohammed's house and asks for the child.

"I beg," says the Prophet in deep distress, "that he may stay with me until tomorrow."

So the angel waits a little. And just then the little boy's voice is heard at school, reading these words from the Koran:

"I fly unto Allah for refuge from the evil one. In the name of Allah the All-Merciful, O thou soul who art at rest, return unto thy Lord well-pleased and well-pleasing, enter among my servants and enjoy my paradise."

How sweet to the ears of Mohammed is the voice of his child!

How sweet to parents are the voices of boys and girls who repeat their lessons! I shall not describe the rest of the scene of Ibrahim's death. I only wish to tell how his mother Mary watches over him lovingly, how affectionately his sister Fatimah speaks to Ibrahim, how Husain, the Prophet's grandson, places the child's head on his lap, and how his father weeps when Ibrahim is no more.

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Words of Long Ago

Do parents only love bright and clever children? No, their arms enfold them all.

One day I went into a village shop. The father, a cobbler, was nailing a sole on to an old shoe. The mother was cleaning the kitchen. They paused in their work to speak to me about their son. The poor boy was almost dumb. I could not understand what he was saying, but his parents knew the meaning of his inarticulate cries. He had so little reason that he could neither dress nor feed himself alone. His parents had to watch over him all day lest he should hurt himself or hurt other children. They had done this for seven or eight years; and they loved him in spite of all this trouble.

In the Ramayana the poet speaks of the father's love for all his children: "The father has a number of children, each different in temperament and character. One is a student, another a teacher who fasts, another a doctor, another a soldier, or a skilful worker, or a monk. The father feels the same affection for them all. Another, who may be very slow to learn, is yet devoted in word, thought and deed to his father, and this is the son whom the father loves as his own soul."

The dear mother has eyes that see more deeply than other eyes. She will often see the gift and the skill of her child where others see nothing.

Thus Queen Kausalya, the mother of Rama, had a vision of her son's glory. For one day he was changed in her eyes. The moment before he was a small child, and suddenly ten thousand stars shone on every hair of his body, suns and moons glittered on his limbs, and around him were high mountains, rivers, oceans, and many lands, and all the powers of Nature were gathered upon the wonderful boy.

Joining her hands in prayer, the queen said not a word. With closed eyes, she knelt at his feet until he resumed the form of a little child.

We have seen that parental love exists in a simple way in animals, that the father and mother love their child from

The Family

the beginning of his life, that they love him whether he is healthy or sick, clever or deficient, and that the mother especially has a penetrating eye which detects the good qualities of his soul.

The family is something very precious to mankind. It is the true home. For neither wood nor stone nor the cloth of a tent nor the marble of a palace make a home, but the love that unites young and old in the family just as the hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

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A pious Muslim used to kiss his mother's feet every day before going out to join his companions.

One day he arrived late and they asked him why.

"I lingered with pleasure," he said, "in the gardens of Paradise, for I have heard that Paradise lies at the feet of the Mother."

It is also written in the book of Al-Mostatraf that when Moses spoke with God, the Most High uttered 3500 words. At the end of the conversation, Moses said, "O my Lord God, give me a rule of conduct."

The Lord replied:

"I bid you be good to your mother."

These words were repeated seven times, and Moses assured him that he would remember them.

Then the Lord added:

"Yes, Moses. When your mother is happy with you, I am also happy, and if she is angry, I am angry."

The love of the mother and father expresses itself to the child in charming words.

An Arab woman caressed her child and said, "I love him as the miser loves his money."

But if the parents' love goes out towards the child, will not the child's love go towards his parents?

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Shall we not return love for love?

There are countless sons and daughters all over the world who lavish affection on their good parents and help them. It would need a book bigger than all the books written by the poets of India to tell of all the affection shown by children to their fathers and mothers.

Here I shall tell you only of one of these countless examples. It is a story from ancient Greece.

Old King Oedipus was blind. He had offended the gods and had to lead the life of a traveller wandering from village to village, from town to town. Kind folk would give him shelter and food, but no one could give him back his sight. And who was to lead him from place to place? Who but his daughter Antigone? She guided his steps along the roads; she begged the strangers whom they met to take pity on him. She carried his messages. When Antigone left him for a moment, old Oedipus was sad. Great was his joy when she returned; and when he touched her hand again he said:

*I have all
That's precious to me; were I now to die
Whilst you are here, I should not be unhappy.*

At last the gods looked kindly on him. He felt that the time had come for him to die, but he was to go to the dwelling-place of the Shining Ones. Blind as he was, he made his way alone to a valley surrounded by high rocks. There he took a bath and dressed himself in fine garments. A clap of thunder was heard. And old Oedipus disappeared from sight. He had joined the gods. Antigone wept at his departure:

*Oh, I was fond of misery with him:
E'en what was most unlovely grew beloved
When he was with me.*

He had indeed lived in misery, but how much more he would

The Family

have suffered if he had not been comforted by his daughter's love.

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We have spoken of the love of parents for their children and of children for their parents. If someone asked you what makes a family, what would you reply?

I asked a child the other day and he replied, "Two." He meant the husband and the wife.

I asked another child and he replied, "Three," thinking of the father, the mother and the child.

And yet we can see that the family is very often larger than these three. Suppose, for example, that there are four: father, mother and two children. Then a new idea, a new friendship comes into play, the friendship of brother and sister. In this friendship, we do not look up, as to a parent, or down, as to a child. We are attached to a friend who is more on our own level, who is in a way our equal, or nearly our equal in age. And so brotherly affection adds a new gem to the wealth of the household.

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When Rama returned to the city of Ayodhya with his bride Sita of the lotus eyes, his brother Lakshman shared in the joy. Tents were set up for entertainments, the streets were planted with mango, betel-nut and banana-trees. The bazaars were bright with flowers and drapery; flags waved; drums rolled; all kinds of music played sweetly. People cheered, "Rama, Rama!" and Rama's heart was happy.

And so was the heart of Lakshman; brother shared the joy of brother.

A day came when the sky of life was clouded and no music was heard. The old king of Ayodhya had made known the terrible decree that Rama must go into exile for fourteen years.

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When Lakshman heard this cruel order his body shook with sorrow, his eyes filled with tears; he ran and kissed Rama's feet, and for a moment he could not speak a word.

"Brother," said noble Rama, "let not your soul be troubled. All will be well in the end. You cannot come with me. You must stay in Ayodhya to help my father and the people."

"No," replied Lakshman, "no, my brother, not so. I am devoted to you alone. I tell you with all my heart that where you go, there I too must go."

Then Rama raised up his brother, embraced him and said:

"Go and say farewell to your mother, and then come with me to the forest and to exile."

And Lakshman was full of joy.

Brothers and sisters protect each other.

In the Bhratridwitiya festival, sisters in Hindu families mark the foreheads of their brothers with sandalwood powder, give them sweetmeats and if they can, a gift of cloth. In this way they hope to ward off the coming of Yama, the Lord of Death. And they recite:

*On my brother's brow I have made the mark,
On Yama's door the bolt has fallen.*

It is not sandalwood but love that protects and blesses, the love of sister for brother and brother for sister.

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But we can widen the limits of the family and include in it the dear grandparents, the uncles and aunts and cousins.

We can widen it still further.

I mean the men and women who are not of the same blood as the family, but who help in the house by washing, cleaning, cooking and in many other ways. I mean the servants. They also form part of the family. In ancient Rome, when a patrician spoke

The Family

of his family, he was not thinking only of his wife and children, but also of his slaves.

Let me tell you a scene from the play *Hasan and Husain* which is so much admired by the Muslims of Persia.

Noble Husain, who was killed on the battlefield of Karbala in Babylonia, was about to fight his last combat. All his comrades of war were slain. He stood alone like the last palm-tree standing in an oasis. The women of his family were mourning their dead and also Husain, who was surely about to die at the hands of the enemy.

One by one he bade farewell to all, to his wife Umm Lailah, to Zainab his sister, to his other sister Kulsum and his daughter Sukainah.

An old negress approached the great captain. "Master," she said, "my heart grieves at the thought that I shall be separated from you. I am very old and I have nothing more to live for. I wish only one thing: forgive me, I beg you, for all the faults I have committed."

Husain, the warrior in his coat of mail, who in a few short hours would lie martyred on the plain of Karbala, looked gently at the old negress and said:

"Yes, you have served us a very long time. You have toiled at the household tasks for my mother. You have threshed the corn. How often you have rocked me in your arms! Your face is black, but you have a pure white heart. Today I shall leave you. I owe you many more thanks than I can count. I beg your forgiveness for any action which may have been thoughtless or unkind."

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But we have not yet found out how wide the family circle is. Are there not other servants, both two-footed and four-footed, who add to the pleasure of the home? Are there not birds who entertain us with their chirping and singing? Are there not pets

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who play in our rooms and domestic animals who work for us on our farms? Should not animals, the tame helpers, be counted as members of the family?

The whole world knows that the people of India are friendly with the animals who live in the same land. But they are not the only ones who have kindly feelings towards our brothers the animals. In the North where the sea is frozen into thick ice and the ground is nearly always white with snow, lives a people known as the Eskimos.

In this land, a white or polar bear once saved the lives of three men. They had fallen into the sea and had caught hold of a bear as he swam, and he carried them to the shore. They were very grateful and wished to repay their debt.

"Thank you," said the bear, "I don't need anything for the moment. But if ever you are out hunting with other men and you catch me, would you please ask them to spare my life? You will recognise me by my bald head."

So saying, he dived into the sea and swam away.

Next winter, the Eskimos of the same tribe saw a bear on the ice and set off in pursuit. Among the hunters were the three men whose lives had been saved by the bald-headed bear. They discovered that it was the same animal. They begged their companions to leave him alone. What is more, they prepared a good meal for him and spread it out in front of him on the ice. He ate heartily and lay down on the ice to sleep; no one harmed him and the children played around him without fear. When he awoke he went down towards the sea, dived in and swam away. The Eskimos never saw him again, but they always remembered their friend the bear.

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So in our idea of the family let us include father, mother, child, brother, sister, grandparents, servants, and the animals that help man.

The Family

Of course, the ways and customs of families are not the same in every country of the world. You will find it interesting to hear from travellers or read in books or learn from your teachers about the family customs of Japan, China, Persia, Egypt, Europe and America. And you will find many differences. But in all of them, love rules in their hearts and affection is the law. It may happen that the members of a family do not love one another, but then they are not a true family.

A man may act in an inhuman way, but then he is not a true man.

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Rangananda and his father

In the year 1831 a twelve-year old Hindu boy knocked at the door of the district judge of Chittur. He was the son of a farmer who had been put in prison for not paying his rent. The farmer had taken some Government land, but the harvest failed and under the law which was then in force, he had to go to prison.

While the father was in jail, his birthday came and the mother wept because he could not be at home. That is why his son Rangananda ran to Chittur and knocked at the judge's door.

The judge listened to the boy's story and said:

"I cannot let your father go unless I have some security, some pledge that he will return to finish his sentence."

"We have no money," the boy replied, "but I shall be the pledge myself and I shall stay in prison in my father's place."

The judge's heart was touched. He signed an order for the father's release. Swift as a deer, Rangananda ran to the prison. Father and son joyfully set out for their home and reached it that night.

Rangananda was later known as Rangananda Shastri. He could read and speak fifteen languages.

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Words of Long Ago

The white elephant (A fable)

A herd of 80,000 elephants roamed the jungles of the Himalayas, led by a mighty white beast whom they were proud to acknowledge as their king.

The king's mother was blind.

If ever he wandered with the herd into remote parts of the forest, he still had loving thoughts for his mother and sent her messengers with fruit.

Alas, the messengers ate the fruit themselves and the loving gifts never reached the blind mother. When he discovered this deceit the king resolved to leave the herd and to feed and protect his mother himself. So he led her to a cave in Mount Chandorana, near to a lake, and they lived together in peace.

One day a man from the city of Benares lost his way in the jungle and wandered in despair for seven days.

The elephant-king knelt down and invited the lost man to climb on to his back; then he took him to the path which led to Benares and showed him the way.

Alas, the man's heart was wicked. He told the King of Benares what a fine white elephant was to be found in the cave of Chandorana, and the King sent him with many helpers to catch the royal elephant. The hunters saw the white king standing in a lake. They seized him and he did not resist, they took him to Benares.

The blind mother was sad when her son did not return.

"Ah," she sighed, "the frankincense tree still grows and the Kutaja, grass and ferns, lilies and bluebells; but my son, where is he?"

The white elephant was in a stable all bright with flowers, and the King himself came to feed him. But the elephant would eat nothing.

"My mother is not here," he said.

"Come, come," said the King of Benares, "eat and let us be friends."

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"Ah, the poor blind one mourns in the cave of Chandorana."

"Whom do you mean?" asked the King.

"My mother mourns for me."

So the King commanded his people to set the elephant free, and the great creature ran swiftly away from the city into the jungle; he drew water from a pool, hurried to the cave and showered his blind mother with the cool water.

She cried, "It is raining! Alas, my son is not here to take care of me."

"Mother," he said, "it is I, your son. The King has sent me home."

Then they were happy together.

The mother died and was burnt, and in time the white elephant also died. The King made a stone image of him; and from every part of India people gathered each year for the Festival of the Elephant.

Sixteen

Sympathy

WHEN is sorrow accompanied by sorrow?
When one heart feels it and our heart feels it at the same time.

Duryodhana, the famous warrior, fell on the plain of Kurukshetra and his friends were so full of grief that when he lay on the ground and died, all Nature seemed in disorder. Headless creatures with many arms and legs danced dreadful dances over the earth; in lakes and wells the water was turned to blood; rivers flowed upstream instead of downstream; women looked like men, and men like women.

Here the poet teaches us that the suffering undergone by one being spreads through a wide, wide world. There was sympathy between the fallen king and thousands of living creatures.

Is this sympathy shown only in sorrow? No, it is shown both in joy and suffering.

Listen to the story of Nandiya the deer who was kind to his parents in times of peace and contentment and also in times of darkness and peril.

The King of Kosala often used to hunt in the forest where Nandiya lived with his father and mother in peace and mutual love. When he hunted, the King galloped through a wide stretch of country and many people from Kosala had to follow him as attendants; so many people were taken away from their work and they murmured at the loss they suffered.

Therefore they made a park with fences and gates and a pool in the middle, and went into the jungle to drive the deer into the park so that the King might have all the game at hand and would not need to go hunting with so many followers.

Nandiya saw the people coming, armed with sticks, as he

Sympathy

was feeding with his parents in a little wood.

"Stay here," he said to his parents. "I shall go and meet these people."

He came out of the wood alone and the people, assuming that there were no more deer beneath the trees, took him away and passed on.

All the deer, except the two old ones who had stayed in the wood, were now gathered in the park. The King was pleased, and from time to time he shot one of the herd with his bow and arrow. Nandiya's turn, however, did not come for a very long time.

When at last it did come, Nandiya stood still before the king and did not try to run away.

The King was so struck by this unusual behaviour that he did not shoot. Lowering his bow, he paused.

"Shoot, O King," said Nandiya.

"I cannot. There is merit in you, O deer. I grant you your life."

"Will you not, O King, give freedom to the rest of the deer in this park?"

"I will."

"And will you not, O King, show your favour to the birds of the air and the fish in the water?"

"I will."

This deer, the old story says, was the Lord Buddha; he spoke to the King and taught him the Law of Mercy for all living things. And afterwards the King sent a messenger with a drum throughout the country to proclaim his protection for deer, birds and fish.

You will readily agree that Nandiya was right to protect his parents. It would also be good to help a brother or a sister. But you will notice in the next story that a noble Arab spoke of a man as his brother, even though he was not really his brother.

*
* *

Words of Long Ago

A caravan was crossing the desert, and water ran short. The Arab travellers were compelled to measure out the water so that each might have a small but equal share.

For measuring they used a cup with a stone in it. They poured the water from a water-skin until it covered the stone. This was the share of each one.

Only the chief men in the caravan had a share of water.

The first time that the water was measured out like this, Kab-ibn-Mamah was about to take the cup when he saw a man of the Namir tribe looking at him longingly. Kab said to the man who was giving out the water, "Give my share to this brother," and pointed to the man of Namir.

The man drank eagerly. Kab had no water.

The next day, the time came again to share the water.

Once more the man of Namir looked on with longing. Once more Kab gave the cup to the "brother" as he called him.

But when the caravan was about to move on, Kab no longer had the strength to mount his camel.

He remained lying on the sand.

The others dared not stay lest they should all die of thirst. They covered him with blankets to protect him from beasts of prey and left him to die.

*
* * *

You will have noticed that when sorrow is felt, it is soon felt by the heart of someone near. When Duryodhana fell, at once Nature grieved. When danger threatened his parents, Nandiya went out to protect them. When the man of Namir looked on in his thirst, the noble Arab chief immediately offered him his water.

Sorrow quickly follows sorrow and joy goes with joy.

When sympathy is slow to arise we do not value it so highly.

The famous poet Firdausi wrote the history of the kings of Persia and recited it to Sultan Mahmud; the Sultan was

Sympathy

delighted and for some time he held the poet in great favour. The poem Shah-Namah was the work of thirty years, and the Sultan had promised to give the poet 60,000 pieces of gold on its completion.

Firdausi was disliked by the Sultan's Vizier. This man persuaded his master that the treasury was depleted and that it would be only sensible to give the poet silver instead of gold. Mahmud heeded this advice and sent Firdausi some bags containing 60,000 pieces of silver.

Firdausi was at the bath when the bags arrived. He was so infuriated by the Sultan's avarice that he would not even take the gift. He gave 20,000 pieces to the messenger who had brought the money, 20,000 to the proprietor of the baths, and 20,000 to a beer-seller who happened to be there.

Mahmud was informed of this insult and ordered the poet to be trampled to death by elephants. Firdausi was warned and fled to a distant city; at last he settled at Tus, his birth-place.

Soon the Sultan felt sorry that he had treated Firdausi so shamefully and wished to regain the poet's respect. He sent a messenger to Tus, bearing him many presents: 60,000 pieces of gold, silks, brocades, velvets....

Alas! The presents arrived too late.

As the king's messenger passed through one of the gates of the city, leading camels laden with Mahmud's costly gifts, a bier with the remains of the poet passed out of another gate, carrying them to the resting-place of the dead.

*
* * *

"Our Emperor is a just man," said the people of China, "for he is always ready to lend an ear to the complaints of the poor."

But a day came when the ear could hear no more. The Emperor suddenly became deaf. He could no longer listen to the song of the birds, the murmur of the wind or the voices of men.

The Emperor wept, and the nobles and officers who met

Words of Long Ago

with him in council made signs to him and wrote him words of consolation begging him not to be so sad.

“Do not think,” he told them, “that I am sad for myself or for any trouble that this infirmity will cause me. I am sad because now I shall no longer be able to hear the prayers of the afflicted.”

There was silence, for no one knew how to comfort him.

“Ah,” he exclaimed suddenly, “I have found a way. Order my people to stop wearing red clothes unless they have need of my help. So whenever I see a man or a woman dressed in red, I shall know that it is an appeal to me; my deaf ears will hear it and I shall take care that help is given to the distressed.”

The kind-hearted Emperor did not cease to do his work when he became deaf. He immediately thought of a new way of seeking out the poor and the needy. To seek them out — for the noble man does not wait for suffering to come to him, he tries to seek it out.

*
* * *

A number of Hindus formed the Dev Samaj Association in order to do good works. In their monthly journal, things like these were reported:

From Peshawar: Two ladies taught Hindi to women and children two hours a day. Some men looked after sick people at home or in hospital, took care of cows and picked up pieces of broken glass from the road.

From Moga: Two ladies taught Hindi to girls. Men fed animals and planted trees. One member of the Samaj gave free lessons to a poor working-man.

From Ferozepore: Eight ladies cared for the sick. Boys went about helping old and crippled cows, guided the blind, and watered plants. Another member found a friendless man lying in the road, seriously hurt in a carriage accident. He took him to the hospital. Another member visited villages and taught poor people of low caste how to be more clean.

Sympathy

From Sialkot: A widow visited another widow who had lost her only son, read to her and spoke comforting words.

You will notice that in some of these cases kindness took the form of teaching. The heart of a teacher is moved by ignorance: another being needs knowledge and he is ready to give it. And knowledge, like bread or water or clothing, is a gift that can be transmitted from man to man.

* * *

Lord Rama was strong and skilful in hunting, and strong and skilful in the art of teaching. When he set out to hunt animals in the jungle, he took one of his brothers with him as a companion. When he rested and ate, his younger brother sat at his side and shared the meal. When the hero went to the house of his Guru to study, he learnt the four Vedas as others might learn a game or a song. Having filled his mind with the Vedas and the Puranas, he had no wish to keep the sacred words in the secrecy of his heart. He taught them to his brother.

Just as kindness loves to share good knowledge, it also loves to share good news. For example, how great was Hanuman's joy when he could give joy to others. Listen:

Noble Bharata, Lord Rama's brother, waited fourteen years while Rama was in exile from the city of Ayodhya. Rama, the all-beautiful, wandered in the forest and knew the perils of war. But Bharata did not know his brother's fate. As the end of the fourteenth year drew near, he pined in grief, fearing that he would never see Rama's face again, for he had no news of him.

One day more and the fourteen years would have passed.

Bharata was sitting on a seat of sacred grass, his hair was braided, his body was thin, and he was sighing to himself:

"O Rama, Rama, Raghupati!"

Then there stood before him the monkey-king Hanuman, noble Hanuman who had served the hero Rama so faithfully in the wars.

Words of Long Ago

He brought good news, and he was so happy to bring it that his eyes were full of tears and in his heart he felt a world of joy at being able to change Bharata's sorrow into joy. He said:

"The one for whom you mourn day and night has returned safe and sound. He has conquered his enemy in battle and heard the gods singing hymns in his praise, and now the Lord is on his way home with Sita and his brother."

Bharata thought no more of his past sorrow.

"Who are you, who bring me such glad tidings?"

"I am Hanuman, the son of the Wind, and though I am a monkey, I am a servant of Raghupati, of Rama."

Bharata embraced Hanuman.

"Tell me more," he said, "yes, tell me all."

And Hanuman told him all, and he was happy beyond words to be the bearer of good news, and to see the life come back to the haggard face of the once sorrowful Bharata.

*
* * *

Does the human heart show mercy only to human beings? No, it feels sorrow for the sorrow of an animal and joy for its joy.

People passed by a certain woman in scorn. They called her a sinner.

This sinner saw a dog whose tongue hung out in terrible thirst. It was dying. Without a cry, the poor creature was begging for something to drink.

The sinner took off her boot and let it down into a nearby well; in this way she brought up a little water and gave it to the dog, and so its life was saved.

People changed their minds about her.

"The Lord," they said, "has forgiven this woman's sins."

She may have been a sinner, but she understood the meaning of human kindness.

*
* * *

Sympathy

And again:

A man came to the Prophet Mohammed and showed him a nest full of young birds wrapped up in a piece of carpet.

"I found these birds, my Lord," he said, "as I came through the wood. Hearing the chirps of the nestlings, I looked into a tree and found this nest."

"Put the nest on the ground," said the Prophet.

Then the mother bird swooped down and perched on the edge of the nest, delighted to have found her children.

"Put the family back where you found them," said Mohammed. And he added:

"Be kind to animals. Ride them when they are strong enough to carry you. Dismount from them when they are tired. Give them to drink when they are thirsty."

In the records of Islam it is said that one day the angels of heaven said to God:

"O God, is there anything in the world stronger than rock?"

"Yes," God replied, "iron is stronger, for it breaks rock."

"Is there anything stronger than iron?"

"Yes, fire, for it melts iron."

"And is there anything stronger than fire?"

"Water, for it quenches fire."

"And what is stronger than water?"

"Wind, for it can move the waves."

"And is there anything even stronger?"

"Yes, the kind heart that gives alms in secret, not letting the left hand know what the right hand is doing."

Not that today giving alms is the chief way of being kind. Of course, we may help our neighbour with a kind-hearted gift. But the story means that, by a gift or in any other way, the power of kindness is the greatest power in the world for winning the affection and friendship of others.

Suffering is aroused by the suffering of others, and joy by their joy.

Such is the glorious nature of sympathy.

Note on the Texts

This volume contains all the writings of the Mother from the period before 1920, the year she settled in Pondicherry, with the exception of *Prayers and Meditations*. The book is divided into seven parts, according to the nature and date of the material. Most of the pieces were written originally in French and appear here in English translation. The texts of this (second) edition are the same as those of the first edition, which was published in 1978 as Volume 2 of the Collected Works of the Mother (Centenary Edition). Details about the texts and their publication follow.

Part 1. The essays and stories in this part were written by the Mother between 1893 and 1912. All the texts were written in French. All but two were first published in 1946 in the first part of a book entitled *Paroles d'autrefois*. This book was reprinted in 1955. An English translation, entitled *Words of Long Ago*, was published in 1946 and reprinted in 1952 and 1974. In the 1978 edition of *Words of Long Ago*, the contents of Part 1 of the previous editions were rearranged according to date and two new pieces added: "A Sapphire Tale" and an unpublished note related to "On Thought". "A Sapphire Tale" was first published in the original French and in English translation in the monthly journal *Mother India* in February 1957. At the time of its publication the Mother remarked to the journal's editor that the story expressed "the ideal of the overmind creation". The original translations of all the contents of Part 1 were revised for publication in 1978 in *Words of Long Ago*, Volume 2 of the Collected Works of the Mother. The same contents were brought out in the original French in 1983 in *Paroles d'autrefois*, the French counterpart of Volume 2 of the Collected Works.

Part 2. The essays in this part were written by the Mother for the meetings of "a small group of seekers" in 1912. All the texts were written in French. All but one were published in 1946 in the second part

Words of Long Ago

of *Paroles d'autrefois*. This book was reprinted in 1955. An English translation, entitled *Words of Long Ago*, was brought out in 1946 and reprinted in 1952 and 1974. In the 1978 edition of *Words of Long Ago*, one new piece was added: the essay for the meeting of 7 May 1914. This essay, which was restored to its original position in the series, was first published in 1939 in *Quelques paroles, quelques prières* and in English translation as the Foreword to the 1940 edition of *Words of the Mother*. The question at the beginning of this essay, taken from the Mother's handwritten manuscript, was published for the first time in the 1978 edition of *Words of Long Ago*. The original translations of all the contents of Part 2 were revised for publication in that edition. The same contents were brought out in the original French in 1983 in *Paroles d'autrefois*.

Part 3. Between 1911 and 1913 the Mother gave a number of talks to different groups in Paris. Two of these talks, "On Thought" and "On Dreams", appear in Part 1 of this book. Several other talks never published in the Mother's lifetime are published here as Part 3. The Mother sometimes presented the same talk to different groups, with suitable additions and alterations. These variants, if significant and non-repetitive, have been given here in footnotes. A note relating to the Mother's talks, which was found among her manuscripts, has been placed before the other items. The talks, notes and reflections in this part, all from the period 1912-13, were first published in English translation in 1978 as Part 3 of *Words of Long Ago*. The original French texts were first brought out in 1983 as Part 3 of *Paroles d'autrefois*.

Part 4. The writings in this part, similar to *Prayers and Meditations*, were not published in the Mother's lifetime. Several of the pieces are dated between 1914 and 1916; the remainder seem clearly to belong to the period before 1920. These writings first appeared in English translation in 1978 as Part 4 of *Words of Long Ago*. The original French texts were first brought out in 1983 as Part 4 of *Paroles d'autrefois*.

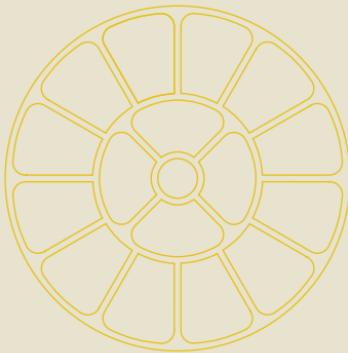
Note on the Texts

Part 5. This part comprises several short essays and notes entitled by the Mother “Notes and Reflections”, and a few related writings. Several of the pieces are dated between 1914 and 1915; the rest appear to have been written around the same time. None of the writings were published during the Mother’s lifetime. They first appeared in English translation in 1978 as Part 5 of *Words of Long Ago*. The original French texts were first brought out in 1983 as Part 5 of *Paroles d’autrefois*.

Part 6. The letters, essays, etc. comprising this part were written in Japan between 1916 and 1920. “Woman and the War”, written originally in French, was published in an English translation seen and revised by the Mother, in the *Fujoshimbun* on 7 July 1916. “Woman and Man”, written in French around the same time and translated into English by the Mother, was never published in either language during her lifetime. “Reminiscences” also appears to have been written first in French and translated subsequently into English, very likely by the Mother herself. The other pieces in this part appear to have been written originally in English. They are among the Mother’s first compositions in the English language. “Impressions of Japan”, dated 9 July 1915, was written in Akakura and published in the form reproduced here in the *Modern Review* (Calcutta) in January 1918. “The Children of Japan”, an incomplete letter, was written shortly after “Impressions of Japan”. “Myself and My Creed” was written in February 1920. “To the Women of Japan” is undated. It exists in several versions, one of which has been chosen as the principal text; to this, passages from other versions have been added. Part of this talk was published as “To the Women of the World” in the annual *Sri Aurobindo Circle* of 1947. Some revisions, made by the Mother for this publication, have been included in the present text. A greater portion of the talk was published as “Talk to the Women of Japan” in 1967. The last part of “To the Women of Japan” incorporated passages from Sri Aurobindo’s *Human Cycle*, *Synthesis of Yoga*, etc. The pieces in this part were published together in English in 1978 as Part 6 of *Words of Long Ago*. The same pieces were brought out in French in 1983 as Part 6 of *Paroles d’autrefois*.

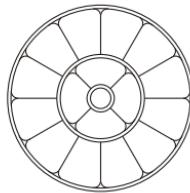
Words of Long Ago

Part 7. The Mother translated and adapted some stories written by F. J. Gould which had been published in his *Youth's Noble Path* in 1911. The Mother's versions, written in French, were first published under the title *Belles Histoires* in 1946. English translations of the stories were first brought out in 1951 under the title *Tales of All Times*. These translations were revised for inclusion in Part 7 of the 1978 edition of *Words of Long Ago*. Several hitherto unpublished stories were translated and added as an appendix to that volume. All the stories were published in the original French in 1983 in Part 7 of *Paroles d'autrefois* and its appendix.



THE MOTHER

Questions and Answers
1929-1931



The Mother

Questions and Answers

1929 - 1931

with

Commentaries on the Dhammapada

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry

VOLUME 3
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The Mother in Tokyo, 1917

Publisher's Note

This volume includes two early collections of conversations by the Mother and her oral commentaries on the *Dhammapada*. The conversations were spoken in English; the commentaries were spoken in French and appear here in English translation.

Questions and Answers 1929. In 1929 the Mother met weekly with a small group of disciples. After a period of meditation she answered questions raised by them. Most of these questions were asked by an Englishwoman who was living in the Ashram at that time. One of those present noted down the conversations immediately afterwards and later sent a copy of fifteen of them to Sri Aurobindo, who revised them for publication. They were first brought out for private circulation in 1931.

Questions and Answers 1930-1931. During 1930 and 1931 the Mother spoke with a group of disciples who met with her in a room of the Ashram known as Prosperity. One of the participants recorded some of these conversations in abbreviated long-hand and later elaborated his notes. These reports were not revised by Sri Aurobindo or the Mother, but the Mother did approve of their publication and made a French translation. They were first published as a book in 1951.

Commentaries on the *Dhammapada*. The Mother gave these commentaries on the Buddhist teachings of the *Dhammapada* between August 1957 and September 1958. She was speaking to a large gathering of Ashram members and students of the Ashram school, members of her “Friday class” at the Ashram Playground. After reading out a chapter of the text, the Mother spoke about the points that interested her and then asked the class to meditate on them. She did not comment systematically

on the *Dhammapada* verses, but she did cover most of the central ideas of the text.

Appendix to *Questions and Answers 1929*. This appendix contains Sri Aurobindo's explanations of certain phrases and passages in *Questions and Answers 1929*. They were written to various disciples between 1933 and 1937.

Details about these texts and their publication are provided in the Note on the Texts.

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Questions and Answers

1929

7 April 1929

Will you say something to us about Yoga?

What do you want the Yoga for? To get power? To attain to peace and calm? To serve humanity?

None of these motives is sufficient to show that you are meant for the Path.

The question you are to answer is this: Do you want the Yoga for the sake of the Divine? Is the Divine the supreme fact of your life, so much so that it is simply impossible for you to do without it? Do you feel that your very *raison d'être* is the Divine and without it there is no meaning in your existence? If so, then only can it be said that you have a call for the Path.

This is the first thing necessary — aspiration for the Divine.

The next thing you have to do is to tend it, to keep it always alert and awake and living. And for that what is required is concentration — concentration upon the Divine with a view to an integral and absolute consecration to its Will and Purpose.

Concentrate in the heart. Enter into it; go within and deep and far, as far as you can. Gather all the strings of your consciousness that are spread abroad, roll them up and take a plunge and sink down.

A fire is burning there, in the deep quietude of the heart. It is the divinity in you — your true being. Hear its voice, follow its dictates.

There are other centres of concentration, for example, one above the crown and another between the eye-brows. Each has its own efficacy and will give you a particular result. But the central being lies in the heart and from the heart proceed all central movements — all dynamism and urge for transformation and power of realisation.

Questions and Answers

What is one to do to prepare oneself for the Yoga?

To be conscious, first of all. We are conscious of only an insignificant portion of our being; for the most part we are unconscious. It is this unconsciousness that keeps us down to our unregenerate nature and prevents change and transformation in it. It is through unconsciousness that the undivine forces enter into us and make us their slaves. You are to be conscious of yourself, you must awake to your nature and movements, you must know why and how you do things or feel or think them; you must understand your motives and impulses, the forces, hidden and apparent, that move you; in fact, you must, as it were, take to pieces the entire machinery of your being. Once you are conscious, it means that you can distinguish and sift things, you can see which are the forces that pull you down and which help you on. And when you know the right from the wrong, the true from the false, the divine from the undivine, you are to act strictly up to your knowledge; that is to say, resolutely reject one and accept the other. The duality will present itself at every step and at every step you will have to make your choice. You will have to be patient and persistent and vigilant — “sleepless”, as the adepts say; you must always refuse to give any chance whatever to the undivine against the divine.

Is the Yoga for the sake of humanity?

No, it is for the sake of Divinity. It is not the welfare of humanity that we seek but the manifestation of the Divine. We are here to work out the Divine Will, more truly, to be worked upon by the Divine Will so that we may be its instruments for the progressive incorporation of the Supreme and the establishment of His reign upon earth. Only that portion of humanity which will respond to the Divine Call shall receive its Grace.

Whether humanity as a whole will be benefited, if not directly, at least, in an indirect way, will depend upon the condition

of humanity itself. If one is to judge from the present conditions, there is not much hope. What is the attitude today of the average man—the representative humanity? Does he not rise in anger and revolt directly he meets something that partakes of the genuinely divine? Does he not feel that the Divine means the destruction of his cherished possessions? Is he not continually yelling out the most categorical negative to everything that the Divine intends and wills? Humanity will have to change much before it can hope to gain anything by the advent of the Divine.

How is that we have met?

We have all met in previous lives. Otherwise we would not have come together in this life. We are of one family and have worked through ages for the victory of the Divine and its manifestation upon earth.

14 April 1929

What are the dangers of Yoga? Is it especially dangerous to the people of the West? Someone has said that Yoga may be suitable for the East, but it has the effect of unbalancing the Western mind.

Yoga is not more dangerous to the people of the West than to those of the East. Everything depends upon the spirit with which you approach it. Yoga does become dangerous if you want it for your own sake, to serve a personal end. It is not dangerous, on the contrary, it is safety and security itself, if you go to it with a sense of its sacredness, always remembering that the aim is to find the Divine.

Dangers and difficulties come in when people take up Yoga not for the sake of the Divine, but because they want to acquire power and under the guise of Yoga seek to satisfy some ambition. If you cannot get rid of ambition, do not touch the thing. It is fire that burns.

There are two paths of Yoga, one of *tapasyā* (discipline), and the other of surrender. The path of *tapasyā* is arduous. Here you rely solely upon yourself, you proceed by your own strength. You ascend and achieve according to the measure of your force. There is always the danger of falling down. And once you fall, you lie broken in the abyss and there is hardly a remedy. The other path, the path of surrender, is safe and sure. It is here, however, that the Western people find their difficulty. They have been taught to fear and avoid all that threatens their personal independence. They have imbibed with their mothers' milk the sense of individuality. And surrender means giving up all that. In other words, you may follow, as Ramakrishna says, either the path of the baby monkey or that of the baby cat. The baby monkey holds to its mother in order to be carried about and it

must hold firm, otherwise if it loses its grip, it falls. On the other hand, the baby cat does not hold to its mother, but is held by the mother and has no fear nor responsibility; it has nothing to do but to let the mother hold it and cry *ma ma*.

If you take up this path of surrender fully and sincerely, there is no more danger or serious difficulty. The question is to be sincere. If you are not sincere, do not begin Yoga. If you were dealing in human affairs, then you could resort to deception; but in dealing with the Divine there is no possibility of deception anywhere. You can go on the Path safely when you are candid and open to the core and when your only end is to realise and attain the Divine and to be moved by the Divine.

There is another danger; it is in connection with the sex impulses. Yoga in its process of purification will lay bare and throw up all hidden impulses and desires in you. And you must learn not to hide things nor leave them aside, you have to face them and conquer and remould them. The first effect of Yoga, however, is to take away the mental control, and the hungers that lie dormant are suddenly set free, they rush up and invade the being. So long as this mental control has not been replaced by the Divine control, there is a period of transition when your sincerity and surrender will be put to the test. The strength of such impulses as those of sex lies usually in the fact that people take too much notice of them; they protest too vehemently and endeavour to control them by coercion, hold them within and sit upon them. But the more you think of a thing and say, "I don't want it, I don't want it", the more you are bound to it. What you should do is to keep the thing away from you, to dissociate from it, take as little notice of it as possible and, even if you happen to think of it, remain indifferent and unconcerned.

The impulses and desires that come up by the pressure of Yoga should be faced in a spirit of detachment and serenity, as something foreign to yourself or belonging to the outside world. They should be offered to the Divine, so that the Divine may take them up and transmute them.

If you have once opened yourself to the Divine, if the power of the Divine has once come down into you and yet you try to keep to the old forces, you prepare troubles and difficulties and dangers for yourself. You must be vigilant and see that you do not use the Divine as a cloak for the satisfaction of your desires. There are many self-appointed Masters, who do nothing but that. And then when you are off the straight path and when you have a little knowledge and not much power, it happens that you are seized by beings or entities of a certain type, you become blind instruments in their hands and are devoured by them in the end. Wherever there is pretence, there is danger; you cannot deceive God. Do you come to God saying, "I want union with you" and in your heart meaning "I want powers and enjoyments"? Beware! You are heading straight towards the brink of the precipice. And yet it is so easy to avoid all catastrophe. Become like a child, give yourself up to the Mother, let her carry you, and there is no more danger for you.

This does not mean that you have not to face other kinds of difficulties or that you have not to fight and conquer any obstacles at all. Surrender does not ensure a smooth and unruffled and continuous progression. The reason is that your being is not yet one, nor your surrender absolute and complete. Only a part of you surrenders; and today it is one part and the next day it is another. The whole purpose of the Yoga is to gather all the divergent parts together and forge them into an undivided unity. Till then you cannot hope to be without difficulties—difficulties, for example, like doubt or depression or hesitation. The whole world is full of the poison. You take it in with every breath. If you exchange a few words with an undesirable man or even if such a man merely passes by you, you may catch the contagion from him. It is sufficient for you to come near a place where there is plague in order to be infected with its poison; you need not know at all that it is there. You can lose in a few minutes what it has taken you months to gain. So long as you belong to humanity and so long as you lead the ordinary life, it

does not matter much if you mix with the people of the world; but if you want the divine life, you will have to be exceedingly careful about your company and your environment.

What is the way to establish unity and homogeneity in our being?

Keep the will firm. Treat the recalcitrant parts as disobedient children. Act upon them constantly and patiently. Convince them of their error.

In the depths of your consciousness is the psychic being, the temple of the Divine within you. This is the centre round which should come about the unification of all these divergent parts, all these contradictory movements of your being. Once you have got the consciousness of the psychic being and its aspiration, these doubts and difficulties can be destroyed. It takes more or less time, but you will surely succeed in the end. Once you have turned to the Divine, saying, "I want to be yours", and the Divine has said, "Yes", the whole world cannot keep you from it. When the central being has made its surrender, the chief difficulty has disappeared. The outer being is like a crust. In ordinary people the crust is so hard and thick that they are not conscious of the Divine within them. If once, even for a moment only, the inner being has said, "I am here and I am yours", then it is as though a bridge has been built and little by little the crust becomes thinner and thinner until the two parts are wholly joined and the inner and the outer become one.

Ambition has been the undoing of many Yogis. That cancer can hide long. Many people start on the Path without any sense of it. But when they get powers, their ambition rises up, all the more violently because it had not been thrown out in the beginning.

A story is told of a Yogi who had attained wonderful powers. He was invited by his disciples to a great dinner. It was served on a big low table. The disciples asked their Master to show

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his power in some way. He knew he should not, but the seed of ambition was there in him and he thought, "After all, it is a very innocent thing and it may prove to them that such things are possible and teach them the greatness of God." So he said, "Take away the table, but only the table, let the table-cloth remain as it is with all the dishes upon it." The disciples cried out, "Oh, that cannot be done, everything will fall down." But he insisted and they removed the table from under the cloth. Lo, the miracle! The cloth and all that was upon it remained there just as though the table was underneath. The disciples wondered. But all on a sudden the Master jumped up and rushed out screaming and crying, "Nevermore shall I have a disciple, nevermore! Woe is me! I have betrayed my God." His heart was on fire; he had used the divine powers for selfish ends.

It is always wrong to display powers. This does not mean that there is no use for them. But they have to be used in the same way as they came. They come by union with the Divine. They must be used by the will of the Divine and not for display. If you come across someone who is blind and you have the power to make him see—if it is the Divine Will that the man shall see, you have only to say, "Let him see" and he will see. But if you wish to make him see simply because you want to cure him, then you use the power to satisfy your personal ambition. Most often, in such cases, you not only lose your power but you create a great disturbance in the man. Yet in appearance the two ways are the same; but in one case you act because of the Divine Will and in the other for some personal motive.

How are we to know, you will ask, when it is the Divine Will that makes us act? The Divine Will is not difficult to recognise. It is unmistakable. You can know it without being very far on the path. Only you must listen to its voice, the small voice that is here in the heart. Once you are accustomed to listen, if you do anything that is contrary to the Divine Will, you feel an uneasiness. If you persist on the wrong track, you get very much disturbed. If, however, you give some material excuse as

the cause of your uneasiness and proceed on your way, you gradually lose the faculty of perception and finally you may go on doing all kinds of wrong and feel no uneasiness. But if, when once you feel the least disturbance, you stop and ask of your inner self, "What is the cause of this?" then you do get the real answer and the whole thing becomes quite clear. Do not try to give a material excuse when you feel a little depression or a slight uneasiness. When you stop and look about for the reason, be absolutely straight and sincere. At first your mind will construct a very plausible and beautiful explanation. Do not accept it, but look beyond and ask, "What is it that is behind this movement? Why am I doing this?" Finally you will discover, hidden in a corner, the little ripple—a slight wrong turn or twist in your attitude that is causing the trouble or disturbance.

One of the commonest forms of ambition is the idea of service to humanity. All attachment to such service or work is a sign of personal ambition. The Guru who believes that he has a great truth to teach to humanity and who wants many disciples and who feels uncomfortable when the disciples go away or who seizes on anybody that comes and tries to make him a disciple, is evidently following nothing but his ambition. You must be able, if you are ready to follow the divine order, to take up whatever work you are given, even a stupendous work, and leave it the next day with the same quietness with which you took it up and not feel that the responsibility is yours. There should be no attachment—to any object or any mode of life. You must be absolutely free. If you want to have the true yogic attitude, you must be able to accept everything that comes from the Divine and let it go easily and without regret. The attitude of the ascetic who says, "I want nothing" and the attitude of the man of the world who says, "I want this thing" are the same. The one may be as much attached to his renunciation as the other to his possession.

You must accept all things—and only those things—that come from the Divine. Because things can come from concealed

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desires. The desires work in the subconscious and bring things to you which, although you may not recognise them as such, nevertheless do not come from the Divine but from disguised desires.

You can easily know when a thing comes from the Divine. You feel free, you are at ease, you are in peace. But when something presents itself to you and you jump at it and cry out, "Oh, at last I have it", then you can know for certain that it does not come from the Divine. Equanimity is the essential condition of union and communion with the Divine.

Does not the Divine sometimes give what you desire?

Certainly. There was a young man who wanted to do Yoga. But he had a mean and cruel father who troubled him very much and tried to prevent him from doing it. He wished ardently to be free from the father's interference. Soon the father fell ill and very seriously; he was about to die. Whereupon the other side of the boy's nature rose up and he loudly bewailed the misfortune and cried, "Oh, my poor father is so ill! It is such a sad thing. Alas, what shall I do?" The father got well. The young man rejoiced and turned once more to Yoga. And the father also began again to oppose and torment him with redoubled violence. The son tore his hair in despair and cried, "Now my father stands in my way more than ever." The whole thing is to know exactly what one wants.

The Divine always brings with it perfect calm and peace. A certain class of Bhaktas, it is true, present generally a very different picture; they jump about and cry and laugh and sing, in a fit of devotion, as they say. But in reality such people do not live in the Divine. They live largely in the vital world.

You say that even Ramakrishna had periods of emotional excitement and would go about with hands uplifted, singing and dancing? The truth of the matter is this. The movement in the inner being may be perfect; but it puts you in a certain condition

of receptivity to forces that fill you with intense emotional excitement, if your external being is weak or untransformed. Where the external being offers resistance to the inner being or cannot hold the entirety of the Ananda, there is this confusion and anarchy in expression.

You must have a strong body and strong nerves. You must have a strong basis of equanimity in your external being. If you have this basis, you can contain a world of emotion and yet not have to scream it out. This does not mean that you cannot express your emotion, but you can express it in a beautiful harmonious way. To weep or scream or dance about is always a proof of weakness, either of the vital or the mental or the physical nature; for on all these levels the activity is for self-satisfaction. One who dances and jumps and screams has the feeling that he is somehow very unusual in his excitement; and his vital nature takes great pleasure in that.

If you have to bear the pressure of the Divine Descent, you must be very strong and powerful, otherwise you would be shaken to pieces. Some persons ask, "Why has not the Divine come yet?" Because you are not ready. If a little drop makes you sing and dance and scream, what would happen if the whole thing came down?

Therefore do we say to people who have not a strong and firm and capacious basis in the body and the vital and the mind, "Do not pull", meaning "Do not try to pull at the forces of the Divine, but wait in peace and calmness." For they would not be able to bear the descent. But to those who possess the necessary basis and foundation we say, on the contrary, "Aspire and draw." For they would be able to receive and yet not be upset by the forces descending from the Divine.

In the case of some persons who turn to the Divine it happens that every material prop or everything they are fond of is removed from their life. And if they love someone, he also is taken away.

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It is a thing that does not happen to all. It happens to those that are called.

Whatever difference there is between the West and the East in relation to spiritual life lies not in the inner being or nature, which is an invariable and constant thing, but in the mental habits, in the modes of outer expression and presentation which are the result of education and environment and other external conditions. All people, whether occidental or oriental, are alike in their deepest feelings; they are different in their way of thinking. Sincerity, for example, is a quality which is the same everywhere. Those who are sincere, to whichever nation they belong, are all sincere in the same way. Only the forms given to this sincerity vary. The mind works in different ways in different peoples, but the heart is the same everywhere; the heart is a much truer reality, and the differences belong to the superficial parts. As soon as you go deep enough, you meet something that is one in all. All meet in the Divine. The sun is the symbol of the Divine in the physical nature. Clouds may modify its appearance, but when they are no longer there, you see it is the same sun always and everywhere.

If you cannot feel one with somebody, it means you have not gone deep enough in your feeling.

21 April 1929

There is a common idea that visions are a sign of high spirituality. Is this true?

Not necessarily. Moreover, to see is one thing but to understand and interpret what is seen is quite another thing and much more difficult. Generally, those who see are misled because they give the meaning or interpretation they wish to give according to their desires, hopes and prepossessions. And then, too, there are many different planes in which you can see. There is a mental seeing, a vital seeing, and there are some visions that are seen in a plane very close to the most material. The visions that belong to the last category appear in forms and symbols that seem to be absolutely material, so clear and real and tangible they are. And if you know how to interpret them you can have very exact indications of circumstances and of the inner condition of people.

Let us illustrate. Here is a vision that someone actually had. A road climbs up a steep and precipitous hillside, bathed in full bright sunlight. On the road a heavy coach drawn by six strong horses is proceeding with great difficulty; it is advancing slowly but steadily. Arrives a man who looks over the situation, takes his position behind the coach and begins to push it or tries to push it up the hill. Then someone comes who has knowledge and says to him, "Why do you labour in vain? Do you think your effort can have any effect? For you it is an impossible task. Even the horses find it difficult."

Now the clue to the meaning of the vision lies in the image of the six horses. Horses are symbols of power and the number six represents divine creation; so the six horses signify the powers of divine creation. The coach stands for realisation, for the thing that has to be realised, achieved, brought up to the

summit, to the height where dwells the Light. Although these powers of creation are divine, it is a hard labour even for them to consummate the realisation; for they have to work against heavy odds, against the whole downward pull of nature. Then comes in the human being in his arrogance and ignorance, with his small fund of mental powers and thinks that he is somebody and can do something. The best thing he can do is to step inside the coach, sit down comfortably and let the horses carry him.

Dreams are quite a different thing. They are more difficult to interpret, since each person has his own world of dream-imagery peculiar to himself. Of course, there are dreams that do not signify much, those that are connected with the most superficial and physical layer of consciousness, those that are the result of stray thoughts, random impressions, mechanical reactions or reflex activities. These have no regular or organised form and shape and meaning; they are hardly remembered and leave almost no trace in the consciousness. But even dreams that have a somewhat deeper origin are still obscure, since they are peculiarly personal, in this sense that they depend for their make-up almost entirely upon the experiences and idiosyncrasies of the individual. Visions also are made up of symbols that do not necessarily obtain universal currency. The symbols vary according to race and tradition and religion. One symbol may be peculiarly Christian, another peculiarly Hindu, a third may be common to all the East and a fourth only to the West. Dreams, on the other hand, are exclusively personal; they depend upon everyday occurrences and impressions. It is exceedingly difficult for one man to explain or interpret another's dream. Each man is like a closed circle to every other man. But everyone can study for himself his own dreams, unravel them and find out their meaning.

Now the procedure to deal with dreams and the dreamland. First become conscious — conscious of your dreams. Observe the relation between them and the happenings of your waking hours. If you remember your night, you will be able to trace

back very often the condition of your day to the condition of your night. In sleep some action or other is always going on in your mental or vital or other plane; things happen there and they govern your waking consciousness. For instance, some are very anxious to perfect themselves and make a great effort during the day. They go to sleep and, when they rise the next day, they find no trace of the gains of their previous day's effort; they have to go over the same ground once again. This means that the effort and whatever achievement there was belonged to the more superficial or wakeful parts of the being, but there were deeper and dormant parts that were not touched. In sleep you fell into the grip of these unconscious regions and they opened and swallowed all that you had laboriously built up in your conscious hours.

Be conscious! Be conscious of the night as well as of the day. First you have to get consciousness, afterwards, control. You who remember your dreams may have had this experience that, even while dreaming, you knew it was a dream; you knew that it was an experience that did not belong to the material world. When once you know, you can act there in the same way as in the material world; even in the dreaming, you can exercise your conscious will and change the whole course of your dream-experience.

And as you become more and more conscious, you will begin to have the same control over your being at night as you have in the day, perhaps even more. For at night you are free, at least partially, from slavery to the mechanism of the body. The control over the processes of the body-consciousness is more difficult, since they are more rigid, less amenable to change than are the mental or the vital processes.

In the night the mental and vital, especially the vital, are very active. During the day they are under check, the physical consciousness automatically represses their free play and expression. In sleep this check is removed and they come out with their natural and free movements.

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What is the nature of dreamless sleep?

Generally, when you have what you call dreamless sleep, it is one of two things; either you do not remember what you dreamt or you fell into absolute unconsciousness which is almost death — a taste of death. But there is the possibility of a sleep in which you enter into an absolute silence, immobility and peace in all parts of your being and your consciousness merges into Sachchidananda. You can hardly call it sleep, for it is extremely conscious. In that condition you may remain for a few minutes, but these few minutes give you more rest and refreshment than hours of ordinary sleep. You cannot have it by chance; it requires a long training.

How is it that in dreams one meets and knows people whom one meets and knows afterwards in the outer world?

It is because of the affinities that draw certain people together, affinities in the mental or the vital world. People often meet in these planes before they meet upon earth. They may join there, speak to each other and have all the relations you can have upon earth. Some know of these relationships, some do not know. Some, as are indeed most, are unconscious of the inner being and the inner intercourse, and yet it will happen that, when they meet the new face in the outer world, they find it somehow very familiar, quite well-known.

Are there no false visions?

There are what in appearance are false visions. There are, for instance, hundreds or thousands of people who say that they have seen the Christ. Of that number those who have actually seen Him are perhaps less than a dozen, and even with them there is much to say about what they have seen. What the others saw

may be an emanation; or it may be a thought or even an image remembered by the mind. There are, too, those who are strong believers in the Christ and have had a vision of some Force or Being or some remembered image that is very luminous and makes upon them a strong impression. They have seen something which they feel belongs to another world, to a supernatural order, and it has created in them an emotion of fear, awe or joy; and as they believe in the Christ, they can think of nothing else and say it is He. But the same vision or experience if it comes to one who believes in the Hindu, the Mohammedan or some other religion, will take a different name and form. The thing seen or experienced may be fundamentally the same, but it is formulated differently according to the different make-up of the apprehending mind. It is only those that can go beyond beliefs and faiths and myths and traditions who are able to say what it really is; but these are few, very few. You must be free from every mental construction, you must divest yourself of all that is merely local or temporal, before you can know what you have seen.

Spiritual experience means the contact with the Divine in oneself (or without, which comes to the same thing in that domain). And it is an experience identical everywhere in all countries, among all peoples and even in all ages. If you meet the Divine, you meet it always and everywhere in the same way. Difference comes in because between the experience and its formulation there is almost an abyss. Directly you have spiritual experience, which takes place always in the inner consciousness, it is translated into your external consciousness and defined there in one way or another according to your education, your faith, your mental predisposition. There is only one truth, one reality; but the forms through which it may be expressed are many.

What was the nature of Jeanne d'Arc's vision?

Jeanne d'Arc was evidently in relation with some entities belonging to what we call the world of the Gods (or as the Catholics

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say, the world of the Saints, though it is not quite the same). The beings she saw she called archangels. These beings belong to the intermediate world between the higher mind and the supramental, the world that Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind. It is the world of the creators, the “Formateurs”.

The two beings who were always appearing and speaking to Jeanne d'Arc would, if seen by an Indian, have a quite different appearance; for when one sees, one projects the forms of one's mind. To what you see you give the form of that which you expect to see. If the same being appeared simultaneously in a group where there were Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Shintoists, it would be named by absolutely different names. Each would say, in reference to the appearance of the being, that he was like this or like that, all differing and yet it would be one and the same manifestation. You have the vision of one in India whom you call the Divine Mother, the Catholics say it is the Virgin Mary, and the Japanese call it Kwannon, the Goddess of Mercy, and others would give other names. It is the same Force, the same Power, but the images made of it are different in different faiths.

*What is the place of training or discipline in surrender?
If one surrenders, can he not be without discipline? Does
not discipline sometimes hamper?*

Maybe. But a distinction must be made between a method of development or discipline and a willed action. Discipline is different; I am speaking of willed action. If you surrender you have to give up effort, but that does not mean that you have to abandon also all willed action. On the contrary, you can hasten the realisation by lending your will to the Divine Will. That too is surrender in another form.

What is required of you is not a passive surrender, in which you become like a block, but to put your will at the disposal of the Divine Will.

But how can one do this before the union has been effected?

You have a will and you can offer that will. Take the example of becoming conscious of your nights. If you take the attitude of passive surrender, you would say, "When it is the Divine Will that I should become conscious, then I shall become conscious." On the other hand, if you offer your will to the Divine, you begin to will, you say, "I will become conscious of my nights." You have the will that it should be done; you do not sit down idle and wait. The surrender comes in when you take the attitude that says, "I give my will to the Divine. I intensely want to become conscious of my nights, I have not the knowledge, let the Divine Will work it out for me." Your will must continue to act steadily, not in the way of choosing a particular action or demanding a particular object, but as an ardent aspiration concentrated upon the end to be achieved. This is the first step. If you are vigilant, if your attention is alert, you will certainly receive something in the form of an inspiration of what is to be done and that you must forthwith proceed to do. Only, you must remember that to surrender is to accept whatever is the result of your action, though the result may be quite different from what you expect. On the other hand, if your surrender is passive, you will do nothing and try nothing; you will simply go to sleep and wait for a miracle.

Now to know whether your will or desire is in agreement with the Divine Will or not, you must look and see whether you have an answer or have no answer, whether you feel supported or contradicted, not by the mind or the vital or the body, but by that something which is always there deep in the inner being, in your heart.

Is not an increasing effort of meditation needed and is it not true that the more hours you meditate the greater progress you make?

The number of hours spent in meditation is no proof of spiritual progress. It is a proof of your progress when you no longer have to make an effort to meditate. Then you have rather to make an effort to stop meditating; it becomes difficult to stop meditation, difficult to stop thinking of the Divine, difficult to come down to the ordinary consciousness. Then you are sure of progress, then you have made real progress when concentration in the Divine is the necessity of your life, when you cannot do without it, when it continues naturally from morning to night whatever you may be engaged in doing. Whether you sit down to meditation or go about and do things and work, what is required of you is consciousness; that is the one need,—to be constantly conscious of the Divine.

But is not sitting down to meditation an indispensable discipline, and does it not give a more intense and concentrated union with the Divine?

That may be. But a discipline in itself is not what we are seeking. What we are seeking is to be concentrated on the Divine in all that we do, at all times, in all our acts and in every movement. There are some here who have been told to meditate; but also there are others who have not been asked to do any meditation at all. But it must not be thought that they are not progressing. They too follow a discipline, but it is of another nature. To work, to act with devotion and an inner consecration is also a spiritual discipline. The final aim is to be in constant union with the Divine, not only in meditation but in all circumstances and in all the active life.

There are some who, when they are sitting in meditation, get into a state which they think very fine and delightful. They sit self-complacent in it and forget the world; but if they are disturbed, they come out of it angry and restless, because their meditation was interrupted. This is not a sign of spiritual progress or discipline. There are some people who act and seem to feel as

if their meditation were a debt they have to pay to the Divine; they are like men who go to church once a week and think they have paid what they owe to God.

If you need to make an effort to go into meditation, you are still very far from being able to live the spiritual life. When it takes an effort to come out of it, then indeed your meditation can be an indication that you are in the spiritual life.

There are disciplines such as Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga that one can practise and yet have nothing to do with the spiritual life; the former arrives mostly at body control, the latter at mind control. But to enter the spiritual life means to take a plunge into the Divine, as you would jump into the sea. And that is not the end but the very beginning; for after you have taken the plunge, you must learn to live in the Divine. How are you to do it? You have simply to jump straight in and not to think, "Where shall I fall? What will happen to me?" It is the hesitation of your mind that prevents you. You must simply let yourself go. If you wish to dive into the sea and are thinking all the time, "Ah, but there may be a stone here or a stone there", you cannot dive.

But you see the sea and so you can jump straight into it.

But how are you to jump into the spiritual life?

Of course, you must have had some glimpse of the Divine Reality, as you must see the sea and know something of it before you can jump into it. That glimpse is usually the awakening of the psychic consciousness. But some realisation you must have—a strong mental or vital, if not a deep psychic or integral contact. You must have felt strongly the Divine Presence in or about you; you must have felt the breath of the Divine world. And you must have felt too as a suffocating pressure the opposite breath of the ordinary world, drawing you to an endeavour to come out of that oppressive atmosphere. If you have that, then you have only to seek refuge unreservedly in the Divine Reality and live in its help and protection, in it alone. What you may

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have done in the course of your ordinary life only partially or in some parts of your being or at times and on occasions, you must do completely and for good. That is the plunge you have to take, and unless you do it, you may do Yoga for years and yet know nothing of a true spiritual living. Take the whole and entire plunge and you will be free from this outer confusion and get the true experience of the spiritual life.

28 April 1929

It has been said that in order to progress in Yoga one must offer up everything to the Divine, even every little thing that one has or does in life. What is precisely the meaning of that?

Yoga means union with the Divine, and the union is effected through offering — it is founded on the offering of yourself to the Divine. In the beginning you start by making this offering in a general way, as though once for all; you say, "I am the servant of the Divine; my life is given absolutely to the Divine; all my efforts are for the realisation of the Divine Life." But that is only the first step; for this is not sufficient. When the resolution has been taken, when you have decided that the whole of your life shall be given to the Divine, you have still at every moment to remember it and carry it out in all the details of your existence. You must feel at every step that you belong to the Divine; you must have the constant experience that, in whatever you think or do, it is always the Divine Consciousness that is acting through you. You have no longer anything that you can call your own; you feel everything as coming from the Divine, and you have to offer it back to its source. When you can realise that, then even the smallest thing to which you do not usually pay much attention or care, ceases to be trivial and insignificant; it becomes full of meaning and it opens up a vast horizon beyond.

This is what you have to do to carry out your general offering in detailed offerings. Live constantly in the presence of the Divine; live in the feeling that it is this presence which moves you and is doing everything you do. Offer all your movements to it, not only every mental action, every thought and feeling but even the most ordinary and external actions such as eating; when you

eat, you must feel that it is the Divine who is eating through you. When you can thus gather all your movements into the One Life, then you have in you unity instead of division. No longer is one part of your nature given to the Divine, while the rest remains in its ordinary ways, engrossed in ordinary things; your entire life is taken up, an integral transformation is gradually realised in you.

In the integral Yoga, the integral life down even to the smallest detail has to be transformed, to be divinised. There is nothing here that is insignificant, nothing that is indifferent. You cannot say, "When I am meditating, reading philosophy or listening to these conversations I will be in this condition of an opening towards the Light and call for it, but when I go out to walk or see friends I can allow myself to forget all about it." To persist in this attitude means that you will remain untransformed and never have the true union; always you will be divided; you will have at best only glimpses of this greater life. For although certain experiences and realisations may come to you in meditation or in your inner consciousness, your body and your outer life will remain unchanged. An inner illumination that does not take any note of the body and the outer life, is of no great use, for it leaves the world as it is. This is what has continually happened till now. Even those who had a very great and powerful realisation withdrew from the world to live undisturbed in inner quiet and peace; the world was left to its ways, and misery and stupidity, Death and Ignorance continued, unaffected, their reign on this material plane of existence. For those who thus withdraw, it may be pleasant to escape from this turmoil, to run away from the difficulty and to find for themselves a happy condition elsewhere; but they leave the world and life uncorrected and untransformed; and their own outer consciousness too they leave unchanged and their bodies as unregenerate as ever. Coming back to the physical world, they are likely to be worse there than even ordinary people; for they have lost the mastery over material things, and their dealing with

physical life is likely to be slovenly and helpless in its movements and at the mercy of every passing force.

An ideal of this kind may be good for those who want it, but it is not our Yoga. For we want the divine conquest of this world, the conquest of all its movements and the realisation of the Divine here. But if we want the Divine to reign here we must give all we have and are and do here to the Divine. It will not do to think that anything is unimportant or that the external life and its necessities are no part of the Divine Life. If we do, we shall remain where we have always been and there will be no conquest of the external world; nothing abiding there will have been done.

Do people who have advanced very far come back to this plane?

Yes; if there is a will in them to change this plane, then the more advanced they are, the surer they are to come back. And as for those who have the will of running away, even they, when they go over to the other side, may find that the flight was not of much use after all.

Do many remember that they have passed over and are back again?

When you reach a certain state of consciousness, you remember. It is not so difficult to touch this state partially for a short time; in deep meditation, in a dream or a vision one may have the feeling or the impression that he has lived this life before, had this realisation, known these truths. But this is not a full realisation; to come to that, one must have attained to a permanent consciousness within us which is everlasting and holds together all our existences in past or present or future time.

When we are concentrated in mental movements or

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intellectual pursuits, why do we sometimes forget or lose touch with the Divine?

You lose it because your consciousness is still divided. The Divine has not settled into your mind; you are not wholly consecrated to the Divine Life. Otherwise you could concentrate to any extent upon such things and still you would have the sense of being helped and supported by the Divine.

In all pursuits, intellectual or active, your one motto should be, "Remember and Offer." Let whatever you do be done as an offering to the Divine. And this too will be an excellent discipline for you; it will prevent you from doing many foolish and useless things.

Often in the beginning of the action this can be done; but as one gets engrossed in the work, one forgets. How is one to remember?

The condition to be aimed at, the real achievement of Yoga, the final perfection and attainment, for which all else is only a preparation, is a consciousness in which it is impossible to do anything without the Divine; for then, if you are without the Divine, the very source of your action disappears; knowledge, power, all are gone. But so long as you feel that the powers you use are your own, you will not miss the Divine support.

In the beginning of the Yoga you are apt to forget the Divine very often. But by constant aspiration you increase your remembrance and you diminish the forgetfulness. But this should not be done as a severe discipline or a duty; it must be a movement of love and joy. Then very soon a stage will come when, if you do not feel the presence of the Divine at every moment and whatever you are doing, you feel at once lonely and sad and miserable.

Whenever you find that you can do something without feeling the presence of the Divine and yet be perfectly comfortable,

you must understand that you are not consecrated in that part of your being. That is the way of the ordinary humanity which does not feel any need of the Divine. But for a seeker of the Divine Life it is very different. And when you have entirely realised unity with the Divine, then, if the Divine were only for a second to withdraw from you, you would simply drop dead; for the Divine is now the Life of your life, your whole existence, your single and complete support. If the Divine is not there, nothing is left.

In the initial stages of Yoga, is it well for the Sadhak to read ordinary books?

You can read sacred books and yet be far away from the Divine; and you can read the most stupid productions and be in touch with the Divine. It is not possible to get an idea of what the transformed consciousness and its movements are until you have had a taste of the transformation. There is a way of consciousness in union with the Divine in which you can enjoy all you read, as you can all you observe, even the most indifferent books or the most uninteresting things. You can hear poor music, even music from which one would like to run away, and yet you can, not for its outward self but because of what is behind, enjoy it. You do not lose the distinction between good music and bad music, but you pass through either into that which it expresses. For there is nothing in the world which has not its ultimate truth and support in the Divine. And if you are not stopped by the appearance, physical or moral or aesthetic, but get behind and are in touch with the Spirit, the Divine Soul in things, you can reach beauty and delight even through what affects the ordinary sense only as something poor, painful or discordant.

Can it be said in justification of one's past that whatever has happened in one's life had to happen?

Obviously, what has happened had to happen; it would not have been, if it had not been intended. Even the mistakes that we have committed and the adversities that fell upon us had to be, because there was some necessity in them, some utility for our lives. But in truth these things cannot be explained mentally and should not be. For all that happened was necessary, not for any mental reason, but to lead us to something beyond what the mind imagines. But is there any need to explain after all? The whole universe explains everything at every moment and a particular thing happens because the whole universe is what it is. But this does not mean that we are bound over to a blind acquiescence in Nature's inexorable law. You can accept the past as a settled fact and perceive the necessity in it, and still you can use the experience it gave you to build up the power consciously to guide and shape your present and your future.

Is the time also of an occurrence arranged in the Divine Plan of things?

All depends upon the plane from which one sees and speaks. There is a plane of divine consciousness in which all is known absolutely, and the whole plan of things foreseen and predetermined. That way of seeing lives in the highest reaches of the Supramental; it is the Supreme's own vision. But when we do not possess that consciousness, it is useless to speak in terms that hold good only in that region and are not our present effective way of seeing things. For at a lower level of consciousness nothing is realised or fixed beforehand; all is in the process of making. Here there are no settled facts, there is only the play of possibilities; out of the clash of possibilities is realised the thing that has to happen. On this plane we can choose and select; we can refuse one possibility and accept another; we can follow one path, turn away from another. And that we can do, even though what is actually happening may have been foreseen and predetermined in a higher plane.

The Supreme Consciousness knows everything beforehand, because everything is realised there in her eternity. But for the sake of her play and in order to carry out actually on the physical plane what is foreordained in her own supreme self, she moves here upon earth as if she did not know the whole story; she works as if it was a new and untried thread that she was weaving. It is this apparent forgetfulness of her own foreknowledge in the higher consciousness that gives to the individual in the active life of the world his sense of freedom and independence and initiative. These things in him are her pragmatic tools or devices, and it is through this machinery that the movements and issues planned and foreseen elsewhere are realised here.

It may help you to understand if you take the example of an actor. An actor knows the whole part he has to play; he has in his mind the exact sequence of what is to happen on the stage. But when he is on the stage, he has to appear as if he did not know anything; he has to feel and act as if he were experiencing all these things for the first time, as if it was an entirely new world with all its chance events and surprises that was unrolling before his eyes.

Is there then no real freedom? Is everything absolutely determined, even your freedom, and is fatalism the highest secret?

Freedom and fatality, liberty and determinism are truths that obtain on different levels of consciousness. It is ignorance that makes the mind put the two on the same level and pit one against the other. Consciousness is not a single uniform reality, it is complex; it is not something like a flat plain, it is multidimensional. On the highest height is the Supreme and in the lowest depth is matter; and there is an infinite gradation of levels of consciousness between this lowest depth and the highest height.

In the plane of matter and on the level of the ordinary consciousness you are bound hand and foot. A slave to the

mechanism of Nature, you are tied to the chain of Karma, and there, in that chain, whatever happens is rigorously the consequence of what has been done before. There is an illusion of independent movement, but in fact you repeat what all others do, you echo Nature's world-movements, you revolve helplessly on the crushing wheel of her cosmic machine.

But it need not be so. You can shift your place if you will; instead of being below, crushed in the machinery or moved like a puppet, you can rise and look from above and by changing your consciousness you can even get hold of some handle to move apparently inevitable circumstances and change fixed conditions. Once you draw yourself up out of the whirlpool and stand high above, you see you are free. Free from all compulsions, not only you are no longer a passive instrument, but you become an active agent. You are not only not bound by the consequences of your action, but you can even change the consequences. Once you see the play of forces, once you raise yourself to a plane of consciousness where lie the origins of forces and identify yourself with these dynamic sources, you belong no longer to what is moved but to that which moves.

This precisely is the aim of Yoga,—to get out of the cycle of Karma into a divine movement. By Yoga you leave the mechanical round of Nature in which you are an ignorant slave, a helpless and miserable tool, and rise into another plane where you become a conscious participant and a dynamic agent in the working out of a Higher Destiny. This movement of the consciousness follows a double line. First of all there is an ascension; you raise yourself out of the level of material consciousness into superior ranges. But this ascension of the lower into the higher calls a descent of the higher into the lower. When you rise above the earth, you bring down too upon earth something of the above,—some light, some power that transforms or tends to transform its old nature. And then these things that were distinct, disconnected and disparate from each other—the higher in you and the lower, the inner and the outer strata of your

being and consciousness — meet and are slowly joined together and gradually they fuse into one truth, one harmony.

It is in this way that what are called miracles happen. The world is made up of innumerable planes of consciousness and each has its own distinct laws; the laws of one plane do not hold good for another. A miracle is nothing but a sudden descent, a bursting forth of another consciousness and its powers — most often it is the powers of the vital — into this plane of matter. There is a precipitation, upon the material mechanism, of the mechanism of a higher plane. It is as though a lightning flash tore through the cloud of our ordinary consciousness and poured into it other forces, other movements and sequences. The result we call a miracle, because we see a sudden alteration, an abrupt interference with the natural laws of our own ordinary range, but the reason and order of it we do not know or see, because the source of the miracle lies in another plane. Such incursions of the worlds beyond into our world of matter are not very uncommon, they are even a constant phenomenon, and if we have eyes and know how to observe we can see miracles in abundance. Especially must they be constant among those who are endeavouring to bring down the higher reaches into the earth-consciousness below.

Has creation a definite aim? Is there something like a final end to which it is moving?

No, the universe is a movement that is eternally unrolling itself. There is nothing which you can fix upon as *the end* and one aim. But for the sake of action we have to section the movement, which is itself unending, and to say that this or that is the goal, for in action we need something upon which we can fix our aim. In a picture you need a definite scheme of composition and colour; you have to set a limit, to put the whole thing within a fixed framework; but the limit is illusory, the frame is a mere convention. There is a constant continuation of the picture that

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stretches beyond any particular frame, and each continuation can be drawn in the same conditions in an unending series of frames. Our aim is this or that, we say, but we know that it is only the beginning of another aim beyond it, and that in its turn leads to yet another; the series develop always and never stop.

5 May 1929

What is the proper function of the intellect? Is it a help or a hindrance to Sadhana?

Whether the intellect is a help or a hindrance depends upon the person and upon the way in which it is used. There is a true movement of the intellect and there is a wrong movement; one helps, the other hinders. The intellect that believes too much in its own importance and wants satisfaction for its own sake, is an obstacle to the higher realisation.

But this is true not in any special sense or for the intellect alone, but generally and of other faculties as well. For example, people do not regard an all-engrossing satisfaction of the vital desires or the animal appetites as a virtue; the moral sense is accepted as a mentor to tell one the bounds that one may not transgress. It is only in his intellectual activities that man thinks he can do without any such mentor or censor!

Any part of the being that keeps to its proper place and plays its appointed role is helpful; but directly it steps beyond its sphere, it becomes twisted and perverted and therefore false. A power has the right movement when it is set into activity for the divine's purpose; it has the wrong movement when it is set into activity for its own satisfaction.

The intellect, in its true nature, is an instrument of expression and action. It is something like an intermediary between the true knowledge, whose seat is in the higher regions above the mind, and realisation here below. The intellect or, generally speaking, the mind gives the form; the vital puts in the dynamism and life-power; the material comes in last and embodies.

How is one to meet adverse forces—forces that are invisible and yet quite living and tangible?

A great deal depends upon the stage of development of your consciousness. At the beginning, if you have no special occult knowledge and power, the best you can do is to keep as quiet and peaceful as possible. If the attack takes the form of adverse suggestions try quietly to push them away, as you would some material object. The quieter you are, the stronger you become. The firm basis of all spiritual power is equanimity. You must not allow anything to disturb your poise: you can then resist every kind of attack. If, besides, you possess sufficient discernment and can see and catch the evil suggestions as they come to you, it becomes all the more easy for you to push them away; but sometimes they come unnoticed, and then it is more difficult to fight them. When that happens, you must sit quiet and call down peace and a deep inner quietness. Hold yourself firm and call with confidence and faith: if your aspiration is pure and steady, you are sure to receive help.

Attacks from adverse forces are inevitable: you have to take them as tests on your way and go courageously through the ordeal. The struggle may be hard, but when you come out of it, you have gained something, you have advanced a step. There is even a necessity for the existence of the hostile forces. They make your determination stronger, your aspiration clearer.

It is true, however, that they exist because you gave them reason to exist. So long as there is something in you which answers to them, their intervention is perfectly legitimate. If nothing in you responded, if they had no hold upon any part of your nature, they would retire and leave you. In any case, they need not stop or hamper your spiritual progress.

The only way to fail in your battle with the hostile forces is not to have a true confidence in the divine help. Sincerity in the aspiration always brings down the required succour. A quiet call, a conviction that in this ascension towards the realisation you are never walking all alone and a faith that whenever help is needed it is there, will lead you through, easily and securely.

Do these hostile forces generally come from outside or inside?

If you think or feel that they come from inside, you have possibly opened yourself to them and they have settled in you unnoticed. The true nature of things is one of harmony; but there is a distortion in certain worlds that brings in perversion and hostility. If you have a strong affinity for these worlds of distortion, you can become friends with the beings that are there and answer fully to them. That happens, but it is not a very happy condition. The consciousness is at once blinded and you cannot distinguish the true from the false, you cannot even tell what is a lie and what is not.

In any case, when an attack comes the wisest attitude is to consider that it comes from outside and to say, "This is not myself and I will have nothing to do with it." You have to deal in the same way with all lower impulses and desires and all doubts and questionings in the mind. If you identify yourself with them, the difficulty in fighting them becomes all the greater; for then you have the feeling that you are facing the never easy task of overcoming your own nature. But once you are able to say, "No, this is not myself, I will have nothing to do with it", it becomes much easier to disperse them.

Where can the line be drawn between the inside and the outside?

The line is very flexible; it can be as near to you and as far from you as you will. You may take everything upon yourself and feel it as a part and parcel of your real self; or you may throw it away as you would a bit of hair or nail without being touched at all.

There have been religions whose followers would not part even with a bit of hair or nail, fearing that they would lose thereby something of their personality. Those who are capable

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of extending the consciousness as wide as the world, become the world; but those who are shut up in their little bodies and limited feelings stop at those limits; their bodies and their petty feelings are to them their whole self.

Can mere faith create all, conquer all?

Yes, but it must be an integral faith and it must be absolute. And it must be of the right kind, not merely a force of mental thought or will, but something more and deeper. The will put forth by the mind sets up opposite reactions and creates a resistance. You must have heard something of the method of Coué in healing diseases. He knew some secret of this power and utilised it with considerable effect; but he called it imagination and his method gave the faith he called up too mental a form. Mental faith is not sufficient; it must be completed and enforced by a vital and even a physical faith, a faith of the body. If you can create in yourself an integral force of this kind in all your being, then nothing can resist it; but you must reach down to the most subconscious, you must fix the faith in the very cells of the body. There is, for instance, now abroad the beginning of a knowledge among the scientists that death is not a necessity. But the whole of humanity believes firmly in death; it is, one might say, a general human suggestion based on a long unchanging experience. If this belief could be cast out first from the conscious mind, then from the vital nature and the subconscious physical layers, death would no longer be inevitable.

But it is not only in the mind of man that this idea of death exists. The animal creation knew it before him.

Death as a fact has been attached to all life upon earth; but man understands it in a different sense from the meaning Nature originally put into it. In man and in the animals that are nearest to his level, the necessity of death has taken a special form

and significance to their consciousness; but the subconscious knowledge in this lower Nature which supports it is a feeling of the necessity of renewal and change and transformation.

It was the conditions of matter upon earth that made death indispensable. The whole sense of the evolution of matter has been a growth from a first state of unconsciousness to an increasing consciousness. And in this process of growth dissolution of forms became an inevitable necessity, as things actually took place. For a fixed form was needed in order that the organised individual consciousness might have a stable support. And yet it is the fixity of the form that made death inevitable. Matter had to assume forms; individualisation and the concrete embodiment of life-forces or consciousness-forces were impossible without it and without these there would have been lacking the first conditions of organised existence on the plane of matter. But a definite and concrete formation contracts the tendency to become at once rigid and hard and petrified. The individual form persisted as a too binding mould; it cannot follow the movements of the forces; it cannot change in harmony with the progressive change in the universal dynamism; it cannot meet continually Nature's demand or keep pace with her; it gets out of the current. At a certain point of this growing disparity and disharmony between the form and the force that presses upon it, a complete dissolution of the form is unavoidable. A new form must be created; a new harmony and parity made possible. This is the true significance of death and this is its use in Nature. But if the form can become more quick and pliant and the cells of the body can be awakened to change with the changing consciousness, there would be no need of a drastic dissolution, death would be no longer inevitable.

Someone has said that disasters and catastrophes in Nature, earthquake and deluge and the sinking of continents, are the consequence of a discordant and sinful humanity and with the progress and development of the

human race a corresponding change will come about in physical Nature. How far is this true?

Perhaps the truth is rather that it is one and the same movement of consciousness that expresses itself in a Nature ridden with calamities and catastrophes and in a disharmonious humanity. The two things are not cause and effect, but stand on the same level. Above them there is a consciousness which is seeking for manifestation and embodiment upon earth, and in its descent towards matter it meets everywhere the same resistance, in man and in physical Nature. All the disorder and disharmony that we see upon earth is the result of this resistance. Calamity and catastrophe, conflict and violence, obscurity and ignorance — all ills come from the same source. Man is not the cause of external Nature, nor external Nature the cause of man, but both depend on the same one thing that is behind them and greater, and both are part of a perpetual and progressive movement of the material world to express it.

Now if there is awakened somewhere upon earth a receptivity and openness sufficient to bring down in its purity something of the Divine Consciousness, this descent and manifestation in matter can change not only the inner life, but the material conditions also, the physical expression in man and Nature. This descent does not depend for its possibility upon the condition of humanity as a whole. If we had to wait for the mass of humanity to reach a state of harmony, unity and aspiration, strong enough to bring down the Light and change the material conditions and the movement of Nature, there would be little hope. But there is a possibility that an individual or a small group or limited number may achieve the descent. It is not quantity or extension that matters. One drop of the Divine Consciousness entering into the consciousness of the earth could change everything here.

It is the mystery of the contact and fusion of the higher and the lower planes of consciousness that is the great secret, the hidden key. Always it has a transforming force; only here it

would be on a larger scale and reach a higher degree. If there is someone on earth who is capable of coming consciously into contact with a plane that has not yet been manifested here and if by rising into it in his consciousness he can make that plane and the material meet and harmonise, then the great decisive movement of Nature's yet unrealised transformation can take place. A new power will descend and change the conditions of life upon earth.

Even as it is, every time that a great soul has come and revealed some light of truth or brought down upon earth a new force, the conditions on earth have changed, though not exactly in the way that had been hoped and expected. For example, one who has attained to a certain plane of knowledge and consciousness and spiritual experience, has come and said, "I am bringing to you liberation" or "I am bringing to you peace." Those who were around him believed, perhaps, that he was bringing it in a material way; when they found it was not as they thought, they could not understand what he had done. What he brought was a change in the consciousness, a peace of a kind unknown till then or a capacity for liberation that was not there before. But these movements belonged to the inner life and brought no tangible external change in the world. Perhaps the intention to change the world externally was not there; perhaps there was not the necessary knowledge; but still something was effected by these pioneers.

In spite of all adverse appearances, it may well be that earth has been preparing for a certain realisation by steps and stages. There has been a change in civilisation and a change in nature. If it is not apparent, it is because we see from an external point of view and because matter and its difficulties have never been seriously or thoroughly dealt with up till now. Still internally there has been a progress; in the inner consciousness there have been descents of the Light. But as to any realisation in matter, it is difficult to say anything, because we do not exactly know what might have happened there.

There have been in the long past great and beautiful civilisations, perhaps as advanced materially as ours. Looked at from a certain standpoint the most modern might seem to be only a repetition of the most ancient cultures, and yet one cannot say that there has been no progress anywhere. An inner progress at least has been achieved and a greater readiness to respond to the higher consciousness has been born into the material parts. It has been necessary to do over and over again the same things, because what was attempted was never sufficiently done; but each time it has come nearer to being adequately done. When we practise an exercise over and over again we seem to be only repeating the same thing always, but still the accumulative result is some effective change.

The mistake is to look at these things through the dimensions of the human consciousness, for so seen these deep and vast movements seem inexplicable. It is dangerous to try to explain or understand them with the limited mental intelligence. That is the reason why philosophy has always failed to unveil the secret of things; it is because it has tried to fit the universe into the size of the human mind.

How many of us remember former lives?

In all, in some part of our consciousness, there is a remembrance. But this is a dangerous subject, because the human mind is too fond of romance. As soon as it comes to know something of this truth of rebirth, it wants to build up beautiful stories around it. Many people would tell you wonderful tales of how the world was built and how it will proceed in the future, how and where you were born in the past and what you will be hereafter, the lives you have lived and the lives you will still live. All this has nothing to do with spiritual life. The true remembrance of past births may indeed be part of an integral knowledge; but it cannot be got by that way of imaginative fancies. If it is on one side an objective knowledge, on the other it depends largely

on personal and subjective experience, and here there is much chance of invention, distortion or false building. To reach the truth of these things, your experiencing consciousness must be pure and limpid, free from any mental interference or any vital interference, liberated from your personal notions and feelings and from your mind's habit of interpreting or explaining in its own way. An experience of past lives may be true, but between what you have seen and your mind's explanation or construction about it there is bound to be always a great gulf. It is only when you can rise above human feelings and get back from your mind, that you can reach the truth.

12 May 1929

*There are some human beings who are like vampires.
What are they and why are they like that?*

They are not human; there is only a human form or appearance. They are incarnations of beings from the world that is just next to the physical, beings who live on the plane which we call the vital world. It is a world of all the desires and impulses and passions and of movements of violence and greed and cunning and every kind of ignorance; but all the dynamisms too are there, all the life-energies and all the powers. The beings of this world have by their nature a strange grip over the material world and can exercise upon it a sinister influence. Some of them are formed out of the remains of the human being that persist after death in the vital atmosphere near to the earth-plane. His desires and hungers still float there and remain in form even after the dissolution of the body; often they are moved to go on manifesting and satisfying themselves and the birth of these creatures of the vital world is the consequence. But these are minor beings and, if they can be very troublesome, it is yet not impossible to deal with them. There are others, far more dangerous, who have never been in human form; never were they born into a human body upon earth, for most often they refuse to accept this way of birth because it is slavery to matter and they prefer to remain in their own world, powerful and mischievous, and to control earthly beings from there. For, if they do not want to be born on earth, they do want to be in contact with the physical nature, but without being bound by it. Their method is to try first to cast their influence upon a man; then they enter slowly into his atmosphere and in the end may get complete possession of him, driving out entirely the real human soul and personality. These creatures, when in possession of an

earthly body, may have the human appearance but they have not a human nature. Their habit is to draw upon the life-force of human beings; they attack and capture vital power wherever they can and feed upon it. If they come into your atmosphere, you suddenly feel depressed and exhausted; if you are near them for some time you fall sick; if you live with one of them, it may kill you.

But how is one to get such creatures out of one's environment when they are once there?

The vital power incarnated in these beings is of a very material kind and it is effective only within a short distance. Ordinarily, if you do not live in the same house or if you are not in the same company with them, you do not come within their influence. But if you open some channel of connection or communication, through letters, for example, then you make possible an interchange of forces and are liable to be influenced by them even from a far distance. The wisest way with these beings is to cut off all connection and have nothing to do with them—unless indeed you have great occult knowledge and power and have learned how to cover and protect yourself—but even then it is always a dangerous thing to move about with them. To hope to transform them, as some people do, is a vain illusion; for they do not want to be transformed. They have no intention of allowing any transformation and all effort in that direction is useless.

These beings, when in the human body, are not often conscious of what they really are. Sometimes they have a vague feeling that they are not quite human in the ordinary way. But still there are cases where they are conscious and very conscious; not only do they know that they do not belong to humanity but they know what they are, act in that knowledge and deliberately pursue their ends. The beings of the vital world are powerful by their very nature; when to their power they add knowledge, they become doubly dangerous. There is nothing to be done

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with these creatures; you should avoid having any dealings with them unless you have the power to crush and destroy them. If you are forced into contact with them, beware of the spell they can cast. These vital beings, when they manifest on the physical plane, have always a great hypnotic power; for the centre of their consciousness is in the vital world and not in the material and they are not veiled and dwarfed by the material consciousness as human beings are.

Is it not a fact that these creatures are drawn by some peculiar fascination towards the spiritual life?

Yes, because they feel they do not belong to this earth but come from somewhere else; and they feel too that they have powers they have half lost and they are eager to win them back. So whenever they meet anyone who can give them some knowledge of the invisible world, they rush to him. But they mistake the vital for the spiritual world and in their seeking follow vital and not spiritual ends. Or perhaps they deliberately seek to corrupt spirituality and build up an imitation of it in the mould of their own nature. Even then it is a kind of homage they pay, or a sort of amends they make, in their own way, to the spiritual life. And there is too some kind of attraction that compels them; they have revolted against the Divine rule, but in spite of their revolt or perhaps because of it, they feel somehow bound and are powerfully attracted by its presence.

This is how it happens that you see them sometimes used as instruments to bring into connection with each other those who are to realise the spiritual life upon earth. They do not purposely serve this use, but are compelled to it. It is a kind of compensation that they pay. For they feel the pressure of the descending Light, they sense that the time has come or is soon coming when they must choose between conversion or dissolution, choose either to surrender to the Divine Will and take their part in the Great Plan or to sink into unconsciousness and cease

to be. The contact with a seeker of Truth gives such a being his chance to change. All depends upon how he utilises his chance. Taken rightly, it may open his way to liberation from falsehood and obscurity and misery, which is the stuff out of which these vital creatures are made, and bring him to Regeneration and to Life.

Have not these beings a great control over money power?

Yes. The power of money is at present under the influence or in the hands of the forces and beings of the vital world. It is because of this influence that you never see money going in any considerable amount to the cause of Truth. Always it goes astray, because it is in the clutch of the hostile forces and is one of the principal means by which they keep their grip upon the earth. The hold of the hostile forces upon money-power is powerfully, completely and thoroughly organised and to extract anything out of this compact organisation is a most difficult task. Each time that you try to draw a little of this money away from its present custodians, you have to undertake a fierce battle.

And yet one signal victory somewhere over the adverse forces that have the hold upon money would make victory possible simultaneously and automatically at all other points also. If in one place they yielded, all who now feel that they cannot give money to the cause of Truth would suddenly experience a great and intense desire to give. It is not that those rich men who are more or less toys and instruments in the hands of the vital forces are averse to spend; their avarice is awake only when the vital desires and impulses are not touched. For when it is to gratify some desire that they call their own, they spend readily; but when they are called to share their ease and the benefits of their wealth with others, then they find it hard to part with their money. The vital power controlling money is like a guardian who keeps his wealth in a big safe always tightly closed. Each time the people who are in its grasp are asked to part with their

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money, they put all sorts of careful questions before they will consent to open their purses even a very little way; but if a vital impulse arises in them with its demand, the guardian is happy to open wide the coffer and money flows out freely. Commonly, the vital desires he obeys are connected with the sex impulses, but very often too he yields to the desire for fame and consideration, the desire for food or any other desire that is on the same vital level; whatever does not belong to this category is closely questioned and scrutinised, grudgingly admitted and most often refused help in the end. In those who are slaves of vital beings, the desire for truth and light and spiritual achievement, even if it at all touches them, cannot balance the desire for money. To win money from their hands for the Divine means to fight the devil out of them; you have first to conquer or convert the vital being whom they serve, and it is not an easy task. Men who are under the sway of vital creatures can change from a life of ease, cast away enjoyment and become intensely ascetic and yet remain just as wicked as ever and even by the change turn worse than before.

Why is one person allowed to exercise his will over another?

It is not that one is allowed to exercise his will over another, but that there is a universal will and those who are more or less capable of manifesting this force seem to have a stronger will-power. It is like vital force or light or electricity or any other power of nature; some are good channels or instruments for manifesting the power, others are poor channels. There is no question of morality here. It is a fact of nature, a law of the great play.

Can one meet the beings of the vital in their own domain?

Vital beings move in a supraphysical world where human beings,

if they chance to enter, feel at sea, helpless and defenceless. The human being is at home and safe in the material body; the body is his protection. There are some who are full of contempt for their bodies and think that things will be much better and easier after death without them. But in fact the body is your fortress and your shelter. While you are lodged in it the forces of the hostile world find a difficulty in getting any direct hold upon you. What are nightmares? These are your sorties into the vital world. And what is the first thing you try to do when you are in the grip of a nightmare? You rush back into your body and shake yourself into your normal physical consciousness. But in the world of the vital forces you are a stranger; it is an uncharted sea in which you have neither compass nor rudder. You do not know how to go, you do not know where to go and at each step you do just the opposite of what should be done. Directly you enter any realm of this world, its beings gather round you and want to encompass and get out of you all you have, to draw what they can and make it a food and a prey. If you have no strong light and force radiating from within you, you move there without your body as if you had no coat to protect you against a chill and bleak atmosphere, no house to shield you, even no skin covering you, your nerves exposed and bare. There are men who say, "How unhappy I am in this body", and think of death as an escape! But after death you have the same vital surroundings and are in danger from the same forces that are the cause of your misery in this life. The dissolution of the body forces you out into the open spaces of the vital world. And you have no longer a defence; there is not the physical body any longer to rush back to for safety.

It is here upon earth, in the body itself, that you must acquire a complete knowledge and learn to use a full and complete power. Only when you have done that will you be free to move about with entire security in all the worlds. Only when you are incapable of having the slightest fear, when you remain unmoved, for example, in the midst of the worst nightmare,

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can you say, "Now I am ready to go into the vital world." But this means the acquisition of a power and a knowledge that can come only when you are a perfect master of the impulses and desires of the vital nature. You must be absolutely free from everything that can bring in the beings of the darkness or allow them to rule over you; if you are not free, beware!

No attachments, no desires, no impulses, no preferences; perfect equanimity, unchanging peace and absolute faith in the Divine protection: with that you are safe, without it you are in peril. And as long as you are not safe, it is better to do like little chickens that take shelter under the mother's wings.

How does the physical body act as a protection?

The physical body acts as a protection by its grossness, by the very thing we charge against it. It is dull and insensitive, thick, rigid and hard; it is like a fortress with strong dense walls. The vital world is fluidic, there things move and mix and interpenetrate freely; it is like the waves of the sea that ceaselessly flow into each other and change and mingle. Against this fluidity of the vital world you are defenceless unless you can oppose to it a very powerful light and force from inside; otherwise it penetrates you and there is nothing to hamper its invading influence. But the body intervenes, cuts you off from the vital world and is a dam against the flood of its forces.

But is there any individuality in the forms of the vital world, if it is so fluid?

Individuality there is; only its forms are not so fixed and hard as the forms of embodied beings. Individuality does not mean an unplastic rigidity. A stone has a very rigid form, perhaps the most rigid we know, but there is very little individuality in it. Take ten or twenty stones together and you will have to be very careful if you want to discern between them. But the beings of

the vital world can be recognised at the very first sight one from another; you distinguish them by something in the way in which the form is built, by the atmosphere which it carries with it, by the manner in which each moves and speaks and acts. As human beings change their expression according as they are happy or angry; these beings also undergo change in the stress of their moods, but the alteration is more intense in the vital world. Not only the mere expression but the very forms of the features change.

19 May 1929

*What is the nature of the power that thought possesses?
How and to what extent am I the creator of my world?*

According to the Buddhist teachings, every human being lives and moves in a world of his own, quite independent of the world in which another lives; it is only when a certain harmony is created between these different worlds that they interpenetrate and men can meet and understand one another. This is true of the mind; for everybody moves in a mental world of his own, created by his own thoughts. And it is so true that always, when something has been said, each understands it in a different way; for what he catches is not the thing that has been spoken but something he has in his own head. But it is a truth that belongs to the movement of the mental plane and holds good only there.

For the mind is an instrument of action and formation and not an instrument of knowledge; at each moment it is creating forms. Thoughts are forms and have an individual life, independent of their author: sent out from him into the world, they move in it towards the realisation of their own purpose of existence. When you think of anyone, your thought takes a form and goes out to find him; and, if your thinking is associated with some will that is behind it, the thought-form that has gone out from you makes an attempt to realise itself. Let us say, for instance, that you have a keen desire for a certain person to come and that, along with this vital impulse of desire, a strong imagination accompanies the mental form you have made; you imagine, "If he came, it would be like this or it would be like that." After a time you drop the idea altogether, and you do not know that even after you have forgotten it, your thought continues to exist. For it does still exist and is in action, independent of you, and it would need a great power to bring it back from its work. It is working

in the atmosphere of the person touched by it and creates in him the desire to come. And if there is a sufficient power of will in your thought-form, if it is a well-built formation, it will arrive at its own realisation. But between the formation and the realisation there is a certain lapse of time, and if in this interval your mind has been occupied with quite other things, then when there happens this fulfilment of your forgotten thought, you may not even remember that you once harboured it; you do not know that you were the instigator of its action and the cause of what has come about. And it happens very often too that when the result does come, you have ceased to desire or care for it. There are some men who have a very strong formative power of this kind and always they see their formations realised; but because they have not a well-disciplined mental and vital being, they want now one thing and now another and these different or opposite formations and their results collide and clash with one another. And these people wonder how it is that they are living in so great a confusion and disharmony! They do not realise that it is their own thoughts and desires that have built the circumstances around them which seem to them so incoherent and contradictory and make their life almost unbearable.

This is a knowledge of great importance, if it is given along with the secret of its right use. Self-discipline and self-mastery are the secret; the secret is to find in oneself the source of the Truth and that constant government of the Divine Will which can alone give to each formation its full power and its integral and harmonious realisation. Men generally form thoughts without knowing how these formations move and act. Formed in this state of confusion and ignorance, they clash with one another and create an impression of strain and effort and fatigue and the feeling that you are cutting your way through a multitude of obstacles. These conditions of ignorance and incoherence set in motion a confused conflict in which the strongest and the most enduring forms will have victory over the others.

There is one thing certain about the mind and its workings;

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it is that you can understand only what you already know in your own inner self. What strikes you in a book is what you have already experienced deep within you. Men find a book or a teaching very wonderful and often you hear them say, "That is exactly what I myself feel and know, but I could not bring it out or express it as well as it is expressed here." When men come across a book of true knowledge, each finds himself there, and at every new reading he discovers things that he did not see in it at first; it opens to him each time a new field of knowledge that had till then escaped him in it. But that is because it reaches layers of knowledge that were waiting for expression in the subconscious in him; the expression has now been given by somebody else and much better than he could himself have done it. But, once expressed, he immediately recognises it and feels that it is the truth. The knowledge that seems to come to you from outside is only an occasion for bringing out the knowledge that is within you.

The experience of misrepresentation of something we have said is a very common one and it has a similar source. We say something that is quite clear, but the way in which it is understood is stupefying! Each sees in it something else than what was intended or even puts into it something that is quite the contrary of its sense. If you want to understand truly and avoid this kind of error, you must go behind the sound and movement of the words and learn to listen in silence. If you listen in silence, you will hear rightly and understand rightly; but so long as there is something moving about and making a noise in your head, you will understand only what is moving in your head and not what is told you.

Why is one pursued by a host of adverse conditions, when one first becomes acquainted with Yoga? Someone has said that when you open the door to Yoga, you are confronted by a multitude of obstacles. Is this true?

It is not an absolute rule; and much depends upon the person.

Adverse conditions come to many as a test for the weak points in their nature. The indispensable basis for Yoga, which must be well established before you can walk freely on the path, is equanimity. Naturally, from that point of view, all disturbances are tests which you have to pass. But they are necessary too in order to break down the limits which your mental constructions have built around you and which prevent your opening to the Light and the Truth. The whole mental world in which you live is limited, even though you may not know or feel its limitations, and something must come and break down this building in which your mind has shut itself and liberate it. For instance, you have some fixed rules, ideas or principles to which you attribute an absolute importance; most often it is an adherence to certain moral principles or precepts, such as the commandment "Honour thy father and mother" or "Thou shalt not kill" and the rest. Each man has some fad or one preferred shibboleth or another, each thinks that he is free from this or that prejudice from which others suffer and is willing to regard such notions as quite false; but he imagines that his is not like theirs, it is for him the truth, the real truth. An attachment to a rule of the mind is an indication of a blindness still hiding somewhere. Take, for example, the very universal superstition, prevalent all over the world, that asceticism and spirituality are one and the same thing. If you describe someone as a spiritual man or a spiritual woman, people at once think of one who does not eat or sits all day without moving, one who lives in a hut in great poverty, one who has given away all he had and keeps nothing for himself. This is the picture that immediately arises in the minds of ninety-nine people out of a hundred, when you speak of a spiritual man; the one proof of spirituality for them is poverty and abstinence from everything that is pleasant or comfortable. This is a mental construction which must be thrown down if you are to be free to see and follow the spiritual truth. For you come to the spiritual life with a sincere aspiration and you want to meet the Divine and realise the Divine in your consciousness and in your life; and

then what happens is that you arrive in a place which is not at all a hut and meet a Divine One who is living a comfortable life, eating freely, surrounded by beautiful or luxurious things, not distributing what he has to the poor, but accepting and enjoying all that people give him. At once with your fixed mental rule you are bewildered and cry, "Why, what is this? I thought I was to meet a spiritual man!" This false conception has to be broken down and disappear. Once it is gone, you find something that is much higher than your narrow ascetic rule, a complete openness that leaves the being free. If you are to get something, you accept it, and if you are to give up the very same thing, you with an equal willingness leave it. Things come and you take them up; things go and you let them pass, with the same smile of equanimity in the taking or the leaving.

Or, again, you have adopted as your golden rule, "Thou shalt not kill", and have a horror for cruelty and slaughter. Do not be surprised if you are immediately put in the presence of killing, not only once but repeatedly, until you understand that your ideal is no more than a mental principle and that a seeker of the spiritual truth should not be bound and attached to a mental rule. And when once you are free from it, you will find perhaps that all these scenes which troubled you—and were indeed sent in order to trouble you and shake you out of your mental building—have, singularly enough, ceased altogether to happen in your presence.

When you come to the Divine, you must abandon all mental conceptions; but, instead of doing that, you throw your conceptions upon the Divine and want the Divine to obey them. The only true attitude for a Yogi is to be plastic and ready to obey the Divine Command whatever it may be; nothing must be indispensable to him, nothing a burden. Often the first impulse of those who want to live the spiritual life is to throw away all they have; but they do it because they want to be rid of a burden, not because they want to surrender to the Divine. Men who possess wealth and are surrounded by the things that give

them luxury and enjoyment turn to the Divine, and immediately their movement is to run away from these things,—or, as they say, “to escape from their bondage”. But it is a wrong movement; you must not think that the things you have belong to you,—they belong to the Divine. If the Divine wants you to enjoy anything, enjoy it; but be ready too to give it up the very next moment with a smile.

What are physical ailments? Are they attacks by the hostile forces from outside?

There are two factors that have to be considered in the matter. There is what comes from outside and there is what comes from your inner condition. Your inner condition becomes a cause of illness when there is a resistance or revolt in it or when there is some part in you that does not respond to the protection; or even there may be something there that almost willingly and wilfully calls in the adverse forces. It is enough if there is a slight movement of this kind in you; the hostile forces are at once upon you and their attack takes often the form of illness.

But are not illnesses sometimes the result of microbes and not a part of the movement of the Yoga?

Where does Yoga begin and where does it end? Is not the whole of your life Yoga? The possibilities of illness are always there in your body and around you; you carry within you or there swarm about you the microbes and germs of every disease. How is it that all of a sudden you succumb to an illness which you did not have for years? You will say it is due to a “depression of the vital force”. But from where does the depression come? It comes from some disharmony in the being, from a lack of receptivity to the divine forces. When you cut yourself off from the energy and light that sustain you, then there is this depression, there is created what medical science calls a “favourable ground” and

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something takes advantage of it. It is doubt, gloominess, lack of confidence, a selfish turning back upon yourself that cuts you off from the light and divine energy and gives the attack this advantage. It is this that is the cause of your falling ill and not microbes.

*But has it not been found that by improved sanitation
the health of the average citizen improves?*

Medicine and sanitation are indispensable in the ordinary life, but I am not speaking now of the average citizen, I am speaking of those who do Yoga. Still there is this disadvantage of sanitation that while you diminish the chances of catching an illness, you diminish also your natural power of resistance. Attendants in hospitals, who are always washing with disinfectants, find that their hands become more easily infected and are much more susceptible than the hands of others. There are people, on the contrary, who know nothing of hygiene and do the most insanitary things and yet remain immune. Their very ignorance helps them because it shuts them to the suggestions that come with medical knowledge. On the other hand, your belief in the sanitary precautions you take helps them to work. For your thought is, "Now I am disinfected and safe", and to that extent it makes you safe.

*But why then are we to take sanitary precautions such
as drinking only filtered water?*

Is any one of you pure and strong enough not to be affected by suggestions? If you drink unfiltered water and think, "Now I am drinking impure water", you have every chance of falling sick. And even though such suggestions may not enter through the conscious mind, the whole of your subconscious is there, almost helplessly open to take any kind of suggestion. In life it is the action of the subconscious that has the larger share and it acts

a hundred times more powerfully than the conscious parts. The normal human condition is a state filled with apprehensions and fears; if you observe your mind deeply for ten minutes, you will find that for nine out of ten it is full of fears — it carries in it fear about many things, big and small, near and far, seen and unseen, and though you do not usually take conscious notice of it, it is there all the same. To be free from all fear can come only by steady effort and discipline.

And even if by discipline and effort you have liberated your mind and your vital of apprehension and fear, it is more difficult to convince the body. But that too must be done. Once you enter the path of Yoga you must get rid of all fears — the fears of your mind, the fears of your vital, the fears of your body which are lodged in its very cells. One of the uses of the blows and knocks you receive on the path of Yoga is to rid you of all fear. The causes of your fears leap on you again and again, until you can stand before them free and indifferent, untouched and pure. One has a fear of the sea, another the fear of fire. The latter will find, it may be, that he has to face conflagration after conflagration till he is so trained that not a cell of his body quivers. That of which you have horror comes repeatedly till the horror is gone. One who seeks the transformation and is a follower of the Path, must become through and through fearless, not to be touched or shaken by anything whatever in any part of his nature.

26 May 1929

If our will is only an expression or echo of the universal will, where is the place of individual initiative? Is the individual only an instrument to register universal movements? Has he no power of creation or origination?

All depends upon the plane of consciousness from which you are looking at things and speaking of them or on the part of the being from which you act.

If you look from one plane of consciousness, the individual will appear to you as if he were not only an instrument and recorder, but a creator. But look from another and higher plane of consciousness with a wider view of things and you will see that this is only an appearance. In the workings of the universe whatever happens is the result of all that has happened before. How do you propose to separate one being from the integral play of the manifestation or one movement from the whole mass of movements? Where are you going to put the origin of a thing or its beginning? The whole play is a rigidly connected chain; one link merges imperceptibly into another. Nothing can be taken out of the chain and explained by itself as if it were its own source and beginning.

And what do you mean when you say that the individual creates or originates a movement? Does he do it all out of himself or out of nothing as it were? If a being were able to create in that way a thought or feeling or action or anything else, he would be the creator of the world. It is only if the individual goes back in his consciousness into the greater Consciousness which is the origin of things, that he can be an originator; he can initiate a movement only by identifying himself with the conscious Power which is the ultimate source of all movements.

There are many planes of consciousness; and the determinism of one plane is not the same as the determinism of another. So, when you speak of the creative individual, of what part of him are you thinking? For he is a very composite entity. Is it his psychic being of which you speak, or the mental or the vital or the physical? Between the unseen source of a movement and its manifestation, its external expression through the individual, there are all these steps and many others; and on each many modifications of it take place, many distortions and deformations. It is these changes that give the illusion of a new creation, a new origin, or a new starting-point for a movement. It is like when you put a stick into water; you see the stick, not in its true line, but bent into an angle. But it is an illusion, a distortion by the sight; it is not even a real angle.

Each individual consciousness, you can say, brings into the universal movement something that you can call from a certain point of view its own deformation or from another its own quality of the movement. These individual motions are part of the play of the Divine movement; they are not themselves origins, they are a transformation of things whose origin you must seek in the universe as a whole.

The sense of separation is spread everywhere, but it is an illusion; it is one of those false moods of which we must be cured if we want to enter into the true consciousness. The mind cuts the world into small bits: it says, here this stops, there that begins, and by this fragmentation it succeeds in distorting the universal movement. There is one great flow of a single, all-embracing, all-containing consciousness which manifests in an ever unrolling universe. This is the truth that stands behind everything here; but there is too this illusion which masks the truth from you, the illusion of these many movements which imagine that they are separate from one another, that they stand by themselves, in themselves and for themselves and that each is a thing in itself apart from the rest of the universe. They have the impression that their action and reaction upon one another is

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something external, as if they were like different worlds standing in each other's presence but with no point of contact except some external relations at a distance. Each sees himself as if he were a separate personality existing in its own right. This error of the separative sense has been allowed as part of the universal play, because it was necessary that the one consciousness should objectify itself and fix its forms. But because it has been allowed in the past, it does not follow that the illusion of separateness must always continue.

In the universal play there are some, the majority, who are ignorant instruments; they are actors who are moved about like puppets, knowing nothing. There are others who are conscious, and these act their part, knowing that it is a play. And there are some who have the full knowledge of the universal movement and are identified with it and with the one Divine Consciousness and yet consent to act as though they were something separate, a division of the whole. There are many intermediary stages between that ignorance and this full knowledge, many ways of participating in the play. There is a state of ignorance in which you do a thing and believe that it was you who decided it; there is a state of lesser ignorance in which you do it knowing that you are made to do it but you do not know how or why; and there is too a state of consciousness in which you are fully aware, —for you know what it is that acts through you, you know that you are an instrument, you know how and why your act is done, its process and its purpose. The state of ignorance in which you believe that you are the doer of your acts persists so long as it is necessary for your development; but as soon as you are capable of passing into a higher condition, you begin to see that you are an instrument of the one consciousness; you take a step upward and you rise to a higher conscious level.

Do hostile forces attack one on the mental plane as they do in the vital world?

It is difficult to give a precise answer without going into a number of explanations into which we cannot now enter.

Mind is one movement, but there are many varieties of the movement, many strata, that touch and even press into each other. At the same time the movement we call mind penetrates into other planes. In the mental world itself there are many levels. All these mind-planes and mind-forces are interdependent; but yet there is a difference in the quality of their movements and for facility of expression we have to separate them from one another. Thus we can speak of a higher mind, an intermediary mind, a physical and even a quite material mind; and there are many other distinctions that can be made.

Now, there are mental planes that stand high above the vital world and escape its influence; there are no hostile forces or beings there. But there are others—and they are many—that can be touched or penetrated by the vital forces. The mind-plane that belongs to the physical world, the physical mind, as we usually call it, is more material in its structure and movement than the true mind and it is very much under the sway of the vital world and the hostile forces. This physical mind is usually in a kind of alliance with the lower vital consciousness and its movements; when the lower vital manifests certain desires and impulses, this more material mind comes to its aid and justifies and supports them with specious explanations and reasonings and excuses. It is this layer of mind that is most open to suggestions from the vital world and most often invaded by its forces. But there is in us a higher mind which moves in the region of disinterested ideas and luminous speculations and is the originator of forms, and there is a mind of pure ideas that have not yet been put into form; these greater mind-levels are free from the vital movements and the adverse forces, because they stand far above them. There may be contradictory movements there; there may be movements and formations that come into clash with the Truth or are in conflict with one another; but there is no vital disturbance, nothing that can be called hostile. The

true philosopher mind, the mind that is the thinker, discoverer, maker of forms, and the mind of pure ideas that are not yet put into form, are beyond this inferior invasion and influence. But this does not mean that their motions cannot be imitated or their creations misused by perverse or hostile beings of a greater make and higher origin than those of whom I have till now spoken.

What are the conditions in the psychic world? How is it situated with regard to the hostile forces?

The psychic world or plane of consciousness is that part of the world, the psychic being is that part of the being which is directly under the influence of the Divine Consciousness; the hostile forces cannot have even the remotest action upon it. It is a world of harmony, and everything moves in it from light to light and from progress to progress. It is the seat of the Divine Consciousness, the Divine Self in the individual being. It is a centre of light and truth and knowledge and beauty and harmony which the Divine Self in each of you creates by his presence, little by little; it is influenced, formed and moved by the Divine Consciousness of which it is a part and parcel. It is in each of you the deep inner being which you have to find in order that you may come in contact with the Divine in you. It is the intermediary between the Divine Consciousness and your external consciousness; it is the builder of the inner life, it is that which manifests in the outer nature the order and rule of the Divine Will. If you become aware in your outer consciousness of the psychic being within you and unite with it, you can find the pure Eternal Consciousness and live in it; instead of being moved by the Ignorance as the human being constantly is, you grow aware of the presence of an eternal light and knowledge within you, and to it you surrender and are integrally consecrated to it and moved by it in all things.

For your psychic being is that part of you which is already given to the Divine. It is its influence gradually spreading from

within towards the most outward and material boundaries of your consciousness that will bring about the transformation of your entire nature. There can be no obscurity here; it is the luminous part in you. Most people are unconscious of this psychic part within them; the effort of Yoga is to make you conscious of it, so that the process of your transformation, instead of a slow labour extending through centuries, can be pressed into one life or even a few years.

The psychic being is that which persists after death, because it is your eternal self; it is this that carries the consciousness forward from life to life.

The psychic being is the real individuality of the true and divine individual within you. For your individuality means your special mode of expression and your psychic being is a special aspect of the one Divine Consciousness that has taken shape in you. But in the psychic consciousness there is not that sense of division between the individual and the universal consciousness which affects the other parts of your nature. You are conscious there that your individuality is your own line of expression, but at the same time you know too that it is an expression objectifying the one universal consciousness. It is as though you had taken a portion out of yourself and put it in front of you and there were a mutual look and play of movement between the two. This duality was necessary in order to create and establish the objectivised relation and to enjoy it; but in your psychic being the separation that sharpens the duality is seen to be an illusion, an appearance and nothing more.

Is there a difference between the “spiritual” and the “psychic”? Are they different planes?

Yes, the psychic plane belongs to the personal manifestation; the psychic is that which is divine in you put out to be dynamic in the play. But when we speak of the spiritual we are thinking of something that is concentrated in the Divine rather than in the

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external manifestation. The spiritual plane is something static behind and above the outward play; it supports the instruments of the nature, but is not itself included or involved in the external manifestation here.

But in speaking of these things one must be careful not to be imprisoned by the words we use. When I speak of the psychic or the spiritual, I mean things that are very deep and real behind the flat surface of the words and intimately connected even in their difference. Intellectual definitions and distinctions are too external and rigid to seize the true truth of things. And yet, unless you are very much in the habit of speaking to one another, there is almost a necessity of defining the sense of your words, if you are to understand each other. The ideal condition for a conversation is when the minds are so well attuned that the words are only a support for a spontaneous mutual understanding and you need not explain at each step what you utter. This is the advantage when you talk always with the same persons; an attuned harmony is established between their minds and the significance of the things spoken penetrates them at once.

There is a world of ideas without form and it is there that you must enter if you want to seize what is behind the words. So long as you have to draw your understanding from the forms of words, you are likely to fall into much confusion about the true sense; but if in a silence of your mind you can rise into the world from which ideas descend to take form, at once the real understanding comes. If you are to be sure of understanding one another, you must be able to understand in silence. There is a condition in which your minds are so well attuned and harmonised together that one perceives the thought of the other without any necessity of words. But if there is not this attunement, there will always be some deformation of your meaning, because to what you speak the other mind supplies its own significance. I use a word in a certain sense or shade of its sense; you are accustomed to put into it another sense or shade. Then, evidently, you will understand, not my exact

meaning in it, but what the word means to you. This is true not of speech only, but of reading also. If you want to understand a book with a deep teaching in it, you must be able to read it in the mind's silence; you must wait and let the expression go deep inside you into the region where words are no more and from there come slowly back to your exterior consciousness and its surface understanding. But if you let the words jump at your external mind and try to adapt and adjust the two, you will have entirely missed their real sense and power. There can be no perfect understanding unless you are in union with the unexpressed mind that is behind the centre of expression.

We spoke once of individual minds as worlds that are distinct and separate from one another; each is shut up in itself and has almost no direct point of contact with any other. But that is in the region of the inferior mind; there your own formations close you in; you cannot get out of them or out of yourself; you can understand only yourself and your own reflection in things. But here in this higher region of the unexpressed mind and its purer altitudes you are free; when you enter there, you go out of yourself and penetrate into a universal mental plane in which each individual mental world is dipping as if into a huge sea. There you can understand entirely what is going on in another and read his mind as if it were your own, because there no separation divides mind from mind. It is only when you unite in that region with others that you can understand them; otherwise you are not attuned, you do not touch, you have no means of knowing precisely what is happening in another mind than yours. Most often when you are in the presence of another you are quite ignorant of what he thinks or feels; but if you are able to go beyond and above this external plane of expression, if you can enter into a plane where a silent communion is possible, then you can read in that other as you would in yourself. Then the words you use for your expression are of very little importance, because the full comprehension lies beyond them in something else and a minimum of words is sufficient for your

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purpose. Long explanations are not necessary there; you do not need that a thought should be brought out into full expression, for the direct vision of what is meant is with you.

Will a time come when the hostile forces will be there no longer?

When their presence in the world is no more of any use, they will disappear. Their action is used as a testing process, so that nothing may be forgotten, nothing left out in the work of transformation. They will allow no mistake. If you have overlooked in your own being even a single detail, they will come and put their touch upon that neglected spot and make it so painfully evident that you will be forced to change. When they will no longer be required for this process, their existence will become useless and they will vanish. They are suffered to exist here, because they are necessary in the Great Work; once they are no more indispensable, they will either change or go.

Will it be a long time before that happens?

All depends upon your point of view. For time is relative; you can speak of it from the ordinary external human standpoint or from the deeper viewpoint of an inner consciousness or from the outlook of the Divine.

Whether the thing to be done takes a thousand years or only a year according to the human computation, does not matter at all, if you are one with the Divine Consciousness; for then you leave outside you the things of the human nature and you enter into the infinity and eternity of the Divine Nature. Then you escape from this feeling of a great eagerness of hurry with which men are obsessed, because they want to see things done. Agitation, haste, restlessness lead nowhere. It is foam on the sea; it is a great fuss that stops with itself. Men have a feeling that if they are not all the time running about and bursting into fits of

feverish activity, they are doing nothing. It is an illusion to think that all these so-called movements change things. It is merely taking a cup and beating the water in it; the water is moved about, but it is not changed for all your beating. This illusion of action is one of the greatest illusions of human nature. It hurts progress because it brings on you the necessity of rushing always into some excited movement. If you could only perceive the illusion and see how useless it all is, how it changes nothing! Nowhere can you achieve anything by it. Those who are thus rushing about are the tools of forces that make them dance for their own amusement. And they are not forces of the best quality either.

Whatever has been done in the world has been done by the very few who can stand outside the action in silence; for it is they who are the instruments of the Divine Power. They are dynamic agents, conscious instruments; they bring down the forces that change the world. Things can be done in that way, not by a restless activity. In peace, in silence and in quietness the world was built; and each time that something is to be truly built, it is in peace and silence and quietness that it must be done. It is ignorance to believe that you must run from morning to night and labour at all sorts of futile things in order to do something for the world.

Once you step back from these whirling forces into quiet regions, you see how great is the illusion! Humanity appears to you like a mass of blind creatures rushing about without knowing what they do or why they do it and only knocking and stumbling against each other. And it is this that they call action and life! It is empty agitation, not action, not true life.

I said once that, to speak usefully for ten minutes, you should remain silent for ten days. I could add that, to act usefully for one day, you should keep quiet for a year! Of course, I am not speaking of the ordinary day-to-day acts that are needed for the common external life, but of those who have or believe that they have something to do for the world. And the silence

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I speak of is the inner quietude that those alone have who can act without being identified with their action, merged into it and blinded and deafened by the noise and form of their own movement. Stand back from your action and rise into an outlook above these temporal motions; enter into the consciousness of Eternity. Then only you will know what true action is.

2 June 1929

What is the relation of human love to Divine love? Is the human an obstacle to the Divine love? Or is not rather the capacity for human love an index to the capacity for Divine love? Have not great spiritual figures, such as Christ, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, been remarkably loving and affectionate by nature?

Love is one of the great universal forces; it exists by itself and its movement is free and independent of the objects in which and through which it manifests. It manifests wherever it finds a possibility for manifestation, wherever there is receptivity, wherever there is some opening for it. What you call love and think of as a personal or individual thing is only your capacity to receive and manifest this universal force. But because it is universal, it is not therefore an unconscious force; it is a supremely conscious Power. Consciously it seeks for its manifestation and realisation upon earth; consciously it chooses its instruments, awakens to its vibrations those who are capable of an answer, endeavours to realise in them that which is its eternal aim, and when the instrument is not fit, drops it and turns to look for others. Men think that they have suddenly fallen in love; they see their love come and grow and then it fades — or, it may be, endures a little longer in some who are more specially fitted for its more lasting movement. But their sense in this of a personal experience all their own was an illusion. It was a wave from the everlasting sea of universal love.

Love is universal and eternal; it is always manifesting itself and always identical in its essence. And it is a Divine Force; for the distortions we see in its apparent workings belong to its instruments. Love does not manifest in human beings alone; it is everywhere. Its movement is there in plants, perhaps in the very

stones; in the animals it is easy to detect its presence. All the deformations of this great and divine Power come from the obscurity and ignorance and selfishness of the limited instrument. Love, the eternal force, has no clinging, no desire, no hunger for possession, no self-regarding attachment; it is, in its pure movement, the seeking for union of the self with the Divine, a seeking absolute and regardless of all other things. Love divine gives itself and asks for nothing. What human beings have made of it, we do not need to say; they have turned it into an ugly and repulsive thing. And yet even in human beings the first contact of love does bring down something of its purer substance; they become capable for a moment of forgetting themselves, for a moment its divine touch awakens and magnifies all that is fine and beautiful. But afterwards there comes to the surface the human nature, full of its impure demands, asking for something in exchange, bartering what it gives, clamouring for its own inferior satisfactions, distorting and soiling what was divine.

To manifest the Divine love you must be capable of receiving the Divine love. For only those can manifest it who are by their nature open to its native movement. The wider and clearer the opening in them, the more they manifest love divine in its original purity; the more it is mixed with the lower human feelings, the greater is the deformation. One who is not open to love in its essence and in its truth cannot approach the Divine. Even the seekers through knowledge come to a point beyond which if they want to go farther, they are bound to find themselves entering at the same time into love and to feel the two as one, knowledge the light of the divine union, love the very heart of knowledge. There is a place in the soul's progress where they meet and you cannot distinguish one from the other. The division, the distinction between the two that you make in the beginning are a creation of the mind: once you rise to a higher level, they disappear.

Among those who have come into this world seeking to reveal the Divine here and transform earthly life, there are some

who have manifested the Divine love in a greater fullness. In some the purity of the manifestation is so great that they are misunderstood by the whole of humanity and are even accused of being hard and unloving, although the Divine love is there. But it is in them divine and not human in its form as in its substance. For when man speaks of love, he associates it with an emotional and sentimental weakness. But the divine intensity of self-forgetfulness, the capacity of throwing oneself out entirely, making no restriction and no reservation, as a gift, asking nothing in exchange, this is little known to human beings. And when it is there unmixed with weak and sentimental emotions, they find it hard and cold; they cannot recognise in it the very highest and intensest power of love.

The manifestation of the love of the Divine in the world was the great holocaust, the supreme self-giving. The Perfect Consciousness accepted to be merged and absorbed into the unconsciousness of matter, so that consciousness might be awakened in the depths of its obscurity and little by little a Divine Power might rise in it and make the whole of this manifested universe a highest expression of the Divine Consciousness and the Divine love. This was the supreme love, to accept the loss of the perfect condition of supreme divinity, its absolute consciousness, its infinite knowledge, to unite with unconsciousness, to dwell in the world with ignorance and darkness. And yet none perhaps would call it love; for it does not clothe itself in a superficial sentiment, it makes no demand in exchange for what it has done, no show of its sacrifice. The force of love in the world is trying to find consciousnesses that are capable of receiving this divine movement in its purity and expressing it. This race of all beings towards love, this irresistible push and seeking out in the world's heart and in all hearts, is the impulse given by a Divine love behind the human longing and seeking. It touches millions of instruments, trying always, always failing; but this constant touch prepares these instruments and suddenly one day there will awake in them the capacity of self-giving, the capacity of loving.

The movement of love is not limited to human beings and it is perhaps less distorted in other worlds than in the human. Look at the flowers and trees. When the sun sets and all becomes silent, sit down for a moment and put yourself into communion with Nature: you will feel rising from the earth, from below the roots of the trees and mounting upward and coursing through their fibres up to the highest outstretching branches, the aspiration of an intense love and longing,—a longing for something that brings light and gives happiness, for the light that is gone and they wish to have back again. There is a yearning so pure and intense that if you can feel the movement in the trees, your own being too will go up in an ardent prayer for the peace and light and love that are unmanifested here. Once you have come in contact with this large, pure and true Divine love, if you have felt it even for a short time and in its smallest form, you will realise what an abject thing human desire has made of it. It has become in human nature something low, brutal, selfish, violent, ugly, or else it is something weak and sentimental, made up of the pettiest feeling, brittle, superficial, exacting. And this baseness and brutality or this self-regarding weakness they call love!

Is our vital being to take part in the Divine love? If it does, what is the right and correct form of participation it should take?

Where is the manifestation of Divine love intended to stop? Is it to be confined to some unreal or immaterial region? Divine love plunges its manifestation upon earth down into the most material matter. It does not indeed find itself in the selfish distortions of the human consciousness; but the vital in itself is as important an element in Divine love as it is in the whole of the manifested universe. There is no possibility of movement and progress without the mediation of the vital; but because this Power of Nature has been so badly distorted, some prefer to believe that it has to be pulled out altogether and thrown away.

But it is only through the vital that matter can be touched by the transforming power of the Spirit. If the vital is not there to infuse its dynamism and living force, matter will remain dead; for the higher parts of the being will not come into contact with earth, will not be concretised in life, and they will depart unsatisfied and disappear.

The Divine love of which I speak is a Love that manifests here upon this physical earth, in matter, but it must be pure of its human distortions, if it is to incarnate. The vital is an indispensable agent in this as in all manifestation. But as has happened always, the adverse powers have put their hold on this most precious thing. It is the energy of the vital that enters into dull and insensitive matter and makes it responsive and alive. But the adverse forces have distorted it; they have turned it into a field of violence and selfishness and desire and every kind of ugliness and prevented it from taking part in the divine work. The one thing to be done is to change it, not to suppress its movement or destroy it. For without it no intensity is possible anywhere. The vital is in its very nature that in us which can give itself away. Just because it is that which has always the impulse and the strength to take, it is also that which is capable of giving itself to the utmost; because it knows how to possess, it knows also how to abandon itself without reserve. The true vital movement is the most beautiful and magnificent of movements; but it has been twisted and turned into the most ugly, the most distorted, the most repulsive. Wherever into a human story of love, there has entered even an atom of pure love and it has been allowed to manifest without too much distortion, we find a true and beautiful thing. And if the movement does not last, it is because it is not conscious of its own aim and seeking; it has not the knowledge that it is not the union of one being with another that it is seeking after but the union of all beings with the Divine.

Love is a supreme force which the Eternal Consciousness sent down from itself into an obscure and darkened world that

it might bring back that world and its beings to the Divine. The material world in its darkness and ignorance had forgotten the Divine. Love came into the darkness; it awakened all that lay there asleep; it whispered, opening the ears that were sealed, "There is something that is worth waking to, worth living for, and it is love!" And with the awakening to love there entered into the world the possibility of coming back to the Divine. The creation moves upward through love towards the Divine and in answer there leans downward to meet the creation the Divine Love and Grace. Love cannot exist in its pure beauty, love cannot put on its native power and intense joy of fullness until there is this interchange, this fusion between the earth and the Supreme, this movement of Love from the Divine to the creation and from the creation to the Divine. This world was a world of dead matter, till Divine love descended into it and awakened it to life. Ever since it has gone in search of this divine source of life, but it has taken in its search every kind of wrong turn and mistaken way, it has wandered hither and thither in the dark. The mass of this creation has moved on its road like the blind seeking for the unknown, seeking but ignorant of what it sought. The maximum it has reached is what seems to human beings love in its highest form, its purest and most disinterested kind, like the love of the mother for the child. This human movement of love is secretly seeking for something else than what it has yet found; but it does not know where to find it, it does not even know what it is. The moment man's consciousness awakens to the Divine love, pure, independent of all manifestation in human forms, he knows for what his heart has all the time been truly longing. That is the beginning of the Soul's aspiration, that brings the awakening of the consciousness and its yearning for union with the Divine. All the forms that are of the ignorance, all the deformations it has imposed must from that moment fade and disappear and give place to one single movement of the creation answering to the Divine love by its love for the Divine. Once the creation is conscious, awakened, opened to love for the Divine, the Divine

love pours itself without limit back into the creation. The circle of the movement turns back upon itself and the ends meet; there is the joining of the extremes, supreme Spirit and manifesting Matter, and their divine union becomes constant and complete.

Great beings have taken birth in this world who came to bring down here something of the sovereign purity and power of Divine love. The Divine love has thrown itself into a personal form in them that its realisation upon earth may be at once more easy and more perfect. Divine love, when manifested in a personal being, is easier to realise; it is more difficult when it is unmanifested or impersonal in its movement. A human being, awakened by this personal touch, with this personal intensity, to the consciousness of the Divine love, will find his work and change made more easy; the union for which he seeks becomes more natural and close. And the union, the realisation will become for him, too, more full, more perfect; for the wide uniformity of a universal and impersonal Love will be lit up and vivified with the colour and beauty of all possible relations with the Divine.

9 June 1929

What is exactly the nature of religion? Is it an obstacle in the way of the spiritual life?

Religion belongs to the higher mind of humanity. It is the effort of man's higher mind to approach, as far as lies in its power, something beyond it, something to which humanity gives the name God or Spirit or Truth or Faith or Knowledge or the Infinite, some kind of Absolute, which the human mind cannot reach and yet tries to reach. Religion may be divine in its ultimate origin; in its actual nature it is not divine but human. In truth we should speak rather of religions than of religion; for the religions made by man are many. These different religions, even when they had not the same origin, have most of them been made in the same way. We know how the Christian religion came into existence. It was certainly not Jesus who made what is known as Christianity, but some learned and very clever men put their heads together and built it up into the thing we see. There was nothing divine in the way in which it was formed, and there is nothing divine either in the way in which it functions. And yet the excuse or occasion for the formation was undoubtedly some revelation from what one could call a Divine Being, a Being who came from elsewhere bringing down with him from a higher plane a certain Knowledge and Truth for the earth. He came and suffered for his Truth; but very few understood what he said, few cared to find and hold to the Truth for which he suffered. Buddha retired from the world, sat down in meditation and discovered a way out of earthly suffering and misery, out of all this illness and death and desire and sin and hunger. He saw a Truth which he endeavoured to express and communicate to the disciples and followers who gathered around him. But even before he was dead, his teaching had already begun to be

twisted and distorted. It was only after his disappearance that Buddhism as a full-fledged religion reared its head founded upon what the Buddha is supposed to have said and on the supposed significance of these reported sayings. But soon too, because the disciples and the disciples' disciples could not agree on what the Master had said or what he meant by his utterances, there grew up a host of sects and sub-sects in the body of the parent religion — a Southern Path, a Northern Path, a Far Eastern Path, each of them claiming to be the only, the original, the undefiled doctrine of the Buddha. The same fate overtook the teaching of the Christ; that too came to be made in the same way into a set and organised religion. It is often said that, if Jesus came back, he would not be able to recognise what he taught in the forms that have been imposed on it, and if Buddha were to come back and see what has been made of his teaching, he would immediately run back discouraged to Nirvana! All religions have each the same story to tell. The occasion for its birth is the coming of a great Teacher of the world. He comes and reveals and is the incarnation of a Divine Truth. But men seize upon it, trade upon it, make an almost political organisation out of it. The religion is equipped by them with a government and policy and laws, with its creeds and dogmas, its rules and regulations, its rites and ceremonies, all binding upon its adherents, all absolute and inviolable. Like the State, it too administers rewards to the loyal and assigns punishments for those that revolt or go astray, for the heretic and the renegade.

The first and principal article of these established and formal religions runs always, "Mine is the supreme, the only truth, all others are in falsehood or inferior." For without this fundamental dogma, established credal religions could not have existed. If you do not believe and proclaim that you alone possess the one or the highest truth, you will not be able to impress people and make them flock to you.

This attitude is natural to the religious mind; but it is just that which makes religion stand in the way of the spiritual life.

The articles and dogmas of a religion are mind-made things and, if you cling to them and shut yourself up in a code of life made out for you, you do not know and cannot know the truth of the Spirit that lies beyond all codes and dogmas, wide and large and free. When you stop at a religious creed and tie yourself in it, taking it for the only truth in the world, you stop the advance and widening of your inner soul. But if you look at religion from another angle, it need not always be an obstacle to all men. If you regard it as one of the higher activities of humanity and if you can see in it the aspirations of man without ignoring the imperfection of all man-made things, it may well be a kind of help for you to approach the spiritual life. Taking it up in a serious and earnest spirit, you can try to find out what truth is there, what aspiration lies hidden in it, what divine inspiration has undergone transformation and deformation here by the human mind and a human organisation, and with an appropriate mental stand you can get religion even as it is to throw some light on your way and to lend some support to your spiritual endeavour.

In all religions we find invariably a certain number of people who possess a great emotional capacity and are full of a real and ardent aspiration, but have a very simple mind and do not feel the need of approaching the Divine through knowledge. For such natures religion has a use and it is even necessary for them; for, through external forms, like the ceremonies of the Church, it offers a kind of support and help to their inner spiritual aspiration. In every religion there are some who have evolved a high spiritual life. But it is not the religion that gave them their spirituality; it is they who have put their spirituality into the religion. Put anywhere else, born into any other cult, they would have found there and lived there the same spiritual life. It is their own capacity, it is some power of their inner being and not the religion they profess that has made them what they are. This power in their nature is such that religion to them does not become a slavery or a bondage. Only as they have

not a strong, clear and active mind, they need to believe in this or that creed as absolutely true and to give themselves up to it without any disturbing question or doubt. I have met in all religions people of this kind and it would be a crime to disturb their faith. For them religion is not an obstacle. An obstacle for those who can go farther, it may be a help for those who cannot, but are yet able to travel a certain distance on the paths of the Spirit. Religion has been an impulse to the worst things and the best; if the fiercest wars have been waged and the most hideous persecutions carried on in its name, it has stimulated too supreme heroism and self-sacrifice in its cause. Along with philosophy it marks the limit the human mind has reached in its highest activities. It is an impediment and a chain if you are a slave to its outer body; if you know how to use its inner substance, it can be your jumping-board into the realm of the Spirit.

One who holds a particular faith or who has found out some truth, is disposed to think that he alone has found the Truth, whole and entire. This is human nature. A mixture of falsehood seems necessary for human beings to stand on their legs and move on their way. If the vision of the Truth were suddenly given to them they would be crushed under the weight.

Each time that something of the Divine Truth and the Divine Force comes down to manifest upon earth, some change is effected in the earth's atmosphere. In the descent, those who are receptive are awakened to some inspiration from it, some touch, some beginning of sight. If they were capable of holding and expressing rightly what they receive, they would say, "A great force has come down; I am in contact with it and what I understand of it, I will tell you." But most of them are not capable of that, because they have small minds. They get illumined, possessed, as it were, and cry, "I have the Divine Truth, I possess it whole and entire." There are now upon earth at least two dozen Christs, if not as many Buddhas; India alone can supply any number of Avatars, not to speak of minor manifestations. But in this way,

the whole thing begins to look grotesque; but if you see what is behind, it is not so stupid as it seems at the first glance. The truth is that the human personality has come in contact with some Being, some Power, and under the influence of education and tradition calls it Buddha or Christ or by any other familiar name. It is difficult to affirm that it was Buddha himself or the very Christ with whom there was the contact, but none can assert either that the inspiration did not come from that which inspired the Christ or the Buddha. These human vessels may very well have received the inspiration from some such source. If they were modest and simple, they would be content to say that much and no more; they would say, "I have received this inspiration from such and such a Great One", but instead they proclaim, "I am that Great One." I knew one who affirmed that he was both Christ and Buddha! He had received something, had experienced a truth, had seen the Divine Presence in himself and in others. But the experience was too strong for him, the truth too great. He became half crazy and the next day went out into the streets, proclaiming that in him Christ and Buddha had become one.

One Divine Consciousness is here working through all these beings, preparing its way through all these manifestations. At this day it is here at work upon earth more powerfully than it has ever been before. There are some who receive its touch in some way, or to some degree; but what they receive they distort, they make their own thing out of it. Others feel the touch but cannot bear the force and go mad under the pressure. But some have the capacity to receive and the strength to bear, and it is they who will become the vessels of the full knowledge, the chosen instruments and agents.

If you want to appraise the real value of the religion in which you are born or brought up or to have a correct perspective of the country or society to which you belong by birth, if you want to find out how relative a thing the particular environment is into which you happened to be thrown and confined, you have

only to go round the earth and see that what you think good is looked upon as bad elsewhere and what is considered as bad in one place is welcomed as good in another. All countries and all religions are built up out of a mass of traditions. In all of them you will meet saints and heroes and great and mighty personalities as well as small and wicked people. You will then perceive what a mockery it is to say, "Because I am brought up in this religion, therefore it is the only true religion; because I am born in this country, therefore it is the best of all countries." One might as well make the same claim for his family, "Because I come of this family that has lived in the same place for so many years or so many centuries, therefore I am bound by its traditions; they alone are the ideal."

Things have an inner value and become real to you only when you have acquired them by the exercise of your free choice, not when they have been imposed upon you. If you want to be sure of your religion, you must choose it; if you want to be sure of your country, you must choose it; if you want to be sure of your family, even that you must choose. If you accept without question what has been given you by Chance, you can never be sure whether it is good or bad for you, whether it is the true thing for your life. Step back from all that forms your natural environment or inheritance, made up and forced upon you by Nature's blind mechanical process; draw within and look quietly and dispassionately at things. Appraise them, choose freely. Then you can say with an inner truth, "This is my family, this my country, this my religion."

If we go a little way within ourselves, we shall discover that there is in each of us a consciousness that has been living throughout the ages and manifesting in a multitude of forms. Each of us has been born in many different countries, belonged to many different nations, followed many different religions. Why must we accept the last one as the best? The experiences gathered by us in all these many lives in different countries and varying religions, are stored up in that inner continuity of our

consciousness which persists through all births. There are multiple personalities there created by these past experiences, and when we become aware of this multitude within us, it becomes impossible to speak of one particular form of truth as the only truth, one country as our only country, one religion as the only true religion. There are people who have been born into one country, although the leading elements of their consciousness obviously belong to another. I have met some born in Europe who were evidently Indians; I have met others born in Indian bodies who were as evidently Europeans. In Japan I have met some who were Indian, others who were European. And if any of them goes to the country or enters into the civilisation to which he has affinity, he finds himself there perfectly at home.

If your aim is to be free, in the freedom of the Spirit, you must get rid of all the ties that are not the inner truth of your being, but come from subconscious habits. If you wish to consecrate yourself entirely, absolutely and exclusively to the Divine, you must do it in all completeness; you must not leave bits of yourself tied here and there. You may object that it is not easy to cut away altogether from one's moorings. But have you never looked back and observed the changes that have taken place in you in the course of a few years? When you do that, almost always you ask yourself how it was that you could have felt in the way you felt and acted as you did act in certain circumstances; at times, even, you can no longer recognise yourself in the person you were only ten years ago. How can you then bind yourself to what was or to what is or how can you fix beforehand what may or may not be in the future?

All your relations must be newly built upon an inner freedom of choice. The traditions in which you live or are brought up have been imposed on you by the pressure of the environment or by the general mind or by the choice of others. There is an element of compulsion in your acquiescence. Religion itself has been imposed on men; it is often supported by a suggestion of religious fear or by some spiritual or other menace. There

can be no such imposition in your relation with the Divine; it must be free, your own mind's and heart's choice, taken up with enthusiasm and joy. What union can that be in which one trembles and says, "I am compelled, I cannot do otherwise"? Truth is self-evident and has not to be imposed upon the world. It does not feel the need of being accepted by men. For it is self-existent; it does not live by what people say of it or on their adherence. But one who is founding a religion needs to have many followers. The strength and greatness of a religion is adjudged by men according to the number of those that follow it, although the real greatness is not there. The greatness of spiritual truth is not in numbers. I knew the head of a new religion, the son of its founder, and heard him say once that such and such a religion took so many hundreds of years to be built up, and such another so many hundreds of years, but they within fifty years had already over four million followers. "And so you see", he added, "what a great religion is ours!" Religions may reckon their greatness by the number of their believers, but Truth would still be Truth if it had not even a single follower. The average man is drawn towards those who make great pretensions; he does not go where Truth is quietly manifesting. Those who make great pretensions need to proclaim loudly and to advertise; for otherwise they would not attract great numbers of people. The work that is done with no care for what people think of it is not so well known, does not so easily draw multitudes. But Truth requires no advertisement; it does not hide itself but it does not proclaim itself either. It is content to manifest, regardless of results, not seeking approbation or shunning disapprobation, not attracted or troubled by the world's acceptance or denial.

When you come to the Yoga, you must be ready to have all your mental buildings and all your vital scaffoldings shattered to pieces. You must be prepared to be suspended in the air with nothing to support you except your faith. You will have to forget your past self and its clingings altogether, to pluck it out of your consciousness and be born anew, free from every kind

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of bondage. Think not of what you were, but of what you aspire to be; be altogether in what you want to realise. Turn from your dead past and look straight towards the future. Your religion, country, family lie there; it is the DIVINE.

16 June 1929

Can all physical ailments be traced to some disorder in the mind as their ultimate source? If so, what kind of mental disorder would produce such an ailment as, for example, prickly heat or sore throat?

There are as many reasons for an illness as there are people who fall ill; the explanation is different in each case. If you ask me, "Why have I this ailment or that?" I can look and tell you the reason, but there is no general rule.

The ailments of the body are not always the outcome of a mental disorder, disharmony or wrong movement. The source of the malady may be something in the mind, it may be something in the vital; or it may be something more or less purely physical, as in illnesses that arise from an outer contact. Again, the disturbance may be the result of a movement in the Yoga, and in that case too there is a multitude of possible causes.

Let us take up the illnesses that are due to Yoga; for our concern is more directly and intimately with them. Here, although no one reason can be given for any particular illness, yet we can separate them into various groups according to the nature of the causes that provoke them.

The force that comes down into one who is doing Yoga and helps him in his transformation, acts along many different lines and its results vary according to the nature that receives it and the work to be done. First of all, it hastens the transformation of all in the being that is ready to be transformed. If he is open and receptive in his mind, the mind, touched by the power of Yoga, begins to change and progress swiftly. There may be the same rapidity of change in the vital consciousness if that is ready, or even in the body. But in the body the transforming power of Yoga is operative only to a certain degree; for the receptivity

of the body is limited. The most material plane of the universe is still in a condition in which receptivity is mixed with a large amount of resistance. But rapid progress in one part of the being which is not followed by an equivalent progress in other parts produces a disharmony in the nature, a dislocation somewhere; and wherever or whenever this dislocation occurs, it can translate itself into an illness. The nature of the illness depends upon the nature of the dislocation. One kind of disharmony affects the mind and the disturbance it produces may lead even as far as insanity; another kind affects the body and may show itself as fever or prickly heat or any other greater or minor disorder.

On one side, the action of the forces of Yoga hastens the movement of transformation of the being in those parts that are ready to receive and respond to the power that is at work upon it. Yoga, in this way, saves time. The whole world is in a process of progressive transformation; if you take up the discipline of Yoga, you speed up in yourself this process. The work that would require years in the ordinary course, can be done by Yoga in a few days and even in a few hours. But it is your inner consciousness that obeys this accelerating impulse; for the higher parts of your being readily follow the swift and concentrated movement of Yoga and lend themselves more easily to the continuous adjustment and adaptation that it necessitates. The body, on the other hand, is ordinarily dense, inert and apathetic. And if you have in this part something that is not responsive, if there is a resistance here, the reason is that the body is incapable of moving as quickly as the rest of the being. It must take time, it must walk at its own pace as it does in ordinary life. What happens is as when grown-up people walk too fast for children in their company; they have to stop at times and wait till the child who is lagging behind comes up and overtakes them. This divergence between the progress in the inner being and the inertia of the body often creates a dislocation in the system, and that manifests itself as an illness. This is why people who take up Yoga frequently begin by suffering from some physical discomfort or disorder. That need

not happen if they are on their guard and careful. Or if there is a greater and unusual receptivity in the body, then too they escape. But an unmixed receptivity making the physical parts closely follow the pace of the inner transformation is hardly possible, unless the body has already been prepared in the past for the processes of Yoga.

In the ordinary life of man a progressive dislocation is the rule. The mental and the vital beings of man follow as best they can the movement of the universal forces, and the stream of the world's inner transformation and evolution carries them a certain way; but the body bound to the law of the most material nature, moves very slowly. After some years, seventy or eighty, a hundred or two hundred, — and that is perhaps the maximum, — the dislocation is so serious that the outer being falls to pieces. The divergence between the demand and the answer, the increasing inability and irresponsiveness of the body, brings about the phenomenon of death. By Yoga the inner transformation that is in slow constant process in the creation is rendered more intense and rapid, but the pace of the outer transformation remains almost the same as in ordinary life. As a result, the disharmony between the inner and the outer being in one who is doing Yoga tends to be all the greater, unless precautions are taken and a protection secured that will help the body to follow the inner march as closely as possible. Even then it is the very nature of the body to hold you back. It is for this reason that to many we are obliged to say, "Do not pull, do not hurry; you must give your body time to follow." Some have to be kept back even for years and not allowed to do much or progress far. Sometimes, to avoid the disequilibrium becomes impossible; and then you have a disturbance which varies according to the nature of the resistance and the measure of the care you have taken or your negligence. This too is the reason why each time that there is a strong movement of progress, it is almost invariably followed by a period of immobility, which seems to those who are not warned a spell of dullness and stagnation and discouragement in

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which all progress is stopped, and they think anxiously, "What is the matter? Am I losing time? Nothing is being done." But the truth is that it is the time needed for assimilation; a pause is made for the body to open itself more and become receptive and approach nearer to the level attained by the inner consciousness. The parents have been walking too far ahead; they must halt so that the child left behind may run up and catch them by the hand; only then can they start again on the journey together.

Each spot of the body is symbolical of an inner movement; there is there a world of subtle correspondences. But this is a long and complex subject and we cannot enter into its details just now. The particular place in the body affected by an illness is an index to the nature of the inner disharmony that has taken place. It points to the origin, it is a sign of the cause of the ailment. It reveals too the nature of the resistance that prevents the whole being from advancing at the same high speed. It indicates the treatment and the cure. If one could perfectly understand where the mistake is, find out what has been unreceptive, open that part and put the force and the light there, it would be possible to re-establish in a moment the harmony that has been disturbed and the illness would immediately go.

The origin of an illness may be in the mind; it may be in the vital; it may be in any of the parts of the being. One and the same illness may be due to a variety of causes; it may spring in different cases from different sources of disharmony. And there may be too an appearance of illness where there is no real illness at all. In that case, if you are sufficiently conscious, you will see that there is just a friction somewhere, some halting in the movement, and by setting it right you will be cured at once. This kind of malady has no truth in it, even when it seems to have physical effects. It is half made up of imagination and has not the same grip on matter as a true illness.

In short, the sources of an illness are manifold and intricate; each can have a multitude of causes, but always it indicates where is the weak part in the being.

To whatever cause an illness may be due, material or mental, external or internal, it must, before it can affect the physical body, touch another layer of the being that surrounds and protects it. This subtler layer is called in different teachings by various names,—the etheric body, the nervous envelope. It is a subtle body and yet almost visible. In density something like the vibrations that you see around a very hot and steaming object, it emanates from the physical body and closely covers it. All communications with the exterior world are made through this medium, and it is this that must be invaded and penetrated first before the body can be affected. If this envelope is absolutely strong and intact, you can go into places infested with the worst of diseases, even plague and cholera, and remain quite immune. It is a perfect protection against all possible attacks of illness, so long as it is whole and entire, thoroughly consistent in its composition, its elements in faultless balance. This body is built up, on the one side, of a material basis, but rather of material conditions than of physical matter, on the other, of the vibrations of our psychological states. Peace and equanimity and confidence, faith in health, undisturbed repose and cheerfulness and bright gladness constitute this element in it and give it strength and substance. It is a very sensitive medium with facile and quick reactions; it readily takes in all kinds of suggestions and these can rapidly change and almost remould its condition. A bad suggestion acts very strongly upon it; a good suggestion operates in the contrary sense with the same force. Depression and discouragement have a very adverse effect; they cut out holes in it, as it were, in its very stuff, render it weak and unresisting and open to hostile attacks an easy passage.

It is the action of this medium that partly explains why people often feel a spontaneous and unreasoning attraction or repulsion for each other. The first seat of these reactions is in this protecting envelope. Easily we feel attracted towards people who bring a reinforcement to our nervous envelope; we are repelled by those who disturb or hurt it. Whatever gives it a

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sense of expansion and comfort and ease, whatever makes it respond with a feeling of happiness and pleasure exercises on us at once an attraction; when the effect is in the contrary sense, it responds with a protecting repulsion. This movement, when two people meet, is often mutual. It is not, of course, the only cause of affinities, but it is one and a very frequent cause.

If the whole being could simultaneously advance in its progressive transformation, keeping pace with the inner march of the universe, there would be no illness, there would be no death. But it would have to be literally the whole being integrally from the highest planes, where it is more plastic and yields in the required measure to transforming forces, down to the most material, which is by nature rigid, stationary, refractory to any rapid remoulding change.

There are certain regions which offer a much stronger resistance than others to the action of the Yogic forces, and the illnesses affecting them are harder to cure. They are those parts that belong to the most material layers of the being, and the illnesses that pertain to them, as, for instance, skin diseases or bad teeth. Sri Aurobindo spoke once of a Yogi who, still enjoying robust health and a magnificent physique, had been living for nearly a century on the banks of the Narmada. Offered by a disciple medicine for a toothache, he observed, in refusing, that one tooth had given him trouble for the last two hundred years. This Yogi had secured so much control over material nature as to live two hundred years, but in all that time he had not been able to conquer a toothache.

Some of the diseases which are considered most dangerous are the easiest to cure; some that are considered as of very little importance can offer the most obstinate resistance.

The sources of an illness are manifold and intricate; each can have a multitude of causes, but always it indicates where is the weak part in the being.

Nine-tenths of the danger in an illness comes from fear. Fear can give you the apparent symptoms of an illness; and it

can give you the illness too,—its effects can go so far as that. Not so long ago the wife of one who frequents the Ashram but is not herself practising Yoga, heard that there was cholera in the house where her milkman lived; fear took her and the next moment she began to show symptoms of the disease. She could however be rapidly cured, because the apparent symptoms were not allowed to develop into the real illness.

There are physical movements, effects of the pressure of the Yoga, which sometimes create ungrounded fears that may do harm if the fear is not rejected. There is, for instance, a certain pressure in the head of which there has been question and which is felt by many, especially in the earlier stages, when something that is still closed has to open. It is a discomfort that comes to nothing and can easily be got over, if you know that it is an effect of the pressure of the forces to which you are opening, when they work strongly on the body to produce a result and to hasten the transformation. Taken quietly, it can turn into a not unpleasurable sensation. But if you get frightened, you are sure to contract a very bad headache; it may even go as far as a fever. The discomfort is due to some resistance in the nature; if you know how to release the resistance, you are immediately free of the discomfort. But get frightened and the discomfort may turn into something much worse. Whatever the character of the experience you have, you must give no room to fear; you must keep an unshaken confidence and feel that whatever happens is the thing that had to happen. Once you have chosen the path, you must boldly accept all the consequences of your choice. But if you choose and then draw back and choose again and again draw back, always wavering, always doubting, always fearful, you create a disharmony in your being, which not only retards your progress, but can be the origin of all kinds of disturbance in the mind and vital being and discomfort and disease in the body.

23 June 1929

Can a Yogi attain to a state of consciousness in which he can know all things, answer all questions, relating even to abstruse scientific problems, such as, for example, the theory of relativity?

Theoretically and in principle it is not impossible for a Yogi to know everything; all depends upon the Yogi.

But there is knowledge and knowledge. The Yogi does not know in the way of the mind. He does not know everything in the sense that he has access to all possible information or because he contains all the facts of the universe in his mind or because his consciousness is a sort of miraculous encyclopaedia. He knows by his capacity for a containing or dynamic identity with things and persons and forces. Or he knows because he lives in a plane of consciousness or is in contact with a consciousness in which there is the truth and the knowledge.

If you are in the true consciousness, the knowledge you have will also be of the truth. Then, too, you can know directly, by being one with what you know. If a problem is put before you, if you are asked what is to be done in a particular matter, you can then, by looking with enough attention and concentration, receive spontaneously the required knowledge and the true answer. It is not by any careful application of theory that you reach the knowledge or by working it out through a mental process. The scientific mind needs these methods to come to its conclusions. But the Yogi's knowledge is direct and immediate; it is not deductive. If an engineer has to find out the exact position for the building of an arch, the line of its curve and the size of its opening, he does it by calculation, collating and deducing from his information and data. But a Yogi needs none of these things; he looks, has the vision of the thing, sees that it is to be done in

this way and not in another, and this seeing is his knowledge.

Although it may be true in a general way and in a certain sense that a Yogi can know all things and can answer all questions from his own field of vision and consciousness, yet it does not follow that there are no questions whatever of any kind to which he would not or could not answer. A Yogi who has the direct knowledge, the knowledge of the true truth of things, would not care or perhaps would find it difficult to answer questions that belong entirely to the domain of human mental constructions. It may be, he could not or would not wish to solve problems and difficulties you might put to him which touch only the illusion of things and their appearances. The working of his knowledge is not in the mind. If you put him some silly mental query of that character, he probably would not answer. The very common conception that you can put any ignorant question to him as to some super-schoolmaster or demand from him any kind of information past, present or future and that he is bound to answer, is a foolish idea. It is as inept as the expectation from the spiritual man of feats and miracles that would satisfy the vulgar external mind and leave it gaping with wonder.

Moreover, the term "Yogi" is very vague and wide. There are many types of Yogis, many lines or ranges of spiritual or occult endeavour and different heights of achievement, there are some whose powers do not extend beyond the mental level; there are others who have gone beyond it. Everything depends on the field or nature of their effort, the height to which they have arrived, the consciousness with which they have contact or into which they enter.

*Do not scientists go sometimes beyond the mental plane?
It is said that Einstein found his theory of relativity not
through any process of reasoning, but through some kind
of sudden inspiration. Has that inspiration anything to
do with the Supermind?*

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The scientist who gets an inspiration revealing to him a new truth, receives it from the intuitive mind. The knowledge comes as a direct perception in the higher mental plane illumined by some other light still farther above. But all that has nothing to do with the action of Supermind and this higher mental level is far removed from the supramental plane. Men are too easily inclined to believe that they have climbed into regions quite divine when they have only gone above the average level. There are many stages between the ordinary human mind and the Supermind, many grades and many intervening planes. If an ordinary man were to get into direct contact even with one of these intermediate planes, he would be dazzled and blinded, would be crushed under the weight of the sense of immensity or would lose his balance; and yet it is not the Supermind.

Behind the common idea that a Yogi can know all things and answer all questions is the actual fact that there is a plane in the mind where the memory of everything is stored and remains always in existence. All mental movements that belong to the life of the earth are memorised and registered in this plane. Those who are capable of going there and care to take the trouble, can read in it and learn anything they choose. But this region must not be mistaken for the supramental levels. And yet to reach even there you must be able to silence the movements of the material or physical mind; you must be able to leave aside all your sensations and put a stop to your ordinary mental movements, whatever they are; you must get out of the vital; you must become free from the slavery of the body. Then only you can enter into that region and see. But if you are sufficiently interested to make this effort, you can arrive there and read what is written in the earth's memory.

Thus, if you go deep into silence, you can reach a level of consciousness on which it is not impossible for you to receive answers to all your questions. And if there is one who is consciously open to the plenary truth of the supermind, in constant contact with it, he can certainly answer any question that is

worth an answer from the supramental Light. The queries put must come from some sense of the truth and reality behind things. There are many questions and much debated problems that are cobwebs woven of mere mental abstractions or move on the illusory surface of things. These do not pertain to real knowledge; they are a deformation of knowledge, their very substance is of the ignorance. Certainly the supramental knowledge may give an answer, its own answer, to the problems set by the mind's ignorance; but it is likely that it would not be at all satisfactory or perhaps even intelligible to those who ask from the mental level. You must not expect the supramental to work in the way of the mind or demand that the knowledge in truth should be capable of being pieced together with the half-knowledge in ignorance. The scheme of the mind is one thing, but Supermind is quite another and it would no longer be supramental if it adapted itself to the exigencies of the mental scheme. The two are incommensurable and cannot be put together.

When the consciousness has attained to supramental joys, does it no longer take interest in the things of the mind?

The supramental does not take interest in mental things in the same way as the mind. It takes its own interest in all the movements of the universe, but it is from a different point of view and with a different vision. The world presents to it an entirely different appearance; there is a reversal of outlook and everything is seen from there as other than what it seems to the mind and often even the opposite. Things have another meaning; their aspect, their motion and process, everything about them, are watched with other eyes. Everything here is followed by the supermind; the mind movements and not less the vital, the material movements, all the play of the universe have for it a very deep interest, but of another kind. It is about the same difference as that between the interest taken in a puppet-play by one who

holds the strings and knows what the puppets are to do and the will that moves them and that they can do only what it moves them to do, and the interest taken by another who observes the play but sees only what is happening from moment to moment and knows nothing else. The one who follows the play and is outside its secret has a stronger, an eager and passionate interest in what will happen and he gives an excited attention to its unforeseen or dramatic events; the other, who holds the strings and moves the show, is unmoved and tranquil. There is a certain intensity of interest which comes from ignorance and is bound up with illusion, and that must disappear when you are out of the ignorance. The interest that human beings take in things finds itself on the illusion; if that were removed, they would have no interest at all in the play; they would find it dry and dull. That is why all this ignorance, all this illusion has lasted so long; it is because men like it, because they cling to it and its peculiar kind of appeal that it endures.

What should one do who wants to change his bodily condition, effect a cure or correct some physical imperfection? Should he concentrate upon the end to be realised and exercise his will-power or should he only live in the confidence that it will be done or trust in the Divine Power to bring about the desired result in its own time and in its own way?

All these are so many ways of doing the same thing and each in different conditions can be effective. The method by which you will be most successful depends on the consciousness you have developed and the character of the forces you are able to bring into play. You can live in the consciousness of the completed cure or change and by the force of your inner formation slowly bring about the outward change. Or if you know and have the vision of the force that is able to effect these things and if you have the skill to handle it, you can call it down and apply it in the parts

where its action is needed, and it will work out the change. Or, again, you can present your difficulty to the Divine and ask of It the cure, putting confidently your trust in the Divine Power.

But whatever you do, whatever the process you use, and even if you happen to have acquired in it a great skill and power, you must leave the result in the hands of the Divine. Always you may try, but it is for the Divine to give you the fruit of your effort or not to give it. There your personal power stops; if the result comes, it is the Divine Power and not yours that brings it. You question if it is right to ask the Divine for these things. But there is no more harm in turning to the Divine for the removal of a physical imperfection than in praying for the removal of a moral defect. But whatever you ask for or whatever your effort, you must feel, even while trying your best, using knowledge or putting forth power, that the result depends upon the Divine Grace. Once you have taken up the Yoga, whatever you do must be done in a spirit of complete surrender. This must be your attitude, — “I aspire, I try to cure my imperfections, I do my best, but for the result I put myself entirely into the hands of the Divine.”

Does it help, if you say, “I am sure of the result, I know that the Divine will give me what I want”?

You may take it in that way. The very intensity of your faith may mean that the Divine has already chosen that the thing it points to shall be done. An unshakable faith is a sign of the presence of the Divine Will, an evidence of what shall be.

What are the forces that are in operation when one is in silent meditation?

That depends upon the one who meditates.

But in silent meditation does he not make himself a

complete blank? Then how can anything depend upon him?

Even if you make yourself an absolute blank, that does not change the nature of your aspiration or alter its domain. In some the aspiration moves on the mental level or in the vital field; some have a spiritual aspiration. On the quality of the aspiration depends the force that answers and the work that it comes to do. To make yourself blank in meditation creates an inner silence; it does not mean that you have become nothing or have become a dead and inert mass. Making yourself an empty vessel, you invite that which shall fill it. It means that you release the stress of your inner consciousness towards realisation. The nature of the consciousness and the degree of its stress determine the forces that you bring into play and whether they shall help and fulfil or fail or even harm and hinder.

There are many varying conditions in which you may meditate and all have their effect upon the forces brought in or brought down and on their working. If you sit alone, it is your own inner and outer condition that matters. If you sit with others, the general condition is of primary importance. But in either case the conditions will always vary and the forces that answer will never be twice the same. A united concentration rightly done can be a great force. There is an old saying that if twelve sincere persons unite their will and their aspiration and call the Divine, the Divine is bound to manifest. But the will must be one-pointed, the aspiration sincere. For those who make the attempt can be united in inertia or even in mistaken or perverse desire, and the result is then likely to be disastrous.

In your meditation the first imperative need is a state of perfect and absolute sincerity in all the consciousness. It is indispensable that you should not deceive yourself or deceive or be deceived by others. Often people have a wish, a mental preference or vital desire; they want the experience to happen in a particular way or to take a turn that satisfies their ideas or

desires or preferences; they do not keep themselves blank and unprejudiced and simply and sincerely observe what happens. Then if you do not like what happens, it is easy to deceive yourself; you will see one thing, but give it a little twist and make it something else, or you will distort something simple and straightforward or magnify it into an extraordinary experience. When you sit in meditation you must be as candid and simple as a child, not interfering by your external mind, expecting nothing, insisting on nothing. Once this condition is there, all the rest depends upon the aspiration deep within you. If you ask from within for peace, it will come; if for strength, for power, for knowledge, they too will come, but all in the measure of your capacity to receive it. And if you call upon the Divine, then too — always admitting that the Divine is open to your call, and that means your call is pure enough and strong enough to reach him, — you will have the answer.

30 June 1929

What is the ground of the repulsion that one instinctively feels towards certain animals, such as snakes and scorpions?

It is not an inevitable necessity that one should feel this or any other repulsion. To have no repulsion at all is one of the fundamental achievements of Yoga.

The repulsion you speak of comes from fear; if there were no fear, it would not exist. This fear is not based on reason, it is instinctive; it is not individual, but racial; it is a general suggestion and belongs to the consciousness of humanity as a whole. When one takes up the human body, one accepts along with it a mass of these general suggestions, race ideas, race feelings of mankind, associations, attractions, repulsions, fears.

But from another viewpoint there is something very personal in the nature of an attraction or repulsion; for these movements are not the same for everybody and depend mostly on the quality of vibration of the vital being in different people. There are men who not only do not feel any repulsion for creatures like snakes, but have even a liking for them, a vital attraction and preference.

The world is full of things that are not pleasing or beautiful, but that is no reason why one should live in a constant feeling of repulsion for these things. All feelings of shrinking and disgust and fear that disturb and weaken the human mind can be overcome. A Yogi has to overcome these reactions; for almost the very first step in Yoga demands that you must keep a perfect equanimity in the presence of all beings and things and happenings. Always you must remain calm, untouched and unmoved; the strength of the Yogi lies there. An entire calmness

and quietness will disarm even dangerous and ferocious animals when they confront you.

Repulsion is a movement of ignorance. It is an instinctive gesture of self-defence. But what best protects you against any danger is not an unreasoning recoil but knowledge, knowledge of the nature of the danger and a conscious application of the means that will remove or nullify it. The ignorance from which these movements rise is a general human condition, but it can be conquered; for we are not bound to the crude human nature from which the external being starts and which is all around us.

Ignorance is dispelled by a growing consciousness; what you need is consciousness and always more consciousness, a consciousness pure, simple and luminous. In the light of this perfected consciousness, things appear as they are and not as they want to appear. It is like a screen faithfully recording all things as they pass. You see there what is luminous and what is dark, what is straight and what is crooked. Your consciousness becomes a screen or mirror; but this is when you are in a state of contemplation, a mere observer; when you are active, it is like a searchlight. You have only to turn it on, if you want to see luminously and examine penetratingly anything in any place.

The way to attain to this perfect consciousness is to increase your actual consciousness beyond its present grooves and limits, to educate it, to open it to the Divine Light and to let the Divine Light work in it fully and freely. But the Light can do its full and unhindered work only when you have got rid of all craving and fear, when you have no mental prejudices, no vital preferences, no physical apprehensions or attractions to obscure or bind you.

Repulsion is a movement of weakness. It comes because you have been touched and hurt and recoil from what hurts you. The atmosphere of a being or man or animal or its emanations may be harmful for you, although it may not be so felt by

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everybody, and directly it touches you, you shrink back from it. But if you were strong enough, you could stop the danger at a distance and not let it reach or hurt you. For you would see and know at once that there was something harmful there and put a barrier of defence around you, and, even if the thing came near, it would not be able to touch you; you would remain unhurt and unmoved by its presence.

*If the Divine that is all love is the source of the creation,
whence have come all the evils that abound upon earth?*

All is from the Divine; but the One Consciousness, the Supreme has not created the world directly out of itself; a Power has gone out from it and has descended through many gradations of its workings and passed through many agents. There are many creators or rather “formateurs”, form-makers, who have presided over the creation of the world. They are intermediary agents and I prefer to call them “Formateurs” and not “Creators”; for what they have done is to give a form and turn and nature to matter. There have been many, and some have formed things harmonious and benignant and some have shaped things mischievous and evil. And some too have been distorters rather than builders, for they have interfered and spoiled what was begun well by others.

Is not this material world of ours very low down in the scale in the system of worlds that form the creation?

Ours is the most material world, but it is not necessarily “low down”, at least, not for that reason; if it is low down, it is because it is obscure and ignorant, not because it is material. It is a mistake to make “matter” a synonym for obscurity and ignorance. And the material world too is not the only world in which we live: it is rather one of many in which we exist simultaneously, and in one way the most important of them all.

For this world of matter is the point of concentration of all the worlds; it is the field of concretisation of all the worlds; it is the place where all the worlds will have to manifest. At present it is disharmonious and obscure; but that is only an accident, a false start. One day it will become beautiful, rhythmic, full of light; for that is the consummation for which it was made.

28 July 1929

Is it possible for a Yogi to become an artist or can an artist be a Yogi? What is the relation of Art to Yoga?

The two are not so antagonistic as you seem to think. There is nothing to prevent a Yogi from being an artist or an artist from being a Yogi. But when you are in Yoga, there is a profound change in the values of things, of Art as of everything else; you begin to look at Art from a very different standpoint. It is no longer the one supreme all-engrossing thing for you, no longer an end in itself. Art is a means, not an end; it is a means of expression. And the artist then ceases too to believe that the whole world turns round what he is doing or that his work is the most important thing that has ever been done. His personality counts no longer; he is an agent, a channel, his art a means of expressing his relations with the Divine. He uses it for that purpose as he might have used any other means that were part of the powers of his nature.

But does an artist feel at all any impulse to create once he takes up Yoga?

Why should he not have the impulse? He can express his relation with the Divine in the way of his art, exactly as he would in any other. If you want art to be the true and highest art, it must be the expression of a divine world brought down into this material world. All true artists have some feeling of this kind, some sense that they are intermediaries between a higher world and this physical existence. If you consider it in this light, Art is not very different from Yoga. But most often the artist has only an indefinite feeling, he has not the knowledge. Still, I knew some who had it; they worked consciously at their art

with the knowledge. In their creation they did not put forward their personality as the most important factor; they considered their work as an offering to the Divine, they tried to express by it their relation with the Divine.

This was the avowed function of Art in the Middle Ages. The “primitive” painters, the builders of cathedrals in Mediaeval Europe had no other conception of art. In India all her architecture, her sculpture, her painting have proceeded from this source and were inspired by this ideal. The songs of Mirabai and the music of Thyagaraja, the poetic literature built up by her devotees, saints and Rishis rank among the world’s greatest artistic possessions.

But does the work of an artist improve if he does Yoga?

The discipline of Art has at its centre the same principle as the discipline of Yoga. In both the aim is to become more and more conscious; in both you have to learn to see and feel something that is beyond the ordinary vision and feeling, to go within and bring out from there deeper things. Painters have to follow a discipline for the growth of the consciousness of their eyes, which in itself is almost a Yoga. If they are true artists and try to see beyond and use their art for the expression of the inner world, they grow in consciousness by this concentration, which is not other than the consciousness given by Yoga. Why then should not Yogic consciousness be a help to artistic creation? I have known some who had very little training and skill and yet through Yoga acquired a fine capacity in writing and painting. Two examples I can cite to you. One was a girl who had no education whatever; she was a dancer and danced tolerably well. After she took up Yoga, she danced only for friends; but her dancing attained a depth of expression and beauty which was not there before. And although she was not educated, she began to write wonderful things; for she had visions and expressed them in the most beautiful language. But there were ups and

downs in her Yoga, and when she was in a good condition, she wrote beautifully, but otherwise was quite dull and stupid and uncreative. The second case is that of a boy who had studied art, but only just a little. The son of a diplomat, he had been trained for the diplomatic career; but he lived in luxury and his studies did not go far. Yet as soon as he took up Yoga, he began to produce inspired drawings which carried the expression of an inner knowledge and were symbolic in character; in the end he became a great artist.

Why are artists generally irregular in their conduct and loose in character?

When they are so, it is because they live usually in the vital plane, and the vital part in them is extremely sensitive to the forces of that world and receives from it all kinds of impressions and impulsions over which they have no controlling power. And often too they are very free in their minds and do not believe in the petty social conventions and moralities that govern the life of ordinary people. They do not feel bound by the customary rules of conduct and have not yet found an inner law that would replace them. As there is nothing to check the movements of their desire-being, they lead easily a life of liberty or license. But this does not happen with all. I lived ten years among artists and found many of them to be bourgeois to the core; they were married and settled, good fathers, good husbands, and lived up to the most strict moral ideas of what should and what should not be done.

There is one way in which Yoga may stop the artist's productive impulse. If the origin of his art is in the vital world, once he becomes a Yogi he will lose his inspiration or, rather, the source from which his inspiration used to come will inspire him no more, for then the vital world appears in its true light; it puts on its true value, and that value is very relative. Most of those who call themselves artists draw their inspiration from the

vital world only; and it carries in it no high or great significance. But when a true artist, one who looks for his creative source to a higher world, turns to Yoga, he will find that his inspiration becomes more direct and powerful and his expression clearer and deeper. Of those who possess a true value the power of Yoga will increase the value, but from one who has only some false appearance of art even that appearance will vanish or else lose its appeal. To one earnest in Yoga, the first simple truth that strikes his opening vision is that what he does is a very relative thing in comparison with the universal manifestation, the universal movement. But an artist is usually vain and looks on himself as a highly important personage, a kind of demigod in the human world. Many artists say that if they did not believe what they do to be of a supreme importance, they would not be able to do it. But I have known some whose inspiration was from a higher world and yet they did not believe that what they did was of so immense an importance. That is nearer the spirit of true art. If a man is truly led to express himself in art, it is the way the Divine has chosen to manifest in him, and then by Yoga his art will gain and not lose. But there is all the question: is the artist appointed by the Divine or self-appointed?

But if one does Yoga can he rise to such heights as Shakespeare or Shelley? There has been no such instance.

Why not? The Mahabharata and Ramayana are certainly not inferior to anything created by Shakespeare or any other poet, and they are said to have been the work of men who were Rishis and had done Yogic *tapasyā*. The Gita which, like the Upanishads, ranks at once among the greatest literary and the greatest spiritual works, was not written by one who had no experience of Yoga. And where is the inferiority to your Milton and Shelley in the famous poems written whether in India or Persia or elsewhere by men known to be saints, Sufis, devotees? And, then, do you know all the Yogis and their work? Among

the poets and creators can you say who were or who were not in conscious touch with the Divine? There are some who are not officially Yogis, they are not *gurus* and have no disciples; the world does not know what they do; they are not anxious for fame and do not attract to themselves the attention of men; but they have the higher consciousness, are in touch with a Divine Power, and when they create they create from there. The best paintings in India and much of the best statuary and architecture were done by Buddhist monks who passed their lives in spiritual contemplation and practice; they did supreme artistic work, but did not care to leave their names to posterity. The chief reason why Yogis are not usually known by their art is that they do not consider their art-expression as the most important part of their life and do not put so much time and energy into it as a mere artist. And what they do does not always reach the public. How many there are who have done great things and not published them to the world!

Have Yogis done greater dramas than Shakespeare?

Drama is not the highest of the arts. Someone has said that drama is greater than any other art and art is greater than life. But it is not quite like that. The mistake of the artist is to believe that artistic production is something that stands by itself and for itself, independent of the rest of the world. Art as understood by these artists is like a mushroom on the wide soil of life, something casual and external, not something intimate to life; it does not reach and touch the deep and abiding realities, it does not become an intrinsic and inseparable part of existence. True art is intended to express the beautiful, but in close intimacy with the universal movement. The greatest nations and the most cultured races have always considered art as a part of life and made it subservient to life. Art was like that in Japan in its best moments; it was like that in all the best moments in the history of art. But most artists are like parasites growing on the margin of

life; they do not seem to know that art should be the expression of the Divine in life and through life. In everything, everywhere, in all relations truth must be brought out in its all-embracing rhythm and every movement of life should be an expression of beauty and harmony. Skill is not art, talent is not art. Art is a living harmony and beauty that must be expressed in all the movements of existence. This manifestation of beauty and harmony is part of the Divine realisation upon earth, perhaps even its greatest part.

For, from the supramental point of view beauty and harmony are as important as any other expression of the Divine. But they should not be isolated, set up apart from all other relations, taken out from the ensemble; they should be one with the expression of life as a whole. People have the habit of saying, "Oh, it is an artist!" as if an artist should not be a man among other men but must be an extraordinary being belonging to a class by itself, and his art too something extraordinary and apart, not to be confused with the other ordinary things of the world. The maxim, "Art for art's sake", tries to impress and emphasise as a truth the same error. It is the same mistake as when men place in the middle of their drawing-rooms a framed picture that has nothing to do either with the furniture or the walls, but is put there only because it is an "object of art".

True art is a whole and an ensemble; it is one and of one piece with life. You see something of this intimate wholeness in ancient Greece and ancient Egypt; for there pictures and statues and all objects of art were made and arranged as part of the architectural plan of a building, each detail a portion of the whole. It is like that in Japan, or at least it was so till the other day before the invasion of a utilitarian and practical modernism. A Japanese house is a wonderful artistic whole; always the right thing is there in the right place, nothing wrongly set, nothing too much, nothing too little. Everything is just as it needed to be, and the house itself blends marvellously with the surrounding nature. In India, too, painting and sculpture and architecture

were one integral beauty, one single movement of adoration of the Divine.

There has been in this sense a great degeneration since then in the world. From the time of Victoria and in France from the Second Empire we have entered into a period of decadence. The habit has grown of hanging up in rooms pictures that have no meaning for the surrounding objects; any picture, any artistic object could now be put anywhere and it would make small difference. Art now is meant to show skill and cleverness and talent, not to embody some integral expression of harmony and beauty in a home.

But latterly there has come about a revolt against this lapse into bourgeois taste. The reaction was so violent that it looked like a complete aberration and art seemed about to sink down into the absurd. Slowly, however, out of the chaos something has emerged, something more rational, more logical, more coherent to which can once more be given the name of art, an art renovated and perhaps, or let us hope so, regenerated.

Art is nothing less in its fundamental truth than the aspect of beauty of the Divine manifestation. Perhaps, looking from this standpoint, there will be found very few true artists; but still there are some and these can very well be considered as Yogis. For like a Yogi an artist goes into deep contemplation to await and receive his inspiration. To create something truly beautiful, he has first to see it within, to realise it as a whole in his inner consciousness; only when so found, seen, held within, can he execute it outwardly; he creates according to this greater inner vision. This too is a kind of yogic discipline, for by it he enters into intimate communion with the inner worlds. A man like Leonardo da Vinci was a Yogi and nothing else. And he was, if not the greatest, at least one of the greatest painters,—although his art did not stop at painting alone.

Music too is an essentially spiritual art and has always been associated with religious feeling and an inner life. But, here too, we have turned it into something independent and self-sufficient,

a mushroom art, such as is operatic music. Most of the artistic productions we come across are of this kind and at best interesting from the point of view of technique. I do not say that even operatic music cannot be used as a medium of a higher art expression; for whatever the form, it can be made to serve a deeper purpose. All depends on the thing itself, on how it is used, on what is behind it. There is nothing that cannot be used for the Divine purpose — just as anything can pretend to be the Divine and yet be of the mushroom species.

Among the great modern musicians there have been several whose consciousness, when they created, came into touch with a higher consciousness. César Franck played on the organ as one inspired; he had an opening into the psychic life and he was conscious of it and to a great extent expressed it. Beethoven, when he composed the Ninth Symphony, had the vision of an opening into a higher world and of the descent of a higher world into this earthly plane. Wagner had strong and powerful intimations of the occult world; he had the instinct of occultism and the sense of the occult and through it he received his greatest inspirations. But he worked mainly on the vital level and his mind came in constantly to interfere and mechanised his inspiration. His work for the greater part is too mixed, too often obscure and heavy, although powerful. But when he could cross the vital and the mental levels and reach a higher world, some of the glimpses he had were of an exceptional beauty, as in Parsifal, in some parts of Tristan and Iseult and most in its last great Act.

Look again at what the moderns have made of the dance; compare it with what the dance once was. The dance was once one of the highest expressions of the inner life; it was associated with religion and it was an important limb in sacred ceremony, in the celebration of festivals, in the adoration of the Divine. In some countries it reached a very high degree of beauty and an extraordinary perfection. In Japan they kept up the tradition of the dance as a part of the religious life and, because the strict sense of beauty and art is a natural possession of the

Japanese, they did not allow it to degenerate into something of lesser significance and smaller purpose. It was the same in India. It is true that in our days there have been attempts to resuscitate the ancient Greek and other dances; but the religious sense is missing in all such resurrections and they look more like rhythmic gymnastics than dance.

Today Russian dances are famous, but they are expressions of the vital world and there is even something terribly vital in them. Like all that comes to us from that world, they may be very attractive or very repulsive, but always they stand for themselves and not for the expression of the higher life. The very mysticism of the Russians is of a vital order. As technicians of the dance they are marvellous; but technique is only an instrument. If your instrument is good, so much the better, but so long as it is not surrendered to the Divine, however fine it may be, it is empty of the highest and cannot serve a divine purpose. The difficulty is that most of those who become artists believe that they stand on their own legs and have no need to turn to the Divine. It is a great pity; for in the divine manifestation skill is as useful an element as anything else. Skill is one part of the divine fabric, only it must know how to subordinate itself to greater things.

There is a domain far above the mind which we could call the world of Harmony and, if you can reach there, you will find the root of all harmony that has been manifested in whatever form upon earth. For instance, there is a certain line of music, consisting of a few supreme notes, that was behind the productions of two artists who came one after another—one a concerto of Bach, another a concerto of Beethoven. The two are not alike on paper and differ to the outward ear, but in their essence they are the same. One and the same vibration of consciousness, one wave of significant harmony touched both these artists. Beethoven caught a larger part, but in him it was more mixed with the inventions and interpolations of his mind; Bach received less, but what he seized of it was purer. The vibration was that of the victorious emergence of consciousness,

consciousness tearing itself out of the womb of unconsciousness in a triumphant uprising and birth.

If by Yoga you are capable of reaching this source of all art, then you are master, if you will, of all the arts. Those that may have gone there before, found it perhaps happier, more pleasant or full of a rapturous ease to remain and enjoy the Beauty and the Delight that are there, not manifesting it, not embodying it upon earth. But this abstention is not all the truth nor the true truth of Yoga; it is rather a deformation, a diminution of the dynamic freedom of Yoga by the more negative spirit of Sannyasa. The will of the Divine is to manifest, not to remain altogether withdrawn in inactivity and an absolute silence; if the Divine Consciousness were really an inaction of unmanifesting bliss, there would never have been any creation.

4 August 1929

Is not surrender the same as sacrifice?

In our Yoga there is no room for sacrifice. But everything depends on the meaning you put on the word. In its pure sense it means a consecrated giving, a making sacred to the Divine. But in the significance that it now bears, sacrifice is something that works for destruction; it carries about it an atmosphere of negation. This kind of sacrifice is not fulfilment; it is a deprivation, a self-immolation. It is your possibilities that you sacrifice, the possibilities and realisations of your personality from the most material to the highest spiritual range. Sacrifice diminishes your being. If physically you sacrifice your life, your body, you give up all your possibilities on the material plane; you have done with the achievements of your earthly existence.

In the same way you can morally sacrifice your life; you give up the amplitude and free fulfilment of your inner existence. There is always in this idea of self-immolation a sense of forcing, a constriction, an imposed self-denial. This is an ideal that does not give room for the soul's deeper and larger spontaneities. By surrender we mean not this but a spontaneous self-giving, a giving of all your self to the Divine, to a greater Consciousness of which you are a part. Surrender will not diminish, but increase; it will not lessen or weaken or destroy your personality, it will fortify and aggrandise it. Surrender means a free total giving with all the delight of the giving; there is no sense of sacrifice in it. If you have the slightest feeling that you are making a sacrifice, then it is no longer surrender. For it means that you reserve yourself or that you are trying to give, with grudging or with pain and effort, and have not the joy of the gift, perhaps not even the feeling that you are giving. When you do anything with the sense of a compression of your being, be sure that you

are doing it in the wrong way. True surrender enlarges you; it increases your capacity; it gives you a greater measure in quality and in quantity which you could not have had by yourself. This new greater measure of quality and quantity is different from anything you could attain before: you enter into another world, into a wideness which you could not have entered if you did not surrender. It is as when a drop of water falls into the sea; if it still kept there its separate identity, it would remain a little drop of water and nothing more, a little drop crushed by all the immensity around, because it has not surrendered. But, surrendering, it unites with the sea and participates in the nature and power and vastness of the whole sea.

There is no ambiguity or vagueness in the movement, it is clear and strong and definite. If a small human mind stands in front of the Divine Universal Mind and clings to its separateness, it will remain what it is, a small bounded thing, incapable of knowing the nature of the higher reality or even of coming in contact with it. The two continue to stand apart and are, qualitatively as well as quantitatively, quite different from each other. But if the little human mind surrenders, it will be merged in the Divine Universal Mind; it will be one in quality and quantity with it; losing nothing but its own limitations and deformations, it will receive from it its vastness and luminous clearness. The small existence will change its nature; it will put on the nature of the greater truth to which it surrenders. But if it resists and fights, if it revolts against the Universal Mind, then a conflict and pressure are inevitable in which what is weak and small cannot fail to be drawn into that power and immensity. If it does not surrender, its only other possible fate is absorption and extinction. A human being, who comes into contact with the Divine Mind and surrenders, will find that his own mind begins at once to be purified of its obscurities and to share in the power and the knowledge of the Divine Universal Mind. If he stands in front, but separated, without any contact, he will remain what he is, a little drop of water in the measureless vastness. If

he revolts, he will lose his mind; its powers will diminish and disappear. And what is true of the mind is true of all the other parts of the nature. It is as when you fight against one who is too strong for you—a broken head is all you gain. How can you fight something that is a million times stronger? Each time you revolt, you get a knock, and each blow takes away a portion of your strength, as when one who engages in a pugilistic encounter with a far superior rival receives blow after blow and each blow makes him weaker and weaker till he is knocked out. There is no necessity of a willed intervention, the action is automatic. Nothing else can happen if you dash yourself in revolt against the Immensity. As long as you remain in your corner and follow the course of the ordinary life, you are not touched or hurt; but once you come in contact with the Divine, there are only two ways open to you. You surrender and merge in it, and your surrender enlarges and glorifies you; or you revolt and all your possibilities are destroyed and your powers ebb away and are drawn from you into That which you oppose.

There are many wrong ideas current about surrender. Most people seem to look upon surrender as an abdication of the personality; but that is a grievous error. For the individual is meant to manifest one aspect of the Divine Consciousness, and the expression of its characteristic nature is what creates his personality; then, by taking the right attitude towards the Divine, this personality is purified of all the influences of the lower nature which diminish and distort it and it becomes more strongly personal, more itself, more complete. The truth and power of the personality come out with a more resplendent distinctness, its character is more precisely marked than it could possibly be when mixed with all the obscurity and ignorance, all the dirt and alloy of the lower nature. It undergoes a heightening and glorification, an aggrandisement of capacity, a realisation of the maximum of its possibilities. But to have this sublimating change, he must first give up all that, by distorting, limiting and obscuring the true nature, fetters and debases and disfigures

the true personality; he must throw from him whatever belongs to the ignorant lower movements of the ordinary man and his blind limping ordinary life. And first of all he must give up his desires; for desire is the most obscure and the most obscuring movement of the lower nature. Desires are motions of weakness and ignorance and they keep you chained to your weakness and to your ignorance. Men have the impression that their desires are born within; they feel as if they come out of themselves or arise within themselves; but it is a false impression. Desires are waves of the vast sea of the obscure lower nature and they pass from one person to another. Men do not generate a desire in themselves, but are invaded by these waves; whoever is open and without defence is caught in them and tossed about. Desire by engrossing and possessing him makes him incapable of any discrimination and gives him the impression that it is part of his nature to manifest it. In reality, it has nothing to do with his true nature. It is the same with all the lower impulses, jealousy or envy, hatred or violence. These too are movements that seize you, waves that overwhelm and invade; they deform, they do not belong to the true character or the true nature; they are no intrinsic or inseparable part of yourself, but come out of the sea of surrounding obscurity in which move the forces of the lower nature. These desires, these passions have no personality, there is nothing in them or their action that is peculiar to you; they manifest in the same way in everyone. The obscure movements of the mind too, the doubts and errors and difficulties that cloud the personality and diminish its expansion and fulfilment, come from the same source. They are passing waves and they catch anyone who is ready to be caught and utilised as their blind instrument. And yet each goes on believing that these movements are part of himself and a precious product of his own free personality. Even we find people clinging to them and their disabilities as the very sign or essence of what they call their freedom.

If you have understood this, you will be ready to understand the difference, the great difference between spirituality

and morality, two things that are constantly confused with each other. The spiritual life, the life of Yoga, has for its object to grow into the divine consciousness and for its result to purify, intensify, glorify and perfect what is in you. It makes you a power for manifesting of the Divine; it raises the character of each personality to its full value and brings it to its maximum expression; for this is part of the Divine plan. Morality proceeds by a mental construction and, with a few ideas of what is good and what is not, sets up an ideal type into which all must force themselves. This moral ideal differs in its constituents and its ensemble at different times and different places. And yet it proclaims itself as a unique type, a categoric absolute; it admits of none other outside itself; it does not even admit a variation within itself. All are to be moulded according to its single ideal pattern, everybody is to be made uniformly and faultlessly the same. It is because morality is of this rigid unreal nature that it is in its principle and its working the contrary of the spiritual life. The spiritual life reveals the one essence in all, but reveals too its infinite diversity; it works for diversity in oneness and for perfection in that diversity. Morality lifts up one artificial standard contrary to the variety of life and the freedom of the spirit. Creating something mental, fixed and limited, it asks all to conform to it. All must labour to acquire the same qualities and the same ideal nature. Morality is not divine or of the Divine; it is of man and human. Morality takes for its basic element a fixed division into the good and the bad; but this is an arbitrary notion. It takes things that are relative and tries to impose them as absolutes; for this good and this bad differ in differing climates and times, epochs and countries. The moral notion goes so far as to say that there are good desires and bad desires and calls on you to accept the one and reject the other. But the spiritual life demands that you should reject desire altogether. Its law is that you must cast aside all movements that draw you away from the Divine. You must reject them, not because they are bad in themselves,— for they may be good for another man or in

another sphere,—but because they belong to the impulses or forces that, being unillumined and ignorant, stand in the way of your approach to the Divine. All desires, whether good or bad, come within this description; for desire itself arises from an unillumined vital being and its ignorance. On the other hand you must accept all movements that bring you into contact with the Divine. But you accept them, not because they are good in themselves, but because they bring you to the Divine. Accept then all that takes you to the Divine. Reject all that takes you away from it, but do not say that this is good and that is bad or try to impose your outlook on others; for, what you term bad may be the very thing that is good for your neighbour who is not trying to realise the Divine Life.

Let us take an illustration of the difference between the moral and the spiritual view of things. The ordinary social notions distinguish between two classes of men,—the generous, the avaricious. The avaricious man is despised and blamed, while the generous man is considered unselfish and useful to society and praised for his virtue. But to the spiritual vision, they both stand on the same level; the generosity of the one, the avarice of the other are deformations of a higher truth, a greater divine power. There is a power, a divine movement that spreads, diffuses, throws out freely forces and things and whatever else it possesses on all the levels of nature from the most material to the most spiritual plane. Behind the generous man and his generosity is a soul-type that expresses this movement; he is a power for diffusion, for wide distribution. There is another power, another divine movement that collects and amasses; it gathers and accumulates forces and things and all possible possessions, whether of the lower or of the higher planes. The man you tax with avarice was meant to be an instrument of this movement. Both are important, both needed in the entire plan; the movement that stores up and concentrates is no less needed than the movement that spreads and diffuses. Both, if truly surrendered to the Divine, will be utilised as instruments for its divine work

to the same degree and with an equal value. But when they are not surrendered both are alike moved by impulses of ignorance. One is pushed to throw away, the other is pulled towards keeping back; but both are driven by forces obscure to their own consciousness, and between the two there is little to choose. One could say to the much-praised generous man, from the higher point of vision of Yoga, "All your impulses of generosity are nothing in the values of the spirit, for they come from ego and ignorant desire." And, on the other hand, among those who are accused of avarice, you can see sometimes a man amassing and hoarding, full of a quiet and concentrated determination in the work assigned to him by his nature, who, once awakened, would make a very good instrument of the Divine. But ordinarily the avaricious man acts from ego and desire like his opposite; it is the other end of the same ignorance. Both will have to purify themselves and change before they can make contact with the something higher that is behind them and express it in the way to which they are called by their nature.

In the same way you could take all other types and trace them to some original intention in the Divine Force. Each is a diminution or caricature of the type intended by the Divine, a mental and vital distortion of things that have a greater spiritual value. It is a wrong movement that creates the distortion or the caricature. Once this false impulsion is mastered, the right attitude taken, the right movement found, all reveal their divine values. All are justified by the truth that is in them, all equally important, equally needed, different but indispensable instruments of the Divine Manifestation.

Questions and Answers

1930-1931

The Ordinary Life and the True Soul

The ordinary life is a round of various desires and贪欲. As long as one is preoccupied with them, there can be no lasting progress. A way out of the round must be discovered. Take, as an instance, that commonest preoccupation of ordinary life — the constant thinking by people of what they will eat and when they will eat and whether they are eating enough. To conquer the greed for food an equanimity in the being must be developed such that you are perfectly indifferent towards food. If food is given you, you eat it; if not, it does not worry you in the least; above all, you do not keep thinking about food. And the thinking must not be negative, either. To be absorbed in devising methods and means of abstinence as the *sannyasis* do is to be almost as preoccupied with food as to be absorbed in dreaming of it greedily. Have an attitude of indifference towards it: that is the main thing. Get the idea of food out of your consciousness, do not attach the slightest importance to it.

This will be very easy to do once you get into contact with your psychic being, the true soul deep within you. Then you will feel immediately how very unimportant these things are and that the sole thing that matters is the Divine. To dwell in the psychic is to be lifted above all greed. You will have no hankering, no worry, no feverish desire. And you will feel also that whatever happens, happens for the best. Do not misunderstand me to imply that you must always think that everything is for the best. Everything is not for the best so long as you are in the ordinary consciousness. You may be misled into utterly wrong channels when you are not in the right state of consciousness. But once you are poised in the psychic and have made your self-offering to the Divine, all that happens will happen for the best, for

everything, however disguised, will be a definite divine response to you.

Indeed the very act of genuine self-giving is its own immediate reward — it brings with it such happiness, such confidence, such security as nothing else can give. But till the self-giving is firmly psychic there will be disturbances, the interval of dark moments between bright ones. It is only the psychic that keeps on progressing in an unbroken line, its movement a continuous ascension. All other movements are broken and discontinuous. And it is not till the psychic is felt as yourself that you can be an individual even; for it is the true self in you. Before the true self is known, you are a public place, not a being. There are so many clashing forces working in you; hence, if you wish to make real progress, know your own being which is in constant union with the Divine. Then alone will transformation be possible. All the other parts of your nature are ignorant: the mind, for instance, often commits the mistake of thinking that every brilliant idea is also a luminous idea. It can with equal vigour trump up arguments for and against God: it has no infallible sense of the truth. The vital is generally impressed by any show of power and is willing to see in it the Godlike. It is only the psychic which has a just discrimination: it is directly aware of the supreme Presence, it infallibly distinguishes between the divine and the undivine. If you have even for a moment contacted it, you will carry with you a conviction about the Divine which nothing will shake.

How, you ask me, are we to know our true being? Ask for it, aspire after it, want it as you want nothing else. Most of you here are influenced by it, but it should be more than an influence, you should be able to feel identified with it. All urge for perfection comes from it, but you are unaware of the source, you are not collaborating with it knowingly, you are not in identification with its light. Do not think I refer to the emotional part of you when I speak of the psychic. Emotion belongs to the higher vital, not to the pure psychic. The psychic is a steady flame that burns in you, soaring towards the Divine and carrying with it a sense

of strength which breaks down all oppositions. When you are identified with it you have the feeling of the divine truth — then you cannot help feeling also that the whole world is ignorantly walking on its head with its feet in the air!

You must learn to unite what you call your individual self with your true psychic individuality. Your present individuality is a very mixed thing, a series of changes which yet preserves a certain continuity, a certain sameness or identity of vibration in the midst of all flux. It is almost like a river which is never the same and yet has a certain definiteness and persistence of its own. Your normal self is merely a shadow of your true individuality which you will realise only when this normal individual which is differently poised at different times, now in the mental, then in the vital, at other times in the physical, gets into contact with the psychic and feels it as its real being. Then you will be one, nothing will shake or disturb you, you will make steady and lasting progress and be above such petty things as greed for food.

Surrender, Self-offering and Consecration

Surrender is the decision taken to hand over the responsibility of your life to the Divine. Without this decision nothing is at all possible; if you do not surrender, the Yoga is entirely out of the question. Everything else comes naturally after it, for the whole process starts with surrender. You can surrender either through knowledge or through devotion. You may have a strong intuition that the Divine alone is the truth and a luminous conviction that without the Divine you cannot manage. Or you may have a spontaneous feeling that this line is the only way of being happy, a strong psychic desire to belong exclusively to the Divine: "I do not belong to myself," you say, and give up the responsibility of your being to the Truth. Then comes self-offering: "Here I am, a creature of various qualities, good and bad, dark and enlightened. I offer myself as I am to you, take me up with all my ups and downs, conflicting impulses and tendencies—do whatever you like with me." In the course of your self-offering, you start unifying your being around what has taken the first decision—the central psychic will. All the jarring elements of your nature have to be harmonised, they have to be taken up one after another and unified with the central being. You may offer yourself to the Divine with a spontaneous movement, but it is not possible to give yourself effectively without this unification. The more you are unified, the more you are able to realise self-giving. And once the self-giving is complete, consecration follows: it is the crown of the whole process of realisation, the last step of the gradation, after which there is no more trouble and everything runs smoothly. But you must not forget that you cannot become integrally consecrated at once. You are often deluded into such a belief when, for a day or two, you have a

strong movement of a particular kind. You are led to hope that everything else will automatically follow in its wake; but in fact if you become the least bit self-complacent you retard your own advance. For your being is full of innumerable tendencies at war with one another — almost different personalities, we may say. When one of them gives itself to the Divine, the others come up and refuse their allegiance. "We have not given ourselves," they cry, and start clamouring for their independence and expression. Then you bid them be quiet and show them the Truth. Patiently you have to go round your whole being, exploring each nook and corner, facing all those anarchic elements in you which are waiting for their psychological moment to come up. And it is only when you have made the entire round of your mental, vital and physical nature, persuaded everything to give itself to the Divine and thus achieved an absolute unified consecration that you put an end to your difficulties. Then indeed yours is a glorious walk towards transformation, for you no longer go from darkness to knowledge but from knowledge to knowledge, light to light, happiness to happiness.... The complete consecration is undoubtedly not an easy matter, and it might take an almost indefinitely long time if you had to do it all by yourself, by your own independent effort. But when the Divine's Grace is with you it is not exactly like that. With a little push from the Divine now and then, a little push in this direction and in that, the work becomes comparatively quite easy. Of course the length of time depends on each individual, but it can be very much shortened if you make a really firm resolve. Resolution is the one thing required — resolution is the master-key.

Renunciation

There is in books a lot of talk about renunciation — that you must renounce possessions, renounce attachments, renounce desires. But I have come to the conclusion that so long as you have to renounce anything you are not on this path; for, so long as you are not thoroughly disgusted with things as they are, and have to make an effort to reject them, you are not ready for the supramental realisation. If the constructions of the Overmind — the world which it has built and the existing order which it supports — still satisfy you, you cannot hope to partake of that realisation. Only when you find such a world disgusting, unbearable and unacceptable, are you fit for the change of consciousness. That is why I do not give any importance to the idea of renunciation. To renounce means that you are to give up what you value, that you have to discard what you think is worth keeping. What, on the contrary, you must feel is that this world is ugly, stupid, brutal and full of intolerable suffering; and once you feel in this way, all the physical, all the material consciousness which does not want it to be that, will want it to change, crying, "I will have something else — something that is true, beautiful, full of delight and knowledge and consciousness!" All here is floating on a sea of dark unconsciousness. But when you want the Divine with all your will, all your resolution, all your aspiration and intensity, it will surely come. But it is not merely a matter of ameliorating the world. There are people who clamour for change of government, social reform and philanthropic work, believing that they can thereby make the world better. We want a new world, a true world, an expression of the Truth-Consciousness. And it will be, it must be — and the sooner the better!

It should not, however, be just a subjective change. The whole physical life must be transformed. The material world

does not want a mere change of consciousness in us. It says in effect: "You retire into bliss, become luminous, have the divine knowledge; but that does not alter me. I still remain the hell I practically am!" The true change of consciousness is one that will change the physical conditions of the world and make it an entirely new creation.

Aspiration in the Physical for the Divine's Love

Here is the flower we have called “Aspiration in the Physical for the Divine’s Love.” By the “Physical” I mean the physical consciousness, the most ordinary outward-going consciousness, the normal consciousness of most human beings, which sets such great store by comfort, good food, good clothes, happy relationships, etc., instead of aspiring for the higher things. Aspiration in the physical for the Divine’s Love implies that the physical asks for nothing else save that it should feel how the Divine loves it. It realises that all its usual satisfactions are utterly insufficient. But there cannot be a compromise: if the physical wants the Divine’s Love it must want that alone and not say, “I shall have the Divine’s Love and at the same time keep my other attachments, needs and enjoyments....”

The fundamental seat of aspiration from which it radiates or manifests in one part of the being or another is the psychic centre. When I speak of aspiration in the physical I mean that the very consciousness in you which hankers after material comfort and well-being should of itself, without being compelled by the higher parts of your nature, ask exclusively for the Divine’s Love. Usually you have to show it the Light by means of your higher parts; surely this has to be done persistently, otherwise the physical would never learn and it would take Nature’s common round of ages before it learns by itself. Indeed the round of Nature is intended to show it all possible sorts of satisfactions and by exhausting them convince it that none of them can really satisfy it and that what it is at bottom seeking is a divine satisfaction. In Yoga we hasten this slow process of Nature and insist on the physical consciousness seeing the truth and learning to recognise and want it. But how to show it the truth? Well, just as

you bring a light into a dark room. Illumine the darkness of your physical consciousness with the intuition and aspiration of your more refined parts and keep on doing so till it realises how futile and unsatisfactory is its hunger for the low ordinary things, and turns spontaneously towards the truth. When it does turn, your whole life will be changed — the experience is unmistakable.

When, as a child, I used to complain to my mother about food or any such small matter she would always tell me to go and do my work or pursue my studies instead of bothering about trifles. She would ask me if I had the complacent idea that I was born for comfort. "You are born to realise the highest Ideal," she would say and send me packing. She was quite right, though of course her notion of the highest Ideal was rather poor by our standards. We are all born for the highest Ideal: therefore, whenever in our Ashram some petty request for more comfort and material happiness is refused, it is for your own good and to make you fulfil what you are here for. The refusal is actually a favour inasmuch as you are thereby considered worthy to stand before the highest Ideal and be shaped according to it.

Aspiration in Plants

Have you never watched a forest with all its countless trees and plants simply struggling to catch the light—twisting and trying in a hundred possible ways just to be in the sun? That is precisely the feeling of aspiration in the physical—the urge, the movement, the push towards the light. Plants have more of it in their physical being than men. Their whole life is a worship of light. Light is of course the material symbol of the Divine, and the sun represents, under material conditions, the Supreme Consciousness. The plants have felt it quite distinctly in their own simple, blind way. Their aspiration is intense, if you know how to become aware of it. On the plane of Matter they are the most open to my influence—I can transmit a state of consciousness more easily to a flower than to a man: it is very receptive, though it does not know how to formulate its experience to itself because it lacks a mind. But the pure psychic consciousness is instinctive to it. When, therefore, you offer flowers to me their condition is almost always an index to yours. There are persons who never succeed in bringing a fresh flower to me—even if the flower is fresh it becomes limp in their hands. Others, however, always bring fresh flowers and even revitalise drooping ones. If your aspiration is strong your flower-offerings will be fresh. And if you are receptive you will be also very easily able to absorb the message I put in the flowers I give you. When I give them, I give you states of consciousness; the flowers are the mediums and it all depends on your receptivity whether they are effective or not.

Union with the Divine Consciousness and Will

The force which, when absorbed in the Ignorance, takes the form of vital desires is the same which, in its pure form, constitutes the push, the dynamis towards transformation. Consequently, you must beware at the same time of indulging freely in desires, thinking them to be needs which must be satisfied, and of rejecting the vital force as positively evil. What you should do is to throw the doors of your being wide open to the Divine. The moment you conceal something, you step straight into Falsehood. The least suppression on your part pulls you immediately down into unconsciousness. If you want to be fully conscious, be always in front of the Truth — completely open yourself and try your utmost to let it see deep inside you, into every corner of your being. That alone will bring into you light and consciousness and all that is most true. Be absolutely modest — that is to say, know the distance between what you are and what is to be, not allowing the crude physical mentality to think that it knows when it does not, that it can judge when it cannot. Modesty implies the giving up of yourself to the Divine whole-heartedly, asking for help and, by submission, winning the freedom and absence of responsibility which imparts to the mind utter quietness. Not otherwise can you hope to attain the union with the Divine Consciousness and the Divine Will. Of course it depends on the path by which you approach the Divine whether the union with the Consciousness comes first or with the Will. If you go deep within, the former will naturally precede, whereas if you take a standpoint in the universal movement the latter is likely to be realised first; but it is not quite possible to make a cut and dried generalisation because the sadhana is a flexible and fluid thing and also because the Divine Consciousness and Will are

very closely connected with each other, being two aspects of one single Being. Take note, however, that the merely external similarity of your thought or action does not prove that this union has been achieved. All such proofs are superficial, for the real union means a thorough change, a total reversal of your normal consciousness. You cannot have it in your mind or in your ordinary state of awareness. You must get clean out of that —then and not till then can you be united with the Divine Consciousness. Once the union is really experienced the very idea of proving it by the similarity of your thought and action with mine will make you laugh. People living together in the same house for years or coming in daily intimate contact with one another develop a sort of common mind —they think and act alike. But you cannot claim to be like the Divine by such merely mental contact; you must consent to have your consciousness entirely reversed! The genuine sign of the union is that your consciousness has the same quality, the same way of working as the Divine's and proceeds from the same supramental source of Knowledge. That you sometimes happen to act in the external field as the Divine appears to act may be nothing save coincidence, and to demonstrate the union by such comparisons is to try to prove a very great thing by a very small one! The true test is the direct experience of the Divine Consciousness in whatever you do. It is an unmistakable test, because it changes your being completely. Evidently, you cannot at once be fixed in the Divine Consciousness; but even before it settles in you, you can have now and then the experience of it. The Divine Consciousness will come and go, but while the union lasts you will be as if somebody else! The whole universe will wear a new face and you yourself as well as your perception and vision of things will be metamorphosed. So long as you lack the experience you are inclined to look for proofs: proofs and results are secondary —what the union fundamentally means is that in your consciousness you know more than a human being. It is all to the good if, owing to your acquiring a pure, calm and receptive mind,

you manage to think and act in accordance with my intentions. But you must not mistake a step on the way for the final goal. For the chief difference between the positive union and mental receptivity is that I have to formulate what I want you to carry out and put the formula into your pure and calm mind, whereas in the case of the actual union I need not formulate at all. I just put the necessary truth-consciousness in you and the rest automatically works out, because it is I myself who am then in you.... I dare say it is all rather difficult for you to imagine, the experience being well-nigh indescribable. It is, however, less difficult to imagine the union of the will with the Divine Will, for you can imagine a Will which is effective without struggle and victoriously manifest everywhere. And if all your will tends to unite with it, then there is something approaching a union. That is to say, you begin to lose your separate egoistic will and your being thirsts naturally to fulfil the Divine's behest and, without knowing even what the supreme Will is, wills exactly what the Divine wishes. But this means an unquestioning acceptance of the Higher Guidance. The energy in you which is deformed into vital desire but which is originally the urge towards realisation must unite with the Divine Will, so that all your power of volition mingles with it as a drop of water with the sea. No more then its own weaknesses and failings, but evermore the supreme quality of the Divine Will — Omnipotence!

Endurance—the Vital's Hunger for Praise—Signs of the Converted Vital

Let endurance be your watchword: teach the life-force in you — your vital being — not to complain but to put up with all the conditions necessary for great achievement. The body is a very enduring servant, it bears the stress of circumstance tamely like a beast of burden. It is the vital being that is always grumbling and uneasy. The slavery and torture to which it subjects the physical is almost incalculable. How it twists and deforms the poor body to its own fads and fancies, irrationally demanding that everything should be shaped according to its whimsicality! But the very essence of endurance is that the vital should learn to give up its capricious likes and dislikes and preserve an equanimity in the midst of the most trying conditions. When you are treated roughly by somebody or you lack something which would relieve your discomfort, you must keep up cheerfully instead of letting yourself be disturbed. Let nothing ruffle you the least bit, and whenever the vital tends to air its petty grievances with pompous exaggeration just stop to consider how very happy you are, compared to so many in this world. Reflect for a moment on what the soldiers who fought in the last war had to go through. If you had to bear such hardships you would realise the utter silliness of your dissatisfactions. And yet I do not wish you to court difficulties — what I want is simply that you should learn to endure the little insignificant troubles of your life.

Nothing great is ever accomplished without endurance. If you study the lives of great men you will see how they set themselves like flint against the weaknesses of the vital. Even today, the true meaning of our civilisation is the mastery of the physical through endurance in the vital. The spirit of sport and of adventure and the dauntless facing of odds which is evident

in all fields of life are part of this ideal of endurance. In science itself, progress depends on the countless difficult tests and trials which precede achievement. Surely, with such momentous work as we have in hand in our Ashram, we have not any less need of endurance. What you must do is to give your vital a good beating as soon as it protests; for, when the physical is concerned, there is reason to be considerate and to take precautions, but with the vital the only method is a sound "kicking". Kick your vital the moment it complains, because there is no other way of getting out of the petty consciousness which attaches so much importance to creature comforts and social amenities instead of asking for the Light and the Truth.

One of the commonest demands of the vital is for praise. It hates to be criticised and treated as if it were of little importance. But it must be always prepared for rebuffs and stand them with absolute calm; nor must it pay attention to compliments, forgetting that each movement of self-satisfaction is an offering at the altar of the lords of falsehood. The beings of the subtle world of the life-force, with which our vital is connected, live and flourish on the worship of their devotees, and that is why they are always inspiring new cults and religions so that their feasts of worship and adulation may never come to an end. So also your own vital being and the vital forces behind it thrive—that is to say, fatten their ignorance—by absorbing the flatteries given by others. But you must remember that the compliments paid by creatures on the same level of ignorance as oneself are really worth nothing, they are just as worthless as the criticisms levelled at one. No matter from what pretentious source they derive, they are futile and empty. Unfortunately, however, the vital craves even for the most rotten food and is so greedy that it will accept praise from even the very embodiments of incompetence. I am reminded of the annual opening of the Arts Exhibition in Paris, when the President of the Republic inspects the pictures, eloquently discovering that one is a landscape and another a portrait, and making platitudinous comments with

the air of a most intimate soul-searching knowledge of Painting. The painters know very well how inept the remarks are and yet miss no chance of quoting the testimony of the President to their genius. For such indeed is the vital in mankind, ravenously fame-hungry.

What, however, is of genuine worth is the opinion of the Truth. When there is somebody who is in contact with the Divine Truth and can express it, then the opinions given out are no mere compliments or criticisms but what the Divine thinks of you, the value it sets on your qualities, its unerring stamp on your efforts. It must be your desire to hold nothing in esteem except the word of the Truth; and in order thus to raise your standard you must keep Agni, the soul's flame of transformation, burning in you. It is noteworthy how, when Agni flares up, you immediately develop a loathing for the cheap praise which formerly used to gratify you so much, and understand clearly that your love of praise was a low movement of the untransformed nature. Agni makes you see what a vast vista of possible improvement stretches in front of you, by filling you with a keen sense of your present insufficiency. The encomium lavished on you by others so disgusts you that you feel almost bitter towards those whom you would have once considered your friends; whereas all criticism comes as a welcome fuel to your humble aspiration towards the Truth. No longer do you feel depressed or slighted by the hostility of others. For, at least, you are able to ignore it with the greatest ease; at the most, you appreciate it as one more testimony to your present unregenerate state, inciting you to surpass yourself by surrendering to the Divine.

Another remarkable sign of the conversion of your vital, owing to Agni's influence, is that you face your difficulties and obstacles with a smile. You do not sit any more in sackcloth and ashes, lamenting over your mistakes and feeling utterly crestfallen because you are not at the moment quite up to the mark. You simply chase away depression with a smile. A hundred mistakes do not matter to you: with a smile you recognise

that you have erred and with a smile you resolve not to repeat the folly in the future. All depression and gloom is created by the hostile forces who are never so pleased as when throwing on you a melancholy mood. Humility is indeed one thing and depression quite another, the former a divine movement and the latter a very crude expression of the dark forces. Therefore, face your troubles joyously, oppose with invariable cheerfulness the obstacles that beset the road to transformation. The best means of routing the enemy is to laugh in his face! You may grapple and tussle for days and he may still show an undiminished vigour; but just once laugh at him and lo! he takes to his heels. A laugh of self-confidence and of faith in the Divine is the most shattering strength possible — it disrupts the enemy's front, spreads havoc in his ranks and carries you triumphantly onwards.

The converted vital feels also a joy in the process of realisation. All the difficulties implied in that process it accepts with gusto, it never feels happier than when the Truth is shown it and the play of falsehood in its lower nature laid bare. It does not do the Yoga as if carrying a burden on its back but as if it were a very pleasurable occupation. It is willing to endure the utmost with a smile if it is a condition of the transformation. Neither complaining nor grumbling, it endures happily because it is for the sake of the Divine that it does so. It has the unshakable conviction that the victory will be won. Never for an instant does it vacillate in its belief that the mighty work of Change taken up by Sri Aurobindo is going to culminate in success. For that indeed is a fact; there is not a shadow of doubt as to the issue of the work we have in hand. It is no mere experiment but an inevitable manifestation of the Supramental. The converted vital has a prescience of the victory, keeps up a will towards progress which never turns its back, feels full of the energy which is born of its certitude about the triumph of the Divine whom it is aware of always in itself as doing whatsoever is necessary and infusing in it the unfaltering power to resist and finally conquer its enemies. Why should it despair or complain?

Questions and Answers

The transformation is going to be: nothing will ever stop it, nothing will frustrate the decree of the Omnipotent. Cast away, therefore, all diffidence and weakness, and resolve to endure bravely awhile before the great day arrives when the long battle turns into an everlasting victory.

Victory over Falsehood

The lords of Falsehood hold, at present, almost complete sway over poor humanity. Not only the lower life-energy, the lower vital being, but also the whole mind of man accepts them. Countless are the ways in which they are worshipped, for they are most subtle in their cunning and seek their ends in variously seductive disguises. The result is that men cling to their falsehood as if it were a treasure, cherishing it more than even the most beautiful things of life. Apprehensive of its safety, they take care to bury it deep down in themselves; but unless they take it out and surrender it to the Divine they will never find true happiness.

Indeed the very act of bringing it out and showing it to the Light would be in itself a momentous conversion and pave the way to the final victory. For the laying bare of each falsehood is in itself a victory—each acknowledgment of error is the demolition of one of the lords of Darkness. It may be an acknowledgment to oneself, provided it is absolutely honest and is no subtle regret apt to be forgotten the next moment and without the strength to make an unbreakable resolution not to repeat the mistake. Or it may be the acknowledgment to the Divine embodied in the Guru. As a result of direct personal confession to the Guru, your resolution remains no longer your own, because, if you are sincere, the Divine's fiat goes forth in your favour. To give you an idea of what this means I shall relate an experience of mine when I first met Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry. I was in deep concentration, seeing things in the Supermind, things that were to be but which were somehow not manifesting. I told Sri Aurobindo what I had seen and asked him if they would manifest. He simply said, "Yes." And immediately I saw that the Supramental had touched the earth and was beginning to be realised! This was the first time I had witnessed the power to make real what is true: it is the very same power

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that will bring about the realisation in you of the truth when you come in all sincerity, saying, “This falsehood I want to get rid of”, and the answer which you get is “Yes.”

Difficulties in Yoga

The nature of your difficulty indicates the nature of the victory you will gain, the victory you will exemplify in Yoga. Thus, if there is persistent selfishness, it points to a realisation of universality as your most prominent achievement in the future. And, when selfishness is there, you have also the power to reverse this very difficulty into its opposite, a victory of utter wideness.

When you have something to realise, you will have in you just the characteristic which is the contradiction of that something. Face to face with the defect, the difficulty, you say, "Oh, I am like that! How awful it is!" But you ought to see the truth of the situation. Say to yourself, "My difficulty shows me clearly what I have ultimately to represent. To reach the absolute negation of it, the quality at the other pole — this is my mission."

Even in ordinary life, we have sometimes the experience of contraries. He who is very timid and has no courage in front of circumstances proves capable of bearing the most!

To one who has the aspiration for the Divine, the difficulty which is always before him is the door by which he will attain God in his own individual manner: it is his particular path towards the Divine Realisation.

There is also the fact that if somebody has a hundred difficulties it means he will have a tremendous realisation — provided, of course, there are in him patience and endurance and he keeps the aspiring flame of Agni burning against those defects.

And remember: the Grace of the Divine is generally proportioned to your difficulties.

Vital Conversion— Rebirth and Personal Survival

It is very important that the vital should agree to change: it must learn to accept conversion. The vital is not in itself anything to be decried: in fact, all energy, dynamism and push comes from it — without it you may be calm and wise and detached, but you will be absolutely immobile and uncreative. The body would be inert, just like a stone, without the force infused into it by the vital. If the vital is left out, you would be able to realise nothing. But like a spirited horse it is liable to be refractory and, therefore, requires good control. You have to keep your reins tight and your whip ready in order to keep the powerful beast in check. Of course, once the vital has consented to be transformed there is no need either of the tight reins or the ready whip: you proceed smoothly towards the goal, leaping lightly over each obstacle in the way. Otherwise, the vital will either stumble over the barriers or fight shy of jumping them. It is no use thinking that all would have been well if there had been no hurdles at all: they are a part of the game and if they are not faced and jumped in this life on earth you will have to surmount a hundred times greater ones on other planes and in other lives. The best thing is to make up your mind once for all and train your vital to run the race here while you are in the body and, if possible, win it. You are sure to win provided your physical mind reforms itself and helps the vital to change, instead of playing the role of a robber who holds down his victim while his accomplice makes a haul of the victim's property.

The condition of your being after death depends very much on whether the vital has been converted here or not. If you are only a medley of unorganised impulses, then at death, when the consciousness withdraws into the background, the different

personalities in you fall apart, rushing hither and thither to seek their own suitable environments. One part may enter into another person who has an affinity for it, another may even enter an animal, while that which has been alive to the divine Presence may remain attached to the central psychic being. But if you are fully organised and converted into a single individual, bent on reaching the goal of evolution, then you will be conscious after death and preserve a continuity.

As to rebirth, it must be confessed that no rule holds good for all cases. Some people are reborn almost immediately—it most often happens with parents that a part of them gets assimilated into their children if the latter are very much attached to them. Some people, however, take centuries and even thousands of years to be reincarnated. They wait for the necessary conditions to mature which will provide them with a suitable *milieu*. If one is yogically conscious he can actually prepare the body of his next birth. Before the body is born he shapes and moulds it, so that it is he who is the true maker of it while the parents of the new child are only the adventitious, purely physical agents.

I must here remark in passing that there is a common misconception about rebirth. People believe that it is they who are reincarnated, yet this is a palpable error, though it is true that parts of their being are amalgamated with others and so act through new bodies. Their whole being is not reborn, because of the simple fact that what they evidently mean by their "self" is not a real individualised entity but their exterior personality, the personality composed of the outward name and form. Hence it is wrong to say that A is reborn as B: A is a personality organically distinct from B and cannot be said to have reincarnated as B. You would be right only if you said that the same line of consciousness uses both A and B as the instruments of its manifestation. For, what does remain constant is the psychic being which is not the outward personality at all, but something deep within, something which is not the exterior name and form.

You want to know if all men retain their identities after

the dissolution of their bodies. Well, it depends. The ordinary mass of men are so closely identified with their bodies that nothing of them survives when the physical disintegrates. Not that absolutely nothing survives — the vital and mental stuff always remains but it is not identical with the physical personality. What survives has not the clear impress of the exterior personality because the latter was content to remain a jumble of impulses and desires, a temporary organic unity constituted by the cohesion and coordination of bodily functions, and when these functions cease their pseudo-unity also naturally comes to an end. Only if there has been a mental discipline imposed on the different parts and they have been made to subserve a common mental ideal, can there be some sort of genuine individuality which retains the memory of its earthly life and so survives consciously. The artist, the philosopher and other developed persons who have organised, individualised and to a certain extent converted their vital being can be said to survive, because they have brought into their exterior consciousness some shadow of the psychic entity which is immortal by its very nature and whose aim is to progressively build up the being around the central Divine Will.

Resurrection

Resurrection means, for us, the falling off of the old consciousness; but it is not only a rebirth, a sudden change which completely breaks with the past. There is a certain continuity in it between dying to your old self, your low exterior nature and starting quite anew. In the experience of resurrection the movement of discarding the old being is closely connected with that of the rising up from it of the new consciousness and the new strength, so that from what is thrown off the best can unite in a new creation with what has succeeded. The true significance of resurrection is that the Divine Consciousness awakes from the unconsciousness into which it has gone down and lost itself, the Divine Consciousness becomes once more aware of itself in spite of its descent into the world of death, night and obscurity. That world of obscurity is darker even than our physical night: if you came up after plunging into it you would actually find the most impenetrable night clear, just as returning from the true Light of the Divine Consciousness, the Supramental Light without obscurity, you would find the physical sun black. But even in the depths of that supreme darkness the supreme Light lies hidden. Let that Light and that Consciousness awaken in you, let there be the great Resurrection.

Reincarnation – Memory of Past Lives

To understand rightly the problem of what is popularly called reincarnation, you must perceive that there are two factors in it which require consideration. First, there is the line of divine consciousness which seeks to manifest from above and upholds a certain series of formations, peculiar to itself, in the universe which is its field of manifestation. Secondly, there is the psychic consciousness which climbs up from below, the seed of the Divine developing through time till it meets the Force from above and takes the impress of the supramental Truth. This psychic consciousness is the inner being of a man, the material from which his true soul or *jiva* can be fashioned when, in response to its aspiration, the Supramental descends to give it a consistent personality. The exterior being of man is a perishable formation out of the stuff of universal Nature — mental, vital, physical — and is due to the complex interplay of all kinds of forces. The psychic absorbs the essence, as it were, of the experiences of the various formations behind which it stands; but not being in constant contact with them it does not retain the memory of the lives in their totality to which it supplies the background. Hence by merely contacting the psychic one cannot have the recollection of all those past lives: what commonly goes by the name of such recollection is, mostly, either deliberate imposture or a fabrication out of a few spasmodic hints received from within. Many people claim to remember their animal lives as well: they say that they were such and such a monkey living in this or that part of the globe. But if anything is certain, it is that the monkey has no contact whatever with the psychic consciousness and so transmits not one jot of his experiences to it. The impressions of his exterior monkey-nature vanish with

the crumbling of his animal body: to pretend to a knowledge of them is to betray the grossest ignorance of the actual facts of the problem under consideration. Even with regard to human lives, it is only when the psychic has come to the fore that it carries and preserves definite memories, but certainly not of all the details of life unless it is constantly in front and one with the exterior being. For, as a rule, the physical mind and the physical vital dissolve with the death of the organism: they disintegrate and return to the universal Nature and nothing remains of their experiences. Not until they have become united with the psychic, so that there are not two halves but a single consciousness, the whole nature unified round the central Divine Will and this centralised being is connected up with the divine line of consciousness which is above—not until this happens can one receive the knowledge belonging to that consciousness and become aware of the entire series of forms and lives which were upheld by it as its own successive means of gradual self-expression. Before this is done, it is meaningless to speak of *one's* past births and their various incidents. This precious *oneself* is just the present impermanent exterior nature which has absolutely nothing to do with the several other formations behind which, as behind the present one, the true being stands. Only the supramental consciousness holds these births as if strung on one single thread and that alone can give the real knowledge of them all.

Psychic Presence and Psychic Being— Real Origin of Race Superiority

With regard to the evolution upwards, it is more correct to speak of the psychic presence than the psychic being. For it is the psychic presence which little by little becomes the psychic being. In each evolving form there is this presence, but it is not individualised. It is something which is capable of growth and follows the movement of the evolution. It is not a descent of the involution from above. It is formed progressively round the spark of Divine Consciousness which is meant to be the centre of a growing being which becomes the psychic being when it is at last individualised. It is this spark that is permanent and gathers round itself all sorts of elements for the formation of that individuality; the true psychic being is formed only when the psychic personality is fully grown, fully built up, round the eternal divine spark; it attains its culmination, its total fulfilment if and when it unites with a being or personality from above.

Below the human level there is, ordinarily, hardly any individual formation — there is only this presence, more or less. But when, by the growth of the body round the spark of Divine Consciousness, humanity began upon the earth, certain human organisms became in the course of this progressive growth sufficiently perfected, and by their opening and receptivity allowed a junction with certain beings descending from above. This gave rise to a kind of divine humanity, what may be called a race of the élite. If only they had remained by themselves, these people would have continued as a race unique and superhuman. Indeed many races have made claims to be that: the Aryan, the Semitic and the Japanese have all in turn considered themselves the chosen race. But in fact there has been a general levelling of humanity, a lot of intermixture. For there arose the necessity

of prolongation of the superior race, which drove it to intermix with the rest of humanity — with animal humanity, that is to say. Thus its value was degraded and led to that great Fall which is spoken of in the world's scriptures, the coming out of Paradise, the end of the Golden Age. Indeed it was a loss from the point of view of consciousness, but not from that of material strength, since it was a tremendous gain to ordinary humanity. There were, certainly, some beings who had a very strong will not to mix, who resented losing their superiority; and it is just this that is the real origin of race-pride, race-exclusiveness, and a special caste distinction like that cherished by the Brahmins in India. But at present it cannot be said that there is any portion of mankind which is purely animal: all the races have been touched by the descent from above, and owing to the extensive intermixture the result of the Involution was more widely spread.

Of course one cannot say that every man has got a psychic being, just as one cannot refuse to grant it to every animal. Many animals that have lived near man have some beginnings of it, while so often one comes across people who do not seem to be anything else than brutes. Here, too, there has been a good deal of levelling. But on the whole, the psychic in the true sense starts at the human stage: that is also why the Catholic religion declares that only man has a soul. In man alone there is the possibility of the psychic being growing to its full stature even so far as to be able in the end to join and unite with a descending being, a godhead from above.

Faith

The perception of the exterior consciousness may deny the perception of the psychic. But the psychic has the true knowledge, an intuitive instinctive knowledge. It says, "I know; I cannot give reasons, but I know." For its knowledge is not mental, based on experience or proved true. It does not believe after proofs are given: faith is the movement of the soul whose knowledge is spontaneous and direct. Even if the whole world denies and brings forward a thousand proofs to the contrary, still it knows by an inner knowledge, a direct perception that can stand against everything, a perception by identity. The knowledge of the psychic is something which is concrete and tangible, a solid mass. You can also bring it into your mental, your vital and your physical; and then you have an integral faith—a faith which can really move mountains. But nothing in the being must come and say, "It is not like that", or ask for a test. By the least half-belief you spoil matters. How can the Supreme manifest if faith is not integral and immovable? Faith in itself is always unshakable—that is its very nature, for otherwise it is not faith at all. But it may happen that the mind or the vital or the physical does not follow the psychic movement. A man can come to a Yogi and have a sudden faith that this person will lead him to his goal. He does not know whether the person has knowledge or not. He feels a psychic shock and knows that he has met his master. He does not believe after long mental consideration or seeing many miracles. And this is the only kind of faith worthwhile. You will always miss your destiny if you start arguing. Some people sit down and consider whether the psychic impulse is reasonable or not.

It is not really by what is called blind faith that people are misled. They often say, "Oh, I have believed in this or that man and he has betrayed me!" But in fact the fault lies not with the

man but with the believer: it is some weakness in himself. If he had kept his faith intact he would have changed the man: it is because he did not remain in the same faith-consciousness that he found himself betrayed and did not make the man what he wanted him to be. If he had had integral faith, he would have obliged the man to change. It is always by faith that miracles happen. A person goes to another and has a contact with the Divine Presence; if he can keep this contact pure and sustained, it will oblige the Divine Consciousness to manifest in the most material. But all depends on your own standard and your own sincerity; and the more you are psychically ready the more you are led to the right source, the right master. The psychic and its faith are always sincere, but if in your exterior being there is insincerity and if you are seeking not spiritual life but personal powers, that can mislead you. It is that and not your faith that misleads you. Pure in itself, faith can get mixed up in the being with low movements and it is then that you are misled.

Power of Right Attitude

Is it really the best that always happens?... It is clear that all that has happened had to happen: it could not be otherwise—by the universal determinism it had to happen. But we can say so only after it has happened, not before. For the problem of the very best that can happen is an individual problem, whether the individual be a nation or a single human being; and all depends upon the personal attitude. If, in the presence of circumstances that are about to take place, you can take the highest attitude possible—that is, if you put your consciousness in contact with the highest consciousness within reach, you can be absolutely sure that in that case it is the best that can happen to you. But as soon as you fall from this consciousness into a lower state, then it is evidently not the best that can happen, for the simple reason that you are not in your very best consciousness. I even go so far as to affirm that in the zone of immediate influence of each one, the right attitude not only has the power to turn every circumstance to advantage but can change the very circumstance itself. For instance, when a man comes to kill you, if you remain in the ordinary consciousness and get frightened out of your wits, he will most probably succeed in doing what he came for; if you rise a little higher and though full of fear call for the divine help, he may just miss you, doing you a slight injury; if, however, you have the right attitude and the full consciousness of the divine presence everywhere around you, he will not be able to lift even a finger against you.

This truth is just the key to the whole problem of transformation. Always keep in touch with the divine presence, try to bring it down—and the very best will always take place. Of course the world will not change at once, but it will go forward as rapidly as it possibly can. Do not forget that this is so only if you keep on the straight road of Yoga, and not if you deviate

and lose your way and wander about capriciously or helplessly as though in a virgin forest.

If each of you did your utmost, then there would be the right collaboration and the result would be so much the quicker. I have had innumerable examples of the power of right attitude. I have seen crowds saved from catastrophes by one single person keeping the right attitude. But it must be an attitude that does not remain somewhere very high and leaves the body to its usual reactions. If you remain high up like that, saying, "Let God's will be done", you may get killed all the same. For your body may be quite undivine, shivering with fear: the thing is to hold the true consciousness in the body itself and not have the least fear and be full of the divine peace. Then indeed there is no danger. Not only can attacks of men be warded off, but beasts also and even the elements can be affected. I can give you a little example. You remember the night of the great cyclone, when there was a tremendous noise and splash of rain all about the place. I thought I would go to Sri Aurobindo's room and help him shut the windows. I just opened his door and found him sitting quietly at his desk, writing. There was such a solid peace in the room that nobody would have dreamed that a cyclone was raging outside. All the windows were wide open, not a drop of rain was coming inside.

Power of Imagination

The imagination is really the power of mental formation. When this power is put at the service of the Divine, it is not only formative but also creative. There is, however, no such thing as an unreal formation, because every image is a reality on the mental plane. The plot of a novel, for instance, is all there on the mental plane existing independently of the physical. Each of us is a novelist to a certain extent and possesses the capacity to make forms on that plane; and, in fact, a good deal of our life embodies the products of our imagination. Every time you indulge your imagination in an unhealthy way, giving a form to your fears and anticipating accidents and misfortunes, you are undermining your own future. On the other hand, the more optimistic your imagination, the greater the chance of your realising your aim. Monsieur Coué got hold of this potent truth and cured hundreds of people by simply teaching them to imagine themselves out of misery. He once related the case of a lady whose hair was falling off. She began to suggest to herself that she was improving every day and that her hair was surely growing. By constantly imagining it her hair really began to grow and even reached an enviable length owing to still further auto-suggestion. The power of mental formation is most useful in Yoga also; when the mind is put in communication with the Divine Will, the supramental Truth begins to descend through the layers intervening between the mind and the highest Light and if, on reaching the mind, it finds there the power of making forms it easily becomes embodied and stays as a creative force in you. Therefore I say to you never be dejected and disappointed but let your imagination be always hopeful and joyously plastic to the stress of the higher Truth, so that the latter may find you full of the necessary formations to hold its creative light.

The imagination is like a knife which may be used for good

or evil purposes. If you always dwell in the idea and feeling that you are going to be transformed, then you will help the process of the Yoga. If, on the contrary, you give in to dejection and bewail that you are not fit or that you are incapable of realisation, you poison your own being. It is just on account of this very important truth that I am so tirelessly insistent in telling you to let anything happen but, for heavens sake, not to get depressed. Live rather in the constant hope and conviction that what we are doing will prove a success. In other words, let your imagination be moulded by your faith in Sri Aurobindo; for, is not such faith the very hope and conviction that the will of Sri Aurobindo is bound to be done, that his work of transformation cannot but end in a supreme victory and that what he calls the supramental world will be brought down on earth and realised by us here and now?

Selfless Admiration

People are so unwilling to recognise anything that expresses the Divine that they are ever on the alert to find fault, discover apparent defects and so reduce what is high to their own level. They are simply furious at being surpassed and when they do succeed in finding superficial “shortcomings” they are greatly pleased. But they forget that if they confront even the Divine, when its presence is on the earth, with their crude physical mind they are bound to meet only what is crude. They cannot hope to see what they are themselves incapable of seeing or unwilling to see. They are sure to misjudge the Divine if they consider the surface-aspect of its actions, for they will never understand that what seems similar to human activity is yet altogether dissimilar and proceeds from a source which is non-human.

The Divine, manifesting itself for the work on earth, appears to act as men do but really does not. It is not possible to evaluate it by such standards of the obvious and the apparent. But men are utterly in love with their own inferiority and cannot bear to submit to or admit a higher reality. This desire to find fault, this malicious passion to criticise and doubt what something in oneself tells one is a higher reality is the very stamp of humanity — it marks out the merely human. Wherever, on the other hand, there is a spontaneous admiration for the true, the beautiful, the noble, there is something divine expressed. You should know for certain that it is the psychic being, the soul in you with which your physical consciousness comes in contact when your heart leaps out to worship and admire what you feel to be of a divine origin.

The moment you are in front of what you feel to be such, you should be moved to tears of joy. It is the mean creature who stops to reflect: “Yes, it is something great but it would be worth admiring if it fell to my lot, if I were the happy possessor

of this quality, the instrument of this superior manifestation.” Why should you bother about your ego when the main concern is that the Divine should reveal itself wherever it wants and in whatever manner it chooses? You should feel fulfilled when it is thus expressed, you should be able to burst the narrow bonds of your miserable personality, and soar up in unselfish joy. This joy is the true sign that your soul has awakened and has sensed the truth. It is only then that you can open to the influence of the descending truth and be shaped by it. I remember occasions when I used to be moved to tears on seeing even children, even babies do something that was most divinely beautiful and simple. Feel that joy and you will be able to profit by the Divine’s presence in your midst.

Stepping Back

Most of you live on the surface of your being, exposed to the touch of external influences. You live almost projected, as it were, outside your own body, and when you meet some unpleasant being similarly projected you get upset. The whole trouble arises out of your not being accustomed to stepping back. You must always step back into yourself — learn to go deep within — step back and you will be safe. Do not lend yourself to the superficial forces which move in the outside world. Even if you are in a hurry to do something, step back for a while and you will discover to your surprise how much sooner and with what greater success your work can be done. If someone is angry with you, do not be caught in his vibrations but simply step back and his anger, finding no support or response, will vanish. Always keep your peace, resist all temptation to lose it. Never decide anything without stepping back, never speak a word without stepping back, never throw yourself into action without stepping back. All that belongs to the ordinary world is impermanent and fugitive, so there is nothing in it worth getting upset about. What is lasting, eternal, immortal and infinite — that indeed is worth having, worth conquering, worth possessing. It is Divine Light, Divine Love, Divine Life — it is also Supreme Peace, Perfect Joy and All-Mastery upon earth with the Complete Manifestation as the crowning. When you get the sense of the relativity of things, then whatever happens you can step back and look; you can remain quiet and call on the Divine Force and wait for an answer. Then you will know exactly what to do. Remember, therefore, that you cannot receive the answer before you are very peaceful. Practise that inner peace, make at least a small beginning and go on in your practice until it becomes a habit with you.

Knowledge of the Scientist and the Yogi

The climax of the ordinary consciousness is Science. For Science, what is upon the earth is true, simply because it is there. What it calls Nature is for it the final reality, and its aim is to build up a theory to explain the workings of it. So it climbs as high as the physical mind can go and tries to find out the causes of what it assumes to be the true, the real world. But in fact it adapts "causes" to "effects", for it has already taken that which is for the true, the real, and seeks only to explain it mentally. For the yogic consciousness, however, this world is not the final reality. Rising above the mind into the Overmind and then into the Supermind, it enters the divine world of first truths, and looking down from there sees what has happened to those truths here. How distorted they have become, how completely falsified! So the so-called world of fact is for the Yogi a falsehood and not at all the only true reality. It is not what it ought to be, it is almost the very opposite; whereas for the scientist it is absolutely fundamental.

Our aim is to change things. The scientist says that whatever is, is natural and cannot be changed at heart. But, really speaking, the laws of which he usually speaks are of his own mental making; and because he accepts Nature as it is as the very basis, things do not and cannot change for him in any complete sense. But, according to us, all this can be changed, because we know that there is something above, a divine truth seeking manifestation. There are no fixed laws here; even Science in its undogmatic moments recognises that the laws are mere mental constructions. There are only cases, and if the mind could apply itself to all the circumstances it would find that no two cases are similar. Laws are for the mind's convenience, but the process of

the supramental manifestation is different, we may even say it is the reverse of the mind. In the supramental realisation, each thing will carry in itself a truth which will manifest at each instant without being bound by what has been or what will follow. That elaborate linking of the past with the present, which gives things in Nature such an air of unchangeable determinism is altogether the mind's way of conceiving, and is no proof that all that exists is inevitable and cannot be otherwise.

The knowledge possessed by the Yogi is also an answer to the terrible theory that all that takes place is God's direct working. For once you rise to the Supermind you immediately perceive that the world is false and distorted. The supramental truth has not at all found manifestation. How then can the world be a genuine expression of the Divine? Only when the Supermind is established and rules here, then alone the Supreme Will may be said to have authentically manifested. At the same time, we must steer clear of the dangerous exaggeration of the sense of the falsehood of the world, which comes to those who have risen to the higher consciousness. What happened with Shankara and others like him was that they had a glimpse of the true consciousness, which threw the falsehood of this world into such sharp contrast that they declared the universe to be not only false but also a really non-existent illusion which should be entirely abandoned. We, on the other hand, see its falsehood, but realise also that it has to be replaced and not abandoned as an illusion. Only, the truth has got mistranslated, something has stepped in to pervert the divine reality, but the world is in fact meant to express it. And to express it is indeed our Yoga.

Chance

What do we understand by the term “chance”? Chance can only be the opposite of order and harmony. There is only one true harmony and that is the supramental — the reign of Truth, the expression of the Divine Law. In the Supermind, therefore, chance has no place. But in the lower Nature the supreme Truth is obscured: hence there is an absence of that divine unity of purpose and action which alone can constitute order. Lacking this unity, the domain of lower Nature is governed by what we may call chance — that is to say, it is a field in which various conflicting forces intermix, having no single definite aim. Whatever arises out of such a rushing together of forces is a result of confusion, dissonance and falsehood — a product of chance. Chance is not merely a conception to cover our ignorance of the causes at work; it is a description of the uncertain *mélée* of the lower Nature which lacks the calm one-pointedness of the divine Truth. The world has forgotten its divine origin and become an arena of egoistic energies; but it is still possible for it to open to the Truth, call it down by its aspiration and bring about a change in the whirl of chance. What men regard as a mechanical sequence of events, owing to their own mental associations, experiences and generalisations, is really manipulated by subtle agencies each of which tries to get its own will done. The world has got so subjected to these undivine agencies that the victory of the Truth cannot be won except by fighting for it. It has no right to it: it has to gain it by disowning the falsehood and the perversion, an important part of which is the facile notion that, since all things owe their final origin to the Divine, all their immediate activities also proceed directly from it. The fact is that here in the lower Nature the Divine is veiled by a cosmic Ignorance and what takes place does not proceed directly from the divine knowledge. That everything is equally the will

Questions and Answers

of God is a very convenient suggestion of the hostile influences which would have the creation stick as tightly as possible to the disorder and ugliness to which it has been reduced. So what is to be done, you ask? Well, call down the Light, open yourselves to the power of Transformation. Innumerable times the divine peace has been given to you and as often you have lost it—because something in you refuses to surrender its petty egoistic routine. If you are not always vigilant, your nature will return to its old unregenerate habits even after it has been filled with the descending Truth. It is the struggle between the old and the new that forms the crux of the Yoga; but if you are bent on being faithful to the supreme Law and Order revealed to you, the parts of your being belonging to the domain of chance will, however slowly, be converted and divinised.

Different Kinds of Space and Time— Fearlessness on the Vital Plane

Space and time do not begin and end with the mental consciousness: even the Overmind has them. They are the forms of all cosmic existence: only, they vary on each level. Each world has its own space and time.

Thus the mental space and time do not tally with what we observe here in the material universe. In the mind-world we can move forward and backward at our own will and pleasure. The moment you think of a person you are with him; and no matter how near you may be to somebody, you can still be far away if your thoughts are occupied with someone else. The movement is immediate, so very free are the spatio-temporal conditions there. In the vital world, however, you have to use your will: there, too, distance is less rigid, but the movement is not immediate: the will has to be exercised.

The knowledge of different space-times can be of great practical value in Yoga. For, so many blunders are due to the inability to act in the right way when you are in your vital and mental bodies. In dreams, for instance, you must remember that you are in the space and time of the vital world and not try to act as if you were still in your physical body. If you have the necessary knowledge of the state of things there, you can deal much more effectively with those vital beings who terrify you and give you such unpleasant nightmares. One of the characteristics of activity in the vital space and time is that these beings are able to assume huge shapes at will and create the vibration of fear in you which is their most powerful means of invading and possessing you. You must bear in mind their power of terrifying illusion, and cast out all fear. Once you face them boldly, unflinchingly, and look them straight in the eyes, they lose three-quarters of

their power. And if you call upon us for help, then even the last quarter is gone and they either take to their heels or dissolve. A friend of mine who used to go out in his vital body once complained that he was always being confronted with a gigantic tiger which made the night very wretched for him. I told him to banish all fear and walk straight up to the beast and stare it in the face, calling of course for assistance if necessary. He did so and lo! the tiger suddenly dwindled into an insignificant cat!

You have no idea of the almost magical effect of staring fearlessly into the eyes of a vital being. Even on earth, if you deal in this way with all those incarnations of the vital powers which we ordinarily call animals, you are assured of easy mastery. A physical tiger will also flee from you, if without the least tremor you look him straight in the eyes. A snake will never be able to bite you if you manage to rivet its gaze to yours without feeling the slightest dread. Merely staring at it with shaking knees will not help. There must be no disturbance in you: you must be calm and collected when you catch its gaze as it keeps swaying its head in order to fascinate you into abject fear. Animals are aware of a light in the human eyes which they are unable to bear if it is properly directed towards them. Man's look carries a power which nullifies them, provided it is steady and unafraid.

So, to sum up, remember two things: never, never be afraid, and in all circumstances call for the right help to make your strength a hundredfold stronger.

Knowledge by Unity with the Divine— The Divine Will in the World

Consciousness is the faculty of becoming aware of anything whatsoever through identification with it. But the divine consciousness is not only aware but knows and effects. For, mere awareness is not knowledge. To become aware of a vibration, for instance, does not mean that you know everything about it. Only when the consciousness participates in the divine consciousness does it get full knowledge by identification with the object. Ordinarily, identification leads to ignorance rather than knowledge, for the consciousness is lost in what it becomes and is unable to envisage proper causes, concomitants and consequences. Thus you identify yourself with a movement of anger and your whole being becomes one angry vibration, blind and precipitate, oblivious of everything else. It is only when you stand back, remain detached in the midst of the passionate turmoil that you are able to see the process with a knowing eye. So knowledge in the ordinary state of being is to be obtained rather by stepping back from a phenomenon, to watch it without becoming identified with it. But the divine consciousness identifies itself with its object and knows it thoroughly, because it always becomes one with the essential truth or law inherent in each fact. And it not only knows, but, by knowing, brings about what it wants. To be conscious is for it to be effective — each of its movements being a flash of omnipotence which, besides illumining, blazes its way ultimately to the goal dictated by its truth-nature.

Your ordinary consciousness is very much mixed up with unconsciousness — it fumbles, strains and is thwarted, while by unity with the Supreme you share the Supreme Nature and get the full knowledge whenever you turn to observe any object and identify yourself with it. Of course, this does not necessarily

amount to embracing all the contents of the divine consciousness. Your movements become true, but you do not possess all the manifold riches of the Divine's activity. Still, within your sphere, you are able to see correctly and according to the truth of things — which is certainly more than what is called in yogic parlance knowledge by identity. For, the kind of identification taught by many disciplines extends your limits of perception without piercing to the innermost heart of an object: it sees from within it, as it were, but only its phenomenal aspect. For example, if you identify yourself with a tree, you become aware in the way in which a tree is aware of itself, yet you do not come to know everything about a tree for the simple reason that it is itself not possessed of such knowledge. You do share the tree's inner feeling, but you certainly do not understand the truth it stands for, any more than by being conscious of your own natural self you possess at once the divine reality which you secretly are. Whereas if you are one with the divine consciousness, you know — over and above how the tree feels — what the truth behind it is, in short, you know everything, because the divine consciousness knows everything.

Indeed, there are many means of attaining this unity. It may be done through aspiration, or surrender, or some other method. Each followed with persistence and sincerity leads to it. Aspiration is the dynamic push of your whole nature behind the resolution to reach the Divine. Surrender, on the other hand, may be defined as the giving up of the limits of your ego. To surrender to the Divine is to renounce your narrow limits and let yourself be invaded by it and made a centre for its play. But you must bear in mind that the universal consciousness so beloved of Yogis is not the Divine: you can break your limits horizontally if you like, but you will be quite mistaken if you take the sense of wideness and cosmic multiplicity to be the Divine. The universal movement is after all a mixture of falsehood and truth, so that to stop there is to be imperfect; for, you may very well share the cosmic consciousness without ever attaining the transcendent

Truth. On the other hand, to go to the Divine is also to attain the universal realisation and yet remain free of falsehood.

The real bar to self-surrender, whether to the Universal or to the Transcendent, is the individual's love of his own limitations. It is a natural love, since in the very formation of the individual being there is a tendency to concentrate on limits. Without that, there would be no sense of separateness—all would be mixed, as happens quite often in the mental and vital movements of consciousness. It is the body especially which preserves separative individuality by not being so fluid. But once this separateness is established, there creeps in the fear of losing it—a healthy instinct in many respects, but misapplied with regard to the Divine. For, in the Divine you do not really lose your individuality: you only give up your egoism and become the true individual, the divine personality which is not temporary like the construction of the physical consciousness which is usually taken for your *self*. One touch of the divine consciousness and you see immediately that there is no loss in it. On the contrary, you acquire a true individual permanence which can survive a hundred deaths of the body and all the vicissitudes of the vital-mental evolution. Without this transfiguring touch, you always go about in fear; with it, you gradually develop the power to make even your physical being plastic without losing its individuality. Even now, it is not entirely rigid, it is able to feel the conscious movements of others by a sort of sympathy which translates itself into nervous reactions to their joys and sufferings: it is also able to express your inner movements—it is well known that the face is an index and mirror to the mind. But only the divine consciousness can make the body responsive enough to reflect all the movements of the supramental immortality and be an expression of the true soul and, by being divinised, reach the acme of a supreme individuality which can even physically rise superior to the necessity of death and dissolution.

In conclusion, I should like to draw your attention to one point, for it very frequently obstructs true union. It is a great

error to suppose that the Divine Will is always acting openly in the world. All that happens is not, in fact, divine: the Supreme Will is distorted in the manifestation owing to the combination of lower forces which translate it. They are the medium which falsifies its impetus and gives it an undivine result. If all that happened were indeed the flawless translation of it, how could you account for the distortions of the world?... Not that the Divine Will could not have caused the cosmic Ignorance. It is omnipotent and all possibilities are inherent in it: it can work out anything of which it sees the secret necessity in its original vision. And the first cause of the world is, of course, the Divine, though we must take care not to adjudge this fact mentally according to our petty ethical values. But once the conditions of the cosmos were laid down and the involution into nescience accepted as the basis of a progressive manifestation of the Divine out of all that seemed its very opposite, there took place a sort of division between the Higher and the Lower. The history of the world became a battle between the True and the False, in which the details are not all direct representations of the Divine's progressive action but rather distortions of it owing to the mass of resistance offered by the inferior Nature. If there were no such resistance, there would be nothing whatever to conquer in the world, for the world would be harmonious, a constant passage from one perfection to another instead of the conflict which it is—a game of hazards and various possibilities in which the Divine faces real opposition, real difficulty and often real temporary defeat on the way to the final victory. It is just this reality of the whole play that makes it no mere jest. The Divine Will actually suffers distortion the moment it touches the hostile forces in the Ignorance. Hence we must never slacken our efforts to change the world and bring about a different order. We must be vigilant to co-operate with the Divine and not placidly think that whatever happens is always the best. All depends upon the personal attitude. If, in the presence of circumstances that are on the point of occurring, you take the highest possible

attitude — that is to say, if you put your consciousness in contact with the highest consciousness within your reach — you can be absolutely certain that in such a case what happens is the best that can happen to you. But as soon as you fall from this consciousness and come down into a lower state, then it is evident that what happens cannot be the best, since you are not in your best consciousness. As Sri Aurobindo once said, "What happened had to happen, but it could have been much better." Because the person to whom it happened was not in his highest consciousness, there was no other consequence possible; but if he had brought about a descent of the Divine, then, even if the situation in general had been inevitable, it would have turned out in a different way. What makes all the difference is how you receive the impulsion of the Divine Will.

You must rise very high before you can meet this Will in its plenary splendour of authenticity; not before you open your lower nature to it can it begin to manifest in terms of the Truth. You must, therefore, refrain from applying the merely Nietzschean standard of temporary success in order to differentiate the Divine from the undivine. For, life is a battlefield in which the Divine succeeds in detail only when the lower nature is receptive to its impulsions instead of siding with the hostile forces. And even then the test is not so much external as internal: a divine movement cannot be measured by apparent signs — it is a certain kind of vibration that indicates its presence — external tests are of no avail, since even what is in appearance a failure may be in fact a divine achievement.... What you have to do is to give yourself up to the Grace of the Divine; for, it is under the form of Grace, of Love, that it has consented to uplift the universe after the first involution was established. With the Divine Love is the supreme power of Transformation. It has this power because it is for the sake of Transformation that it has given itself to the world and manifested everywhere. Not only has it infused itself into man, but also into all the atoms of the most obscure Matter in order to bring the world back to the original

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Truth. It is this descent that is called the supreme sacrifice in the Indian scriptures. But it is a sacrifice only from the human point of view; the human mind thinks that if it had to do such a thing it would be a tremendous sacrifice. But the Divine cannot really be diminished, its infinite essence can never become less, no matter what “sacrifices” are made.... The moment you open to the Divine Love, you also receive its power of Transformation. But it is not in terms of quantity that you can measure it; what is essential is the true contact; for, you will find that the true contact with it is sufficient to fill at once the whole of your being.

Supermind and Overmind

Sri Aurobindo's work is a unique earth-transformation.

Above the mind there are several levels of conscious being, among which the really divine world is what Sri Aurobindo has called the Supermind, the world of the Truth. But in between is what he has distinguished as the Overmind, the world of the cosmic Gods. Now it is this Overmind that has up to the present governed our world: it is the highest that man has been able to attain in illumined consciousness. It has been taken for the Supreme Divine and all those who have reached it have never for a moment doubted that they have touched the true Spirit. For, its splendours are so great to the ordinary human consciousness that it is absolutely dazzled into believing that here at last is the crowning reality. And yet the fact is that the Overmind is far below the true Divine. It is not the authentic home of the Truth. It is only the domain of the *formateurs*, all those creative powers and deities to whom men have bowed down since the beginning of history. And the reason why the true Divine has not manifested and transformed the earth-nature is precisely that the Overmind has been mistaken for the Supermind. The cosmic Gods do not wholly live in the Truth-Consciousness: they are only in touch with it and represent, each of them, an aspect of its glories.

No doubt, the Supermind has also acted in the history of the world but always through the Overmind. It is the direct descent of the Supramental Consciousness and Power that alone can utterly re-create life in terms of the Spirit. For, in the Overmind there is already the play of possibilities which marks the beginning of this lower triple world of Mind, Life and Matter in which we have our existence. And whenever there is this play and not the spontaneous and infallible working of the innate Truth of the Spirit, there is the seed of distortion and ignorance. Not that

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the Overmind is a field of ignorance; but it is the borderline between the Higher and the Lower, for, the play of possibilities, of separate even if not yet divided choice, is likely to lead to deviation from the Truth of things.

The Overmind, therefore, does not and cannot possess the power to transform humanity into divine nature. For that, the Supramental is the sole effective agent. And what exactly differentiates our Yoga from attempts in the past to spiritualise life is that we know that the splendours of the Overmind are not the highest reality but only an intermediate step between the mind and the true Divine.

True Humility—Supramental Plasticity—Spiritual Rebirth

As I have often been questioned about it, I shall touch briefly on the meaning of true humility, supramental plasticity and spiritual rebirth. Humility is that state of consciousness in which, whatever the realisation, you know the infinite is still in front of you. The rare quality of selfless admiration about which I have spoken to you is but another aspect of true humility; for it is sheer arrogance that refuses to admire and is complacent about its own petty achievements, forgetting the infinite which is always ahead of it. However, you need to be humble not only when you have nothing substantial or divine in you but even when you are on the path of transformation. Paradoxical though it may sound, the Divine who is absolutely perfect is at the same time absolutely humble — humble as nothing else can ever be. He is not occupied in admiring Himself: though He is the All, He ever seeks to find Himself in what is not-Himself — that is why He has created in His own being what seems to be a colossal not-Himself, this phenomenal world. He has passed into a form in which He has to discover endlessly in time the infinite contents of that which He possesses entirely in the eternal consciousness.

One of the greatest victories of this ineffable humility of God will be the transformation of Matter which is apparently the most undivine. Supramental plasticity is an attribute of finally transformed Matter. The supramental body which has to be brought into being here has four main attributes: lightness, adaptability, plasticity and luminosity. When the physical body is thoroughly divinised, it will feel as if it were always walking on air, there will be no heaviness or *tamas* or unconsciousness in it. There will also be no end to its power of adaptability: in

whatever conditions it is placed it will immediately be equal to the demands made upon it because its full consciousness will drive out all that inertia and incapacity which usually make Matter a drag on the Spirit. Supramental plasticity will enable it to stand the attack of every hostile force which strives to pierce it: it will present no dull resistance to the attack but will be, on the contrary, so pliant as to nullify the force by giving way to it to pass off. Thus it will suffer no harmful consequences and the most deadly attacks will leave it unscathed. Lastly, it will be turned into the stuff of light, each cell will radiate the supramental glory. Not only those who are developed enough to have their subtle sight open but the ordinary man too will be able to perceive this luminosity. It will be an evident fact to each and all, a permanent proof of the transformation which will convince even the most sceptical.

The bodily transformation will be the supreme spiritual rebirth—an utter casting away of all the ordinary past. For spiritual rebirth means the constant throwing away of our previous associations and circumstances and proceeding to live as if at each virgin moment we were starting life anew. It is to be free of what is called Karma, the stream of our past actions: in other words, a liberation from the bondage of Nature's common activity of cause and effect. When this cutting away of the past is triumphantly accomplished in the consciousness, all those mistakes, blunders, errors and follies which, still vivid in our recollection, cling to us like leeches sucking our life-blood, drop away, leaving us most joyfully free. This freedom is not a mere matter of thought; it is the most solid, practical, material fact. We really are free, nothing binds us, nothing affects us, there is no obsession of responsibility. If we want to counteract, annul or outgrow our past, we cannot do it by mere repentance or similar things, we must forget that the untransformed past has ever been and enter into an enlightened state of consciousness which breaks loose from all moorings. To be reborn means to enter, first of all, into our psychic consciousness where we are one

with the Divine and eternally free from the reactions of Karma. Without becoming aware of the psychic, it is not possible to do so; but once we are securely conscious of the true soul in us which is always surrendered to the Divine, all bondage ceases. Then incessantly life begins afresh, then the past no longer cleaves to us. To give you an idea of the final height of spiritual rebirth, I may say that there can be a constant experience of the whole universe actually disappearing at every instant and being at every instant newly created!

The Supramental Realisation

In order to know what the Supramental Realisation will be like, the first step, the first condition is to know what the supramental consciousness is. All those who have been, in one way or another, in contact with it have had some glimpse of the realisation to be. But those who have not, can yet aspire for that realisation, just as they can aspire to get the supramental knowledge. True knowledge means awareness by identity: once you get in touch with the supramental world, you can say something about its descent, but not before. What you can say before is that there will be a new creation upon earth; this you say through faith, since the exact character of it escapes you. And if you are called upon to define realisation, you may declare that, individually speaking, it means the transformation of your ordinary human consciousness into the divine and supramental.

The consciousness is like a ladder: at each great epoch there has been one great being capable of adding one more step to the ladder and reaching a place where the ordinary consciousness had never been. It is possible to attain a high level and get completely out of the material consciousness; but then one does not retain the ladder, whereas the great achievement of the great epochs of the universe has been the capacity to add one more step to the ladder without losing contact with the material, the capacity to reach the Highest and at the same time connect the top with the bottom instead of letting a kind of emptiness cut off all connection between the different planes. To go up and down and join the top to the bottom is the whole secret of realisation, and that is the work of the Avatar. Each time he adds one more step to the ladder there is a new creation upon earth.... The step which is being added now Sri Aurobindo has called the Supramental; as a result of it, the consciousness will be able to enter the supramental world and yet retain its personal form,

its individualisation and then come down to establish here a new creation. Certainly this is not the last, for there are farther ranges of being; but now we are at work to bring down the supramental, to effect a reorganisation of the world, to bring the world back to the true divine order. It is essentially a creation of order, a putting of everything in its true place; and the chief spirit or force, the Shakti active at present is Mahasaraswati, the Goddess of perfect organisation.

The work of achieving a continuity which permits one to go up and down and bring into the material what is above, is done inside the consciousness. He who is meant to do it, the Avatar, even if he were shut up in a prison and saw nobody and never moved out, still would he do the work, because it is a work in the consciousness, a work of connection between the Supermind and the material being. He does not need to be recognised, he need have no outward power in order to be able to establish this conscious connection. Once, however, the connection is made, it must have its effect in the outward world in the form of a new creation, beginning with a model town and ending with a perfect world.

The Supramental Descent

Do you know what the flower which we have called “Successful Future” signifies when given to you? It signifies the hope — nay, even the promise — that you will participate in the descent of the supramental world. For that descent will be the successful consummation of our work, a descent of which the full glory has not yet been or else the whole face of life would have been different. By slow degrees the Supramental is exerting its influence; now one part of the being and now another feels the embrace or the touch of its divinity; but when it comes down in all its self-existent power, a supreme radical change will seize the whole nature. We are moving nearer and nearer the hour of its complete triumph. Once the world-conditions are ready the full descent will take place carrying everything before it. Its presence will be unmistakable, its force will brook no resistance, doubts and difficulties will not torture you any longer. For the Divine will stand manifest — unveiled in its total perfection. I do not, however, mean to say that the whole world will at once feel its presence or be transformed; but I do mean that a part of humanity will know and participate in its descent — say, this little world of ours here. From there the transfiguring grace will most effectively radiate. And, fortunately for the aspirants, that successful future will materialise for them in spite of all the obstacles set in its way by unregenerate human nature!

On the Dhammapada

Conjugate Verses

Every Friday I shall read out to you a few verses of the Dhammapada, then we shall meditate on that text. This is to teach you mental control. If I think it necessary I shall give you an explanation.

The Dhammapada begins with conjugate verses; here is the first one:

In all things the primordial element is mind. Mind predominates. Everything proceeds from mind.

Naturally, this concerns the physical life, there is no question of the universe.

If a man speaks or acts with an evil mind, suffering follows him as the wheel follows the hoof of the bullock that pulls the cart.

That is to say, ordinary human life, such as it is in the present world, is ruled by the mind; therefore the most important thing is to control one's mind; so we shall follow a graded or "conjugate" discipline, to use the Dhammapada's expression, in order to develop and control our minds.

There are four movements which are usually consecutive, but which in the end may be simultaneous: to observe one's thoughts is the first, to watch over one's thoughts is the second, to control one's thoughts is the third and to master one's thoughts is the fourth. To observe, to watch over, to control, to master. All that to get rid of an evil mind, for we are told that the man who acts or speaks with an evil mind is followed by suffering as closely as the wheel follows the hoof of a bullock that ploughs or draws the cart.

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This is our first meditation.

30 August 1957

Mind predominates. Everything proceeds from mind. In all things the primordial element is mind. If a man speaks or acts with a purified mind, happiness accompanies him as closely as his inseparable shadow.

This is the counterpart of what we read last time. The Dhammapada contrasts a purified mind with an evil mind. We have already said that there are four successive stages for the purification of the mind. A purified mind is naturally a mind that does not admit any wrong thought, and we have seen that the complete mastery of thought which is required to gain this result is the last achievement in the four stages I have spoken of. The first is: to observe one's mind.

Do not believe that it is such an easy thing, for to observe your thoughts, you must first of all separate yourself from them. In the ordinary state, the ordinary man does not distinguish himself from his thoughts. He does not even know that he thinks. He thinks by habit. And if he is asked all of a sudden, "What are you thinking of?", he knows nothing about it. That is to say, ninety-five times out of a hundred he will answer, "I do not know." There is a complete identification between the movement of thought and the consciousness of the being.

To observe the thought, the first movement then is to step back and look at it, to separate yourself from your thoughts so that the movement of the consciousness and that of thought may not be confused. Thus when we say that one must observe one's thoughts, do not believe that it is so simple; it is the first step. I suggest that this evening in our meditation we take up this first exercise which consists in standing back from one's thought and looking at it.

6 September 1957

“He has insulted me, he has beaten me, he has humiliated me, he has robbed me.” Those who nourish thoughts such as these never appease their hatred.

The Dhammapada tells us first of all that bad thoughts bring about suffering and good thoughts bring about happiness. Now it gives examples of what bad thoughts are and tells us how to avoid suffering. Here is the first example, I repeat: “He has insulted me, he has beaten me, he has humiliated me, he has robbed me”; and it adds: “Those who nourish thoughts such as these never appease their hatred.”

We have begun our mental discipline, basing ourselves on the successive stages of mental development and we have seen that this discipline consists of four consecutive movements, which we have described in this way, as you surely remember: to observe, to watch over, to control and to master; and in the course of the last lesson we have learnt—I hope—to separate ourselves from our thoughts so as to be able to observe them as an attentive spectator.

Today we have to learn how to watch over these thoughts. First you look at them and then you watch over them. Learn to look at them as an enlightened judge so that you may distinguish between the good and the bad, between thoughts that are useful and those that are harmful, between constructive thoughts that lead to victory and defeatist thoughts which turn us away from it. It is this power of discernment that we must acquire now; that will be the subject of our meditation tonight.

As I have told you, the Dhammapada will give us examples, but examples are only examples. We must ourselves learn how to distinguish thoughts that are good from those that are not, and for that you must observe, as I have said, like an enlightened judge—that is to say, as impartially as possible; it is one of the most indispensable conditions.

13 September 1957

“He has insulted me, he has beaten me, he has humiliated me, he has robbed me.” Those who do not nourish thoughts such as these foster no hatred.

This is the counterpart of what we read the other day. But note that this concerns only thoughts that generate resentment. It is because rancour, along with jealousy, is one of the most widespread causes of human misery.

But how to avoid having rancour? A large and generous heart is certainly the best means, but that is not within the reach of all. Controlling one's thought may be of more general use.

Thought-control is the third step of our mental discipline. Once the enlightened judge of our consciousness has distinguished between useful and harmful thoughts, the inner guard will come and allow to pass only approved thoughts, strictly refusing admission to all undesirable elements.

With a commanding gesture the guard will refuse entry to every bad thought and push it back as far as possible.

It is this movement of admission and refusal that we call thought-control and this will be the subject of our meditation tonight.

20 September 1957

For, in truth, in this world hatred is not appeased by hatred; hatred is appeased by love alone. This is the eternal law.

This is one of the most celebrated verses of the Dhammapada, one of those most often cited—I would have liked to be able to say, “one of the most obeyed in the world”; unfortunately that would not be true. For people speak much of this teaching but do not follow it.

Yet, there is one aspect of the problem which is less spoken of but which seems perhaps more urgent still if you want things to change in the world, something to which people give very little

thought. I am going to surprise you. It is this: if love must be returned for hatred in order that the world may change, would it not be even more natural that love should be returned for Love?

If one considers the life and action and heart of men as they are, one would have every right to be surprised at all the hatred, contempt, or at best, the indifference which are returned for this immensity of Love which the divine Grace pours upon the world, for this immensity of Love which acts upon the world at every second to lead it towards the divine delight and which finds so poor a response in the human heart. But people have compassion only for the wicked, the deficient, the misshapen, for the unsuccessful ones and the failures — truly it is an encouragement to wickedness and failure.

If one thought a little more of this aspect of the problem, perhaps one would have less need to insist on the necessity of returning love for hatred, because if the human heart responded in all sincerity to the Love that is being poured into it with the spontaneous gratitude of a love which understands and appreciates, then things would change quickly in the world.

27 September 1957

Many are those who are not aware that one day we all must die. And those who are aware of it appease their quarrels.

When you think you may die the next moment, immediately, automatically, there occurs in you a detachment from all material things; it is logical that from then on you think only of what does not depend upon this physical life and which is the only thing that will still belong to you once you have left this body, that is to say, the eternal existence. The Buddha did not use the word "Divine", but it is essentially the same thing.

To think that one might die the next moment was formerly, in the ancient initiations, a discipline that one had to follow for a

certain time, for the reason I have just mentioned and also in order to overcome all fear of death and to accustom oneself to it. In that age and at the time when the Dhammapada was spoken by the Buddha, the possibility of an earthly immortality was never mentioned because this possibility belonged to such a far-off future that there would have been no point in speaking of it.

Today Sri Aurobindo tells us that this possibility is near at hand and that we have only to prepare for it. But the essential condition even to prepare for it is to completely abolish all fear of death.

You must neither fear it nor desire it.

Stand above it, in an absolute tranquillity, neither fear it nor desire it.

4 October 1957

Just as the strong wind uproots a feeble tree, so Mara overwhelms the man who lives only in pursuit of pleasure, who does not control his senses, who knows not how to moderate his appetite, who is lazy and wastes his energies.

In Buddhist literature, Mara represents the Spirit of Evil, all that is contrary or opposed to the spiritual life; in certain cases he represents death — not so much physical death as death to truth, to the spiritual being.

Here, it means that so long as one does not control one's senses and desires, and concerns oneself with external material satisfactions as the most important thing, one has not the will necessary to resist the attack of hostile forces and all that pulls us down and leads us away from the spiritual reality.

The Dhammapada does not take its stand so much on the moral point of view; it is not evil as men understand it with their blind justice and their arbitrary sense of good and bad. Evil, from the spiritual point of view, is truly that which leads us away from the goal, which sometimes even tears us away from

the deepest purpose of our existence, from the truth of our being and prevents us from realising it.

This is the way in which it should be understood.

11 October 1957

*Just as the strong wind has no hold upon a mighty rock,
so Mara has no hold upon a man who does not live in
pursuit of pleasure, who has good control of his senses,
who knows how to moderate his appetite, who is en-
dowed with unshakable faith and who wastes not his
energies.*

What the Dhammapada means when it speaks of faith is not at all the belief in a dogma or a religion, it is not even faith in the teaching of the Master; it is faith in one's own possibilities, the certitude that whatever the difficulties, whatever the obstacles, whatever the imperfections, even the negations in the being, one is born for the realisation and one *will* realise.

The will must never falter, the effort must be persevering and the faith unshakable. Then instead of spending years to realise what one has to realise, one can do it in a few months, sometimes even in a few days and, if there is sufficient intensity, in a few hours. That is to say, you can take a position within yourself and no bad will that attacks the realisation will have any more power over you than the storm has over a rock.

After that, the way is no longer difficult; it becomes extraordinarily interesting.

18 October 1957

*He who puts on the yellow robe while he is yet impure,
lacking in self-control and lacking in loyalty, truly he is
unworthy to wear the yellow robe of the monk.*

Of course, the yellow robe, in the literal sense, is the robe of the Buddhist monks; it became the robe of all who practised

asceticism. But this is not what the Dhammapada truly means to say, because there is no lack of men who wear the yellow robe but are not purified of their taints. The yellow robe is taken as the symbol of consecration to the spiritual life, the external sign of renunciation of all that is not an exclusive concentration upon the spiritual life.

What Buddhism means by "impurities" is chiefly egoism and ignorance; because, from the Buddhist standpoint, the greatest of all taints is ignorance, not ignorance of external things, of the laws of Nature and of all that you learn at school, but the ignorance of the deepest truth of things, of the law of the being, of the Dharma.

It is noteworthy that the two defects insisted upon here are lack of self-control and lack of loyalty. Loyalty means here sincerity, honesty; what the Dhammapada censures most severely is hypocrisy: to pretend that you want to live the spiritual life and not to do it, to pretend that you want to seek the truth and not to do it, to display the external signs of consecration to the divine life — here symbolised by the yellow robe — but within to be concerned only with oneself, one's selfishness and one's own needs.

It is interesting to note the insistence of the Dhammapada on self-control, for according to the Buddhist teaching, excess in all things is bad. The Buddha always insisted on the Middle Path. You must not be too much on one side nor too much on the other, exaggerate one thing or the other. You must have measure, balance in all things, the balance of moderation.

Therefore the qualities that make you worthy of leading the spiritual life are to have an inner balance, a balance in your action, and to be moderate in everything, to be sincere, honest, loyal.

Balance, moderation, loyalty, honesty: this is the subject of our meditation.

8 November 1957

But he who has discarded all impurity, who is firmly attached to the precepts of morality, who knows how to moderate his appetite and who is loyal, he, truly, is worthy to wear the yellow robe.

I would not like you to take this text as a moral catechism. It certainly has a much deeper and truer meaning, because in all truly spiritual teachings, morality as it is mentally conceived is out of place.

So too the word “impurity”. Pure, as it is understood morally, has not at all the meaning it is given in a truly spiritual teaching; and particularly from the Buddhist standpoint, purity is absence of ignorance, as I have already told you last time, and ignorance means ignoring the inner law, the truth of the being. And loyalty means not to take the illusion for the reality, the changing and fluctuating appearances for the inner and real permanence of the being.

We can say then that self-control and self-mastery, measure, absence of desire, the search for the inner truth of the being and the law of its self-manifestation are very necessary preoccupations for those who want to practise the spiritual life.

To be true to oneself, to one's goal, not to let oneself be moved by disorderly impulses, not to take the changing appearances for the Reality, these are the virtues that one must have in order to progress on the way of spirituality.

15 November 1957

Those who take error for truth, and the truth for error, will never attain the supreme goal, for they are led astray by vain desires and false views.

A comment could be added; for, if one were satisfied with taking error for truth and truth for error, it should be logically very easy to make one's choice as soon as one found for some reason or other or with some help, what is truly the truth and what is

truly the error; one adopts the truth and rejects the error. But unfortunately one loves one's error, somewhere in the being there is an unwillingness to recognise what is true.

My experience is like this: whenever you sincerely want to know the truth, you do know it. There is *always* something to point out the error to you, to make you recognise the truth. And if you observe yourself attentively you find out that it is because you prefer error that you do not find the truth.

Even in small details, the very smallest — not to speak of the big things of life, the big decisions that one has to take — even in the smallest things, whenever the aspiration for the truth and the will to be true are wholly sincere, the indication always comes. And precisely, with the method of the Buddhist discipline, if you follow up within yourself the causes of your way of being, you always find out that persistence in error comes from desire. It is because you have the preference, the desire to feel, to act, to think in a particular way, that you make the mistake. It is not simply because you do not know what is true. You do not know it precisely because you say in a vague, general, imprecise way, "Oh, I want the truth." In fact, if you take a detail, each detail, and put your finger on it, you discover that you are playing the ostrich in order not to see. You put up something uncertain, something vague, a veil, in order not to see behind it.

Whenever there is sincerity, you find that the help, the guidance, the grace are always there to give you the answer and you are not mistaken for long.

It is this sincerity in the aspiration for progress, in the will for truth, in the need to be truly pure — pure as it is understood in the spiritual life — it is this sincerity which is the key to all progress. With it you know — and you *can*.

There is always, somewhere in the being, something which prefers to deceive itself, otherwise the light is there, always ready to guide, but you shut your eyes in order not to see it.

22 November 1957

Those who know the true to be true and the false to be false, they attain the supreme goal, for they pursue right desires and correct views.

We saw last time that it is not sufficient to be able to distinguish what is right from what is wrong. At first sight this seems to be the most difficult point. It is quite obvious that if everyone had to find it out for himself, it would be a very long work; you can pass your whole life going through innumerable experiences which little by little will enlighten you as to what is right and what is not.

Therefore it is easier to rely on someone who has done the work before you and whom you have simply to ask, "Is this true? Is that false?" Evidently, that offers a great advantage, but unfortunately it is not always sufficient; for if you have the desire that things should be in a certain way and that what you prefer should be right, then you are not always ready to listen to good advice.

The last sentence, "for they pursue right desires", which seems to be a commonplace, is perhaps the most difficult part of the problem.

In this book, in this teaching, there are short sentences that appear so simple. If you read without sufficient reflection, you tell yourself, "But it is self-evident, you recognise as true what is true and as false what is false, what does that mean then?" But first of all it is not so easy to distinguish what is true from what is not, then to recognise, that is to say, to admit that a certain thing is true; and above all it is more difficult still perhaps to recognise that a certain thing is false.

In reality, in order to discern exactly what is false requires such sincerity in the aspiration, such resolution in the will to be true that even this little phrase "to know the true to be true and the false to be false" means a very considerable realisation. And the conclusion, "they attain the supreme goal" is a great promise.

There are teachings which say that one must have no desire at all; they are the ones that aim at a complete withdrawal from life in order to enter into the immobility of the Spirit, the absence of all activity, all movement, all form, all external reality. To attain that one must have no desire at all, that is to say, one must completely leave behind all will for progress; progress itself becomes something unreal and external. But if in your conception of Yoga you keep the idea of progress, and if you admit that the whole universe follows a progression, then what you have to do is to shift the objective of desire; instead of turning it towards things that are external, artificial, superficial and egoistical, you must join it as a force of realisation to the aspiration directed to the truth.

These few words, "they pursue right desires", are a proof that the teaching of the Buddha, in its essence, did not turn away from the realisation upon earth, but only from what is false in the conception of the world and in activities as they are carried on in the world. Thus when he teaches that one must escape from life, it is not to escape from a life that would be the expression of the truth but from the illusory life as it is ordinarily lived in the world.

Sri Aurobindo tells us that in order to reach the Truth and to have the power of realising this Truth you must join the spiritual consciousness to a progressive mental consciousness.

And these few words certainly prove that such was the original conception of the Buddhist teaching.

6 December 1957

Just as the rain penetrates through the thatch of a leaking roof, so the passions penetrate an unbalanced mind.

There are innumerable small Buddhist sects of all kinds, in China, in Japan, in Burma, and each one follows its own methods; but the most widespread among them are those whose sole practice is to make the mind quiet.

They sit down for a few hours in the day and even at night and quiet their mind. This is for them the key to all realisation — a quiet mind that knows how to keep quiet for hours together without roving. You must not believe however that it is a very easy thing to do, but they have no other object. They do not concentrate upon any thought, they do not try to understand better, to know more, nothing of the kind; for them the only way is to have a quiet mind and sometimes they pass through years and years of effort before they arrive at this result — to silence the mind, to keep it absolutely silent and still; for, as it is said here in the Dhammapada, if the mind is unbalanced, then this constant movement of ideas following one another, sometimes without any order, ideas contradicting and opposing each other, ideas that speculate on things, all that jostles about in the head, makes holes in the roof, as it were. So through these holes all undesirable movements enter into the consciousness, as water enters into a house with a leaky roof.

However that may be, I believe it is a practice to be recommended to everyone: to keep a certain time every day for trying to make the mind quiet, even, still. And it is an undeniable fact that the more mentally developed one is, the quicker one succeeds; and the more the mind is in a rudimentary state, the more difficult it is.

Those who are at the bottom of the scale, who have never trained their minds, find it necessary to speak in order to think. It happens even that it is the sound of their voice which enables them to associate ideas; if they do not express them, they do not think. At a higher level there are those who still have to move words about in their heads in order to think, even though they do not utter them aloud. Those who truly begin to think are those who are able to think without words, that is to say, to be in contact with the idea and express it through a wide variety of words and phrases. There are higher degrees — many higher degrees — but those who think without words truly begin to reach an intellectual state and for them it is much easier to make

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the mind quiet, that is to say, to stop the movement of associating the words that constantly move about like passers-by in a public square, and to contemplate an idea in silence.

I emphasise this fact because there are quite a few people who, when mental silence has been transmitted to them by occult means, are immediately alarmed and afraid of losing their intelligence. Because they can no longer think, they fear they may become stupid! But to cease thinking is a much higher achievement than to be able to spin out thoughts endlessly and it demands a much greater development.

So from every point of view, and not only from the spiritual point of view, it is always very good to practise silence for a few minutes, at least twice a day, but it must be a true silence, not merely abstention from talking.

Now let us try to be completely silent for a few minutes.

(Meditation)

13 December 1957

Just as the rain cannot penetrate a house well covered with thatch, so also the passions cannot penetrate a balanced mind.

(*It begins to rain.*) That's it. The mind of the sky must be out of balance. (*Laughter*) It is raining.

So I think the sky has no balance and it is better for you to go home. (*It rains harder.*) Well, there is nothing to be done!

The balance is not being restored. You should all go home and meditate on the necessity of having a balanced mind. That's all.

20 December 1957

In the two worlds, in this world and in the other, one who does evil grieves. He laments and suffers as he recalls his evil deeds.

It is quite evident that when you act in an ugly and mean way, naturally you are unhappy; but to be unhappy because you are conscious of the ugliness of your actions seems to me to be already a very advanced stage, for one needs to be very conscious in order to be aware of the evil that one does, and to be conscious of the evil that one does is already a first step towards not doing it any more.

Generally, people are altogether blind to the ugliness of their own actions. They do wrong through ignorance, through unconsciousness, through smallness, through that sort of doubling back on oneself which comes from unconsciousness and ignorance, that obscure instinct of self-preservation which makes one ready to sacrifice the whole world for the sake of one's own well-being. And the smaller one is, the more natural appears the sacrifice offered to one's smallness.

One must be very much higher on the scale to see that what one does is ugly. One must already have at the core of oneself a kind of foreknowledge of what beauty, nobility, generosity are, to be able to suffer from the fact that one doesn't carry them within oneself.

I think the Dhammapada speaks here of those who already know what is beautiful and noble and who do evil wilfully, deliberately. For them life becomes terribly painful indeed. To do persistently what one knows should not be done, is at the cost of all peace, all possible tranquillity, all the well-being that one can have. He who lies is constantly uneasy in the fear that his lie may be discovered; he who has acted wrongly is in a constant anxiety at the idea that perhaps he will be punished; he who tries to deceive has no peace lest it should be found out that he deceives.

In reality, even for a purely egoistic reason, to do good, to be just, straight, honest is the best means to be quiet and peaceful, to reduce one's anxiety to a minimum. And if, besides, one could be disinterested, free from personal motives and egoism, then it would be possible to become truly happy.

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You carry with you, around you, in you, the atmosphere created by your actions, and if what you do is beautiful, good and harmonious, your atmosphere is beautiful, good and harmonious; on the other hand, if you live in a sordid selfishness, unscrupulous self-interest, ruthless bad will, that is what you will breathe every moment of your life and that means misery, constant uneasiness; it means ugliness that despairs of its own ugliness.

And you must not believe that by leaving the body you will free yourself of this atmosphere; on the contrary, the body is a kind of a veil of unconsciousness which diminishes the intensity of the suffering. If you are without the protection of the body in the most material vital life, the suffering becomes much more acute and you no longer have the opportunity to change what is to be changed, to correct what is to be corrected, to open yourself to a higher, happier and more luminous life and consciousness.

You must make haste to do your work here, for it is here that you can truly do it.

Expect nothing from death. Life is your salvation.

It is in life that you must transform yourself. It is upon earth that you progress and it is upon earth that you realise. It is in the body that you win the Victory.

27 December 1957

One who does good rejoices in the two worlds, in this world and in the other. He rejoices more and more as he recalls his good deeds.

One who does evil suffers in the two worlds, in this world and in the other. "I have done wrong": this thought torments him. And his torments increase still more as he follows the way which leads to the infernal world.

One who does good rejoices in the two worlds, in this

world and in the other. “I have done good”: the thought rejoices him and his happiness increases more and more as he follows the way that leads to the celestial world.

It would almost seem from these texts that Buddhism accepts the idea of a hell and a heaven; but that is quite a superficial way of understanding; for, in a deeper sense, this was not the thought of the Buddha. The idea on which he always insisted is that you create, by your conduct and the state of your consciousness, the world in which you live. Everyone carries in himself the world in which he lives and in which he will continue to live even when he loses his body, because, according to the Buddha's teaching, there is, so to say, no difference between life in the body and life outside the body.

Some persons believe, some traditions teach that to leave the body is a blessing and that all difficulties disappear, provided, however, you fulfil certain rites, as in some religions, and that is also why so much importance is given to the religious rites which are, as it were, a passport for going to a happier region once you have left the body. Some even imagine that as soon as you leave the body you at once leave your miseries behind; but it is far from being true and this is what the Dhammapada points out here: what it calls the infernal world consists of psychological ranges, particular states of consciousness you enter when you do wrong, that is to say, when you stray away from all that is beautiful, pure, happy and you live in ugliness and wickedness. Nothing is more disheartening than to live in an atmosphere of wickedness.

What the Dhammapada says here in an almost puerile way is essentially true. Naturally, it does not refer to those who think, “Oh, how good I am, how nice I am!” and therefore feel happy. That is childishness. But when you are good, when you are generous, noble, disinterested, kind, you create in you, around you, a particular atmosphere and this atmosphere is a sort of luminous release. You breathe, you blossom like a flower in

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the sun; there is no painful recoil on yourself, no bitterness, no revolt, no miseries. Spontaneously, naturally, the atmosphere becomes luminous and the air you breathe is full of happiness. And this is the air that you breathe, in your body and out of your body, in the waking state and in the state of sleep, in life and in the passage beyond life, outside earthly life until your new life.

Every wrong action produces on the consciousness the effect of a wind that withers, of a cold that freezes or of burning flames that consume.

Every good and kind deed brings light, restfulness, joy — the sunshine in which flowers bloom.

3 January 1958

Even though he may recite a great number of sacred texts, if he does not act accordingly, the foolish one will be like the cowherd who counts the cows of others. He cannot share in the life of the disciples of the Blessed One.

Though he may recite only a tiny portion of the sacred texts, if he puts into practice their teaching, having rejected all passion, all ill-will and all delusion, he possesses the true wisdom; his mind completely freed, no longer attached to anything, belonging neither to this world nor to any other, he shares in the life of the disciples of the Blessed One.

The thing has been so often said and repeated that it seems quite unnecessary to insist on the fact that a mite of practice is infinitely more precious than mountains of talk. Surely, all the energy that one spends in explaining a theory would be much better utilised in overcoming in oneself a weakness or a defect.

Therefore to conform to the wisdom of this teaching, we

shall consider the best means of rejecting all passion and ill-will and delusion.

The delusion consists in taking the appearance for the reality and transient things for the only thing worthy of pursuit, the everlasting Truth.

It is rather interesting to note that the Dhammapada clearly underlines that it is not enough to be free from the bonds of this world only, but of all the worlds.

For the true and zealous Buddhists tell you that ordinary religions captivate you by enticing you with the glittering advantages that you will find after death in their Paradise, if you practise their principles. Buddhism, on the other hand, has neither hell nor heaven. It does not terrify you with eternal punishment nor does it tempt you with celestial felicities.

It is in the pure Truth that you will find your satisfaction and the reward of all your efforts.

10 January 1958

Vigilance

Vigilance is the way that leads to immortality (or Nirvana). Negligence is the way that leads to death. Those who are vigilant do not die. Those who are negligent are dead already.

In these texts the word Nirvana is not used in the sense of annihilation, as you see, but in the sense of an eternal existence in opposition to life and death, as we know them in the present earthly existence, and which are contrary to each other: life contrary to death, death contrary to life. It is not *that* life which is spoken of, but the eternal existence which is beyond life and death — the true existence.

Vigilance means to be awake, to be on one's guard, to be sincere — never to be taken by surprise. When you want to do sadhana, at each moment of your life, there is a choice between taking a step that leads to the goal and falling asleep or sometimes even going backwards, telling yourself, "Oh, later on, not immediately" — sitting down on the way.

To be vigilant is not merely to resist what pulls you downward, but above all to be alert in order not to lose any opportunity to progress, any opportunity to overcome a weakness, to resist a temptation, any opportunity to learn something, to correct something, to master something. If you are vigilant, you can do in a few days what would otherwise take years. If you are vigilant, you change each circumstance of your life, each action, each movement into an occasion for coming nearer the goal.

There are two kinds of vigilance, active and passive. There is a vigilance that gives you a warning if you are about to make a mistake, if you are making a wrong choice, if you are being weak or allowing yourself to be tempted, and there is the active

vigilance which seeks an opportunity to progress, seeks to utilise every circumstance to advance more quickly.

There is a difference between preventing yourself from falling and advancing more quickly.

And both are absolutely necessary.

He who is not vigilant is already dead. He has lost contact with the true purpose of existence and of life.

So the hours, circumstances, life pass in vain, bringing nothing, and you awake from your somnolence in a hole from which it is very difficult to escape.

17 January 1958

Having fully understood what vigilance is, the sages delight in it and take their pleasure in the presence of the Great Ones.

Throughout this teaching there is one thing to be noticed; it is this: you are never told that to live well, to think well, is the result of a struggle or of a sacrifice; on the contrary it is a delightful state which cures all suffering. At that time, the time of the Buddha, to live a spiritual life was a joy, a beatitude, the happiest state, which freed you from all the troubles of the world, all the sufferings, all the cares, making you happy, satisfied, contented.

It is the materialism of modern times that has turned spiritual effort into a hard struggle and a sacrifice, a painful renunciation of all the so-called joys of life.

This insistence on the exclusive reality of the physical world, of physical pleasures, physical joys, physical possessions, is the result of the whole materialistic tendency of human civilisation. It was unthinkable in ancient times. On the contrary, withdrawal, concentration, liberation from all material cares, consecration to the spiritual joy, that was happiness indeed.

From this point of view it is quite evident that humanity is far from having progressed; and those who were born into

the world in the centres of materialistic civilisation have in their subconscious this horrible notion that only material realities are real and that to be concerned with things that are not material represents a wonderful spirit of sacrifice, an almost sublime effort. Not to be preoccupied from dawn to dusk and from dusk to dawn with all the little physical satisfactions, physical pleasures, physical sensations, physical preoccupations, is to bear evidence of a remarkable spirit. One is not aware of it, but the whole of modern civilisation is built on this conception: "Ah, what you can touch, you are sure that is true; what you can see, you are sure that is true; what you have eaten, you are sure of having eaten it; but all the rest — pooh! We are not sure whether they are not vain dreams and whether we are not giving up the real for the unreal, the substance for the shadow. After all, what are you going to gain? A few dreams! But when you have some coins in your pocket, you are sure that they are there!"

And that is everywhere, underneath everything. Scratch the appearances just a little, it is there, within your consciousness; and from time to time you hear this thing whispering within you, "Take care, don't be taken in." Indeed, it is lamentable.

We have been told that evolution is progressive and that it follows a spiral of ascending progression. I do not doubt that what one calls comfort in modern cities is a much higher degree of evolution than the comfort of the cave-man. But in ancient narratives, they always spoke of a power of foresight, of the prophetic spirit, the announcement of future events through visions, life's intimacy with something more subtle that had for the simple people of that age a more concrete reality.

Now, in those beautiful cities that are so comfortable, when one wants to condemn anything, what does one say? — "It's a dream, it is imagination."

And precisely, if a person lives in an inner perception, people look at him slightly askance and wonder whether he is altogether mentally sound. One who does not pass his time in striving for wealth or in trying to increase his comforts and well-being, to

secure a good position and become an important person, a man who is not like that is mistrusted, people wonder whether he is in his right mind.

And all that is so much the stuff of the atmosphere, the content of the air you breathe, the orientation of the thoughts received from others that it seems absolutely natural. You do not feel that it is a grotesque monstrosity.

To become a little more conscious of oneself, to enter into relation with the life behind the appearances, does not seem to you to be the greatest good. When you sit in a comfortable chair, in front of a lavish meal, when you fill your stomach with delicious dishes, that certainly appears to you much more concrete and much more interesting. And if you look at the day that has passed, if you take stock of your day, if you have had some material advantage, some pleasure, a physical satisfaction, you mark it as a good day; but if you have received a good lesson from life, if it has given you a knock on your nose to tell you that you are a stupid fellow, you do not give thanks to the Grace, you say, "Oh, life is not always fun!"

When I read these ancient texts, I really have the impression that from the inner point of view, from the point of view of the true life, we have fallen back terribly and that for the acquisition of a few ingenious mechanisms, a few encouragements to physical laziness, the acquisition of instruments and gadgets that lessen the effort of living, we have renounced the reality of the inner life. It is that sense which has been lost and it needs an effort for you to think of learning the meaning of life, the purpose of existence, the goal towards which we must advance, towards which all life advances, whether you want it or not. One step towards the goal, oh! it needs so much effort to do that. And generally one thinks of it only when the outer circumstances are not pleasant.

How far we are from the times when the shepherd, who did not go to school and kept watch over his flock at night under the stars, could read in the stars what was going to happen,

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commune with something which expressed itself through Nature, and had the sense of the profound beauty and that peace which a simple life gives!

It is very unfortunate that one has to give up one thing in order to gain another. When I speak of the inner life, I am far from opposing any modern inventions, far from it, but how much these inventions have made us artificial and stupid! How much we have lost the sense of true beauty, how much we burden ourselves with useless needs!

Perhaps the time has come to continue the ascent in the curve of the spiral and now with all that this knowledge of matter has brought us, we shall be able to give to our spiritual progress a more solid basis. Strong with what we have learnt of the secrets of material Nature, we shall be able to join the two extremes and rediscover the supreme Reality in the very heart of the atom.

24 January 1958

Those who are intelligent, meditative, persevering, who ceaselessly struggle with themselves, attain to Nirvana, which is the supreme felicity.

Whosoever can sustain his zeal, remain pure in his actions, act wisely, restrain his passions, live according to the Law (or to morality), he shall see his renown increase.

This promise of a good name does not seem to me quite worthy of the Buddhist teaching. It probably meant something else. And to live according to morality, one must know which morality is intended, for if it is the usually recognised social morality, that also does not seem to me a very alluring promise. Those who have decided to abandon all worldly weaknesses certainly do not care about satisfying social morality... nor about acquiring a good name!

To sustain one's zeal is an excellent thing, to remain pure in one's actions is also indispensable, to act wisely is also perfect, one cannot do it too often; to restrain one's passions, that goes without saying, is the beginning... but that conclusion!!

However I see "Dhamma" has been translated here as "Law", and "Yasa" as "renown", whereas Dhamma should mean rather the inner truth and Yasa the spiritual glory. So we can interpret the text in this way: "Whosoever can sustain his zeal, remain pure in his actions, act wisely, restrain his passions, live according to the inner truth, he shall see his spiritual glory ever growing."

Thus understood, this text is quite excellent. One cannot do better than to conform to it.

31 January 1958 and 7 February 1958

By his effort, his vigilance, his discipline and self-mastery, the intelligent man should create for himself an island which no flood can submerge.

The fools, devoid of intelligence, give themselves up to negligence. The true sage guards vigilance as his most precious treasure.

Do not let yourself fall into carelessness, nor into the pleasures of the senses. He who is vigilant and given to meditation acquires a great happiness.

The intelligent man who by his vigilance has dispelled negligence, mounts to the heights of wisdom, whence he looks upon the many afflicted as one on a mountain looks down upon the people of the plain.

Vigilant among those who are negligent, perfectly awake among those who sleep, the intelligent man advances like a rapid steed leaving behind a weary horse.

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Vigilance is admired. Negligence is reproved. By vigilance, Indra became the highest among the gods.

The Bhikkhu¹ who delights in vigilance and who shuns negligence advances like a fire consuming all bonds, both small and great.

The Bhikkhu who takes pleasure in vigilance and who shuns negligence can no longer fall. He draws near to Nirvana.

I have read out to you the whole chapter because it seemed to me that it is the totality of the verses that creates an atmosphere and that they are meant to be taken all together and not each one separately. But I strongly recommend to you not to take the words used here in their usual literal sense.

Thus, for example, I am quite convinced that the original thought did not mean that you are to be vigilant in order that you may be admired and that you must not be negligent in order not to be reproved. Besides, the example given proves it, for certainly it was not for the sake of gaining admiration that Indra, the chief of the overmental gods in the Hindu tradition, practised vigilance. It is a very childish way of saying things. Yet, if you take these verses all together, they have by their repetition and insistence, a power that evokes the thing which seeks expression; it puts you in relation with a psychological attitude which is very useful and has a very considerable effect, if you follow this discipline.

The last two verses particularly are very evocative. The Bhikkhu moves forward like a burning flame of aspiration and he shuns negligence.

Negligence truly means the relaxation of the will which makes one forget his goal and pass his time in doing all kinds

¹ Member of the Sangha (Buddhist community), mendicant monk who owns nothing.

of things which, far from contributing towards the goal to be attained, stop you on the path and often turn you away from it. Therefore the flame of aspiration makes the Bhikkhu shun negligence. Every moment he remembers that time is relatively short, that one must not waste it on the way, one must go quickly, as quickly as possible, without losing a moment. And one who is vigilant, who does not waste his time, sees his bonds falling, every one, great and small; all his difficulties vanish, because of his vigilance; and if he persists in his attitude, finding in it entire satisfaction, it happens after a time that the happiness he feels in being vigilant becomes so strong that he would soon feel very unhappy if he were to lose this vigilance.

It is a fact that when one has made an effort not to lose time on the way, any time lost becomes a suffering and one can find no pleasure of any kind in it. And once you are in that state, once this effort for progress and transformation becomes the most important thing in your life, the thing to which you give constant thought, then indeed you are on the way towards the eternal existence, the truth of your being.

Certainly there is a moment in the course of the inner growth when far from having to make an effort to concentrate, to become absorbed in the contemplation and the seeking of the truth and its best expression — what the Buddhists call meditation — you feel, on the contrary, a kind of relief, ease, rest, joy, and to have to come out of that in order to deal with things that are not essential, everything that may seem like a waste of time, becomes terribly painful. External activities get reduced to what is absolutely necessary, to those that are done as service to the Divine. All that is futile, useless, precisely those things which seem like a waste of time and effort, all that, far from giving the least satisfaction, creates a kind of discomfort and fatigue; you feel happy only when you are concentrated on your goal.

Then you are really on the way.

14 February 1958

The Mind

Just as the arrow-maker straightens his arrows, so also the intelligent man straightens his thoughts, wavering and fickle, difficult to keep straight, difficult to master.

Just as a fish cast out of the water, our mind quivers and gasps when it leaves behind the kingdom of Mara.

Difficult to master and unstable is the mind, forever in search of pleasure. It is good to govern it. A mind that is controlled brings happiness.

The sage should remain master of his thoughts, for they are subtle and difficult to seize and always in search of pleasure. A mind that is well guided brings happiness.

Wandering afar, solitary, bodiless and hidden in the deep cave of the heart, such is the mind. Whosoever succeeds in bringing it under control liberates himself from the fetters of Mara.

The intelligence of one whose mind is unstable, who is ignorant of the true Law, and whose faith is wavering will never be able to develop.

If a man's thoughts are not agitated, if his mind is not troubled by desire, if he no longer cares for good and evil, this man, wide awake, knows nothing of fear.

Observing that the body is as fragile as a jar, and fortifying the mind like a city at arms, one should attack Mara with the blade of intelligence and should guard carefully whatever has been won.

Before long this body will be lying on the earth, abandoned, as lifeless as a piece of old wood.

Whatever an enemy may do to an enemy, whatever a hater may do to a hater, the harm caused by a misdirected mind is even greater still.

Neither mother nor father nor any other kinsman can do so much good as a well-directed mind.

These few verses correspond to all the needs of those whose mind has not been mastered. They point out the attachment that one has to one's old ways of being, thinking and reacting, even when one is trying to get away from them. As soon as you emerge by your effort, you are like a fish out of water and you gasp for breath because you are no longer in your element of obscure desires.

Even when you make a resolution, the mind remains unstable. It is subtle, difficult to seize. Without seeming to do so, it is continually seeking its own satisfaction; and its intentions are hidden in the core of the heart so as not to show their true nature.

And while not forgetting the weakness of the body, you must try to strengthen the mind against its own weakness; with the sword of wisdom, you must fight against the hostile forces and treasure the progress you have made so that these forces may not despoil you of your progress, for they are terrible thieves.

And then there is a short couplet for those who are afraid of death, intended to liberate them from that fear. Finally there is a last short couplet for those who are attached to their family to show them the vanity of this attachment.

In the end, a last warning: an ill-directed, ill-controlled thought does more harm than an enemy can do to an enemy or a hater to a hater. That is to say, even those who have the best intentions in the world, if they do not have a wise control over

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their thought, will do more harm to themselves and to those whom they love than an enemy can do to an enemy or a hater to a hater.

The mind has a power of deception in its own regard which is incalculable. It clothes its desires and preferences with all kinds of wonderful intentions and it hides its trickeries, resentments and disappointments under the most favourable appearances.

To overcome all that, you must have the fearlessness of a true warrior, and an honesty, a straightforwardness, a sincerity that never fail.

28 February 1958

The Flowers

Who will conquer this world of illusion and the kingdom of Yama¹ and the world of the gods? Who will discover the path of the Law as the skilled gardener discovers the rarest of flowers?

The disciple on the right path will conquer this world of illusion and the kingdom of Yama and the world of the gods. He will discover the path of the Law as the skilled gardener discovers the rarest of flowers.

Knowing his body to be as impermanent as foam and as illusory as a mirage, the disciple on the right path will shatter the flowery arrow of Mara and will rise beyond the reach of the King of Death.

Death carries away the man who seeks only the flowers of sensual pleasure just as torrential floods carry away a sleeping village.

Death, the destroyer, overcomes the man who seeks only the flowers of sensual pleasure before he can satisfy himself.

The sage should go from door to door in his village, as the bee gathers honey from the flowers without bringing harm to their colours or their fragrance.

Do not criticise others for what they do or have not done, but be aware of what, yourself, you do or have not done.

¹ The God of Death.

Questions and Answers

Just as a beautiful flower which is radiant yet lacks fragrance, so are the beautiful words of one who does not act accordingly.

Just as a beautiful flower which is both radiant and sweetly scented, so are the beautiful words of one who acts accordingly.

Just as many garlands can be made from a heap of flowers, so a mortal can accumulate much merit by good deeds.

The fragrance of flowers, even that of sandalwood or of incense, even that of jasmine, cannot go against the wind; but the sweet fragrance of intelligence goes against the wind. All around the man of intelligence spreads the fragrance of his virtue.

No fragrance, not even that of sandalwood or incense, nor of the lotus nor of jasmine, can be compared with the fragrance of intelligence.

Weak is the fragrance of incense or sandalwood compared to that of a virtuous man which reaches up to the highest of divinities.

Mara cannot discover the way that those beings follow who lead a life of perfect purity and who are liberated by their total knowledge.

As the beautiful scented lily rises by the wayside, even so the disciple of the Perfectly Enlightened One,² radiant with intelligence, rises from the blind and ignorant multitude.

² The Buddha.

There are some very wise recommendations here, for example, not to concern oneself with what others do nor with the mistakes they make, but to attend to one's own faults and negligences and rectify them. Another wise counsel is never to utter too many eloquent words which are not effectuated in action—speak little, act well. Beautiful words, they say, that are mere words, are like flowers without fragrance.

And finally, lest you get discouraged by your own faults, the Dhammapada gives you this solacing image: the purest lily can spring out of a heap of rubbish by the wayside. That is to say, there is nothing so rotten that it cannot give birth to the purest realisation.

Whatever may be the past, whatever may be the faults committed, whatever the ignorance in which one might have lived, one carries deep within oneself the supreme purity which can translate itself into a wonderful realisation.

The whole point is to think of that, to concentrate on that and not to be concerned with all the difficulties and obstacles and hindrances.

Concentrate exclusively on what you want to be, forget as entirely as possible what you do not want to be.

7 March 1958

The Fool

Long is the night for one who sleeps not; long is the road for one who is weary; long is the cycle of births for the fool who knows not the true law.

If a man cannot find a companion who is his superior or even his equal, he should resolutely follow a solitary path; for no good can come from companionship with a fool.

The fool torments himself by thinking, “This son is mine, this wealth is mine.” How can he possess sons and riches, who does not possess himself?

The fool who recognises his foolishness is at least wise in that. But the fool who thinks he is intelligent, is a fool indeed.

Even if the fool serves an intelligent man throughout his life, he will nevertheless remain ignorant of the truth, just as the spoon knows not the taste of the soup.

If an intelligent man serves a wise man, if only for a moment, he will quickly understand the truth, just as the tongue instantly perceives the savour of the soup.

The fools, those who are ignorant, have no worse enemies than themselves; bitter is the fruit they gather from their evil actions.

The evil action which one repents later brings only regrets and the fruit one reaps will be tears and lamentations.

The good action one does not need to repent later brings no regret and the fruit one reaps will be contentment and satisfaction.

As long as the evil action has not borne its fruits, the fool imagines that it is as sweet as honey. But when this action bears its fruits, he reaps only suffering.

Though month after month the fool takes his food with the tip of a blade of Kusa grass,¹ he is not for all that worth a sixteenth part of one who has understood the truth.

An evil action does not yield its fruits immediately, just as milk does not at once turn sour; but like a fire covered with ashes, even so smoulders the evil action.

Whatever vain knowledge a fool may have been able to acquire, it leads him only to his ruin, for it breaks his head and destroys his worthier nature.

The foolish monk thirsts after reputation, and a high rank among the Bhikkhus, after authority in the monastery and veneration from ordinary men.

“Let ordinary men and holy ones esteem highly what I have done; let them obey me!” This is the longing of the fool, whose pride increases more and more.

One path leads to earthly gain and quite another leads to Nirvana. Knowing this, the Bhikkhu, the disciple of the Perfectly Enlightened One, longs no more for honour, but rather cultivates solitude.

¹ Kusa grass is considered sacred in India. Taking one's food with the tip of a blade of Kusa grass symbolises an act of asceticism.

Questions and Answers

This seems to point directly to hypocrites who take up the external forms and appearances of wisdom but in their hearts keep all the desires, ambitions, the need for show, and live to satisfy this ambition and these desires instead of living for the only thing that is worth living for: attainment of the true consciousness, integral self-giving to the Divine, the peace, the light and the delight that come from the true wisdom and self-forgetfulness.

One could easily replace throughout this text the word fool by the word ego. One who lives in his ego, for his ego, in the hope of satisfying his ego is a fool. Unless you transcend ego, unless you reach a state of consciousness in which ego has no reason for existing, you cannot hope to attain the goal.

The ego seems to have been indispensable at one time for the formation of the individual consciousness, but with the ego were born all the obstacles, sufferings, difficulties, all that now appears to us as adverse and anti-divine forces. But these forces themselves were a necessity for attaining an inner purification and the liberation from ego. The ego is at once the result of their action and the cause of their prolongation. When the ego disappears, the adverse forces will also disappear, having no longer any reason for their existence in the world.

With the inner liberation, with a total sincerity and perfect purity, all suffering will disappear, because it will no longer be necessary for the progress of the consciousness towards its final goal.

Wisdom, then, consists in working energetically at the inner transformation so that you may emerge victorious from a struggle which will have borne its fruits but will no longer have any need to exist.

14 March 1958

The Sage

We should seek the company of the sage who shows us our faults, as if he were showing us a hidden treasure; it is best to cultivate relations with such a man because he cannot be harmful to us. He will bring us only good.

One who exhorts us to good and dissuades us from doing evil is appreciated, esteemed by the just man and hated by the unjust.

Do not seek the company or friendship of men of base character, but let us consort with men of worth and let us seek friendship with the best among men.

He who drinks directly from the source of the Teaching lives happy in serenity of mind. The sage delights always in the Teaching imparted by the noble disciples of the Buddha.

Those who build waterways lead the water where they want; those who make arrows straighten them; carpenters shape their wood; the sage controls himself.

No more than a mighty rock can be shaken by the wind, can the sage be moved by praise or blame.

The sage who has steeped himself in the Teaching, becomes perfectly peaceful like a deep lake, calm and clear.

Wherever he may be, the true sage renounces all pleasures. Neither sorrow nor happiness can move him.

Neither for his own sake, nor for the sake of others does the sage desire children, riches or domains. He does not

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aim for his own success by unjust ways. Such a man is virtuous, wise and just.

Few men cross to the other shore. Most men remain and do no more than run up and down along this shore.

But those who live according to the Teaching cross beyond the realm of Death, however difficult may be the passage.

The sage will leave behind the dark ways of existence, but he will follow the way of light. He will leave his home for the homeless life and in solitude will seek the joy which is so difficult to find.

Having renounced all desires and attachments of the senses, the sage will cleanse himself of all the taints of the mind.

One whose mind is well established in all the degrees of knowledge, who, detached from all things, delights in his renunciation, and who has mastered his appetites, he is resplendent, and even in this world he attains Nirvana.

There is a sentence here which is particularly felicitous. It is the very first sentence we have read, “We should seek the company of the sage who shows our faults, as if he were showing us a hidden treasure.”

In all Scriptures meant to help mankind to progress, it is always said that you must be very grateful to those who show you your faults and so you must seek their company; but the form used here is particularly felicitous: if a fault is shown to you it is as if a treasure were shown to you; that is to say, each time that you discover in yourself a fault, incapacity, lack of understanding, weakness, insincerity, all that prevents you

from making a progress, it is as if you discovered a wonderful treasure.

Instead of growing sad and telling yourself, "Oh, there is still another defect", you should, on the contrary, rejoice as if you had made a wonderful acquisition, because you have just caught hold of one of those things that prevented you from progressing. And once you have caught hold of it, pull it out! For those who practise a yogic discipline consider that the moment you know that a thing should not be, you have the power to remove it, discard it, destroy it.

To discover a fault is an acquisition. It is as though a flood of light had come to replace the little speck of obscurity which has just been driven out.

When you follow a yogic discipline, you must not accept this weakness, this baseness, this lack of will, which means that knowledge is not immediately followed by power. To know that a thing should not be and yet continue to allow it to be is such a sign of weakness that it is not accepted in any serious discipline, it is a lack of will that verges on insincerity. You know that a thing should not be and the moment you know it, you are the one who decides that it shall not be. For knowledge and power are essentially the same thing—that is to say, you must not admit in any part of your being this shadow of bad will which is in contradiction to the central will for progress and which makes you impotent, without courage, without strength in the face of an evil that you must destroy.

To sin through ignorance is not a sin; that is part of the general evil in the world as it is, but to sin when you know, that is serious. It means that there is hidden somewhere, like a worm in the fruit, an element of bad will that must be hunted out and destroyed, at any cost, because any weakness on such a point is the source of difficulties that sometimes, later on, become irreparable.

So then the first thing is to be perfectly happy when someone or some circumstance puts you in the conscious presence of a

Questions and Answers

fault in yourself which you did not know. Instead of lamenting, you must rejoice and in this joy must find the strength to get rid of the thing which should not be.

21 March 1958

The Adept

No sorrow exists for one who has completed his journey, who has let fall all cares, who is free in all his parts, who has cast off all bonds.

Those who are heedful strive always and, like swans leaving their lakes, leave one home after another.

Those who amass nothing, who eat moderately, who have perceived the emptiness of all things and who have attained unconditioned liberation, their path is as difficult to trace as that of a bird in the air.

One for whom all desires have passed away and who has perceived the emptiness of all things, who cares little for food, who has attained unconditioned liberation, his path is as difficult to trace as that of a bird in the air.

Even the Gods esteem one whose senses are controlled as horses by the charioteer, one who is purged of all pride and freed from all corruption.

One who fulfils his duty is as immovable as the earth itself. He is as firm as a celestial pillar, pure as an unmuddyed lake; and for him the cycle of births is completed.

Calm are the thoughts, the words and the acts of one who has liberated himself by the true knowledge and has achieved a perfect tranquillity.

The greatest among men is he who is not credulous but has the sense of the Uncreated, who has cut all ties, who has destroyed all occasion for rebirth.

Whether village or forest, plain or mountain, wherever the adepts may dwell, that place is always delightful.

Delightful are the forests which are shunned by the multitude. There, the adept, who is free from passion, will find happiness, for he seeks not after pleasure.

There is a very interesting sentence here: “He who is not credulous but has the sense of the Uncreated....”

One who is not credulous — all kinds of things can be understood from this word. The first impression is that it refers to one who does not believe in invisible things without having an experience of them, as distinct from people who follow, for example, a particular religion and have faith in dogmas simply because that is what they have been taught. But he “has the sense of the Uncreated”, that is to say, he is in contact with invisible things and knows them as they are, by identity. The Dhammapada has told us, to begin with, that the greatest of men is he who has no faith in what is taught but has a personal experience of things that are not visible, he who is free from all belief and has himself had the experience of invisible things.

Another explanation can also be given: one who is not credulous is he who does not believe in the reality of appearances, in things as we see them, who does not take them for the truth, who knows that these are only misleading appearances and that behind them lies a truth that is to be found and known by personal experience and by identity.

And this makes one reflect on the number of things, the countless number of things that we believe without any personal knowledge, simply because we have been taught that they are like that, or because we are accustomed to think they are like that, or because we are surrounded by people who believe that things are like that. If we look at all the things that we believe and not only believe but assert with an indisputable authority, “This is like this”, “That, but of course it is like that”, “And

this thing, yes, it is so...." In truth, however, we know nothing about it, it is simply because we are in the habit of thinking that they are like that. What are the things that you have experienced personally, with which you have had a direct contact, of which you can at least say with sincerity, "I am convinced that it is like that, because I have experienced it"? Not many.

In reality, if you truly want to have knowledge, you must begin by making a very important study: verify the things that we have been taught, even the most common and the most insignificant. Then you will understand why the text says "the greatest among men", because I do not think that many have made this experiment.

Just to find out the number of things we believe and assert, simply because it is customary to believe and assert them, is indeed a very interesting discovery.

Now go and look into your thought and consciousness for all the things that you assert without proof. You will see!

28 March 1958

The Thousands

Better than a thousand words devoid of meaning is a single meaningful word which can bring tranquillity to one who hears it.

Better than a thousand verses devoid of meaning is a single meaningful verse which can bring tranquillity to one who hears it.

Better than the repetition of a hundred verses devoid of meaning is the repetition of a single verse of the Teaching which can bring tranquillity to one who hears it.

The greatest conqueror is not he who is victorious over thousands of men in battle, but he who is victorious over himself.

The victory that one wins over oneself is of more value than victory over all the peoples.

No god, no Gandharva,¹ nor Mara nor Brahma² can change that victory to defeat.

If, month after month, for a hundred years one offers sacrifices by the thousand, and if for a single instant one offers homage to a being full of wisdom, that single homage is worth more than all those countless sacrifices.

If for a hundred years a man tends the flame on Agni's altar, and if, for a single instant, he renders homage to a man who has mastered his nature, this brief homage has more value than all his long devotions.

¹ Celestial musician.

² The creator of the universe.

Whatever the sacrifices and oblations a man in this world may offer throughout a whole year in order to acquire merit, that is not worth even a quarter of the homage offered to a just man.

For one who is respectful to his elders, four things increase: long life, beauty, happiness and strength.

A single day spent in good conduct and meditation is worth more than a hundred years spent in immorality and dissipation.

A single day of wisdom and meditation is worth more than a hundred years spent in foolishness and dissipation.

A single day of strength and energy is worth more than a hundred years spent in indolence and inertia.

A single day lived in the perception that all things appear and disappear is worth more than a hundred years spent not knowing that they appear and disappear.

A single day spent in contemplation of the path of immortality is worth more than a hundred years lived in ignorance of the path of immortality.

A single day spent in contemplation of the supreme Truth is worth more than a hundred years lived in ignorance of the supreme Truth.

All kinds of different things are gathered here under the same heading. It is an association of words more than an association of ideas. But the central trend is this, that it is preferable to have one moment of sincerity rather than a long life of apparent devotion and that a psychological and spiritual victory over oneself is more important than all external victories.

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There is also an interesting reflection, that a victory over oneself is the only victory which is truly safe from the intervention of any god or power of Nature or any instrument of evil. If you have gained self-mastery on one point, that goes beyond the reach of any intervention even from the very highest powers, whether they are gods of the Overmind or any anti-divine powers in the world.

The opening text says that a single word that gives you peace is worth more than thousands of words that have no meaning — this anybody can understand — but it is also said that the word that gives you peace is worth more than thousands of words that can satisfy the mental activity but have no psychological effect on your being.

Indeed, when you have found something which has the power to help you in gaining a victory over your unconsciousness and inertia, you must, till you reach the final result, exhaust all the effects produced by that word or phrase before you look for others.

It is more important to pursue to its end the practice of the effect produced by an idea that one has met somehow, than to try to accumulate in the head a large number of ideas. Ideas may all be very useful in their own time, if they are allowed in at the opportune moment, particularly if you carry to the extreme limit the result of one of those dynamic ideas that are capable of making you win an inner victory. That is to say, one should have for one's chief, if not only aim the practice of what one knows rather than the accumulation in oneself of a knowledge which remains purely theoretical.

So one could sum up: put into practice integrally what you know, only then can you usefully increase your theoretical knowledge.

11 April 1958

Evil

Hasten towards the good, leave behind all evil thoughts, for to do good without enthusiasm is to have a mind which delights in evil.

If one does an evil action, he should not persist in it, he should not delight in it. For full of suffering is the accumulation of evil.

If one does a good action, he should persist in it and take delight in it. Full of happiness is the accumulation of good.

As long as his evil action has not yet ripened, an evil-doer may experience contentment. But when it ripens, the wrong-doer knows unhappiness.

As long as his good action has not yet ripened, one who does good may experience unhappiness. But when it ripens, the good man knows happiness.

Do not treat evil lightly, saying, "That will not touch me." A jar is filled drop by drop; even so the fool fills himself little by little with wickedness.

Do not treat good lightly, saying, "That will not touch me." A jar is filled drop by drop; even so the sage fills himself little by little with goodness.

The merchant who is carrying many precious goods and who has but few companions, avoids dangerous roads; and a man who loves his life is wary of poison. Even so should one act regarding evil.

Questions and Answers

A hand that has no wound can carry poison with impunity; act likewise, for evil cannot touch the righteous man.

If you offend one who is pure, innocent and defenceless, the insult will fall back on you, as if you threw dust against the wind.

Some are reborn here on earth, evil-doers go to the worlds of Niraya,¹ the just go to the heavenly worlds, but those who have freed themselves from all desire attain Nirvana.

Neither in the skies, nor in the depths of the ocean, nor in the rocky caves, nowhere upon earth does there exist a place where a man can find refuge from his evil actions.

Neither in the skies, nor in the depths of the ocean, nor in the rocky caves, nowhere upon earth does there exist a place where a man can hide from death.

People have the habit of dealing lightly with thoughts that come. And the atmosphere is full of thoughts of all kinds which do not in fact belong to anybody in particular, which move perpetually from one person to another, very freely, much too freely, because there are very few people who can keep their thoughts under control.

When you take up the Buddhist discipline to learn how to control your thoughts, you make very interesting discoveries. You try to observe your thoughts. Instead of letting them pass freely, sometimes even letting them enter your head and establish themselves in a quite inopportune way, you look at them, observe them and you realise with stupefaction that in the space of

¹ Hell; the state of suffering.

a few seconds there passes through the head a series of absolutely improbable thoughts that are altogether harmful.

You believe you are so good, so kind, so well disposed and always full of good feelings. You wish no harm to anybody, you wish only good—all that you tell yourself complacently. But if you look at yourself sincerely as you are thinking, you notice that you have in your head a collection of thoughts which are sometimes frightful and of which you were not at all aware.

For example, your reactions when something has not pleased you: how eager you are to send your friends, relatives, acquaintances, everyone, to the devil! How you wish them all kinds of unpleasant things, without even being aware of it! And how you say, "Ah, that will teach him to be like that!" And when you criticise, you say, "He must be made aware of his faults." And when someone has not acted according to your ideas, you say, "He will be punished for it!" and so on.

You do not know it because you do not look at yourself in the act of thinking. Sometimes you know it, when it becomes a little too strong. But when the thing simply passes through, you hardly notice it—it comes, it enters, it leaves. Then you find out that if you truly want to be pure and wholly on the side of the Truth, then that requires a vigilance, a sincerity, a self-observation, a self-control which are not common. You begin to realise that it is difficult to be truly sincere.

You flatter yourself that you have nothing but good feelings and good intentions and that whatever you do, you do for the sake of what is good—yes, so long as you are conscious and have control, but the moment you are not very attentive, all kinds of things happen within you of which you are not at all conscious and which are not very pretty.

If you want to clean your house thoroughly, you must be vigilant for a long time, for a very long time and especially not believe that you have reached the goal, like that, at one stroke, because one day you happened to decide that you would be on the right side. That is of course a very essential and important

Questions and Answers

point, but it must be followed by a good many other days when you have to keep a strict guard on yourself so as not to belie your resolution.

4 April 1958

Punishment

All tremble when faced with punishment; all fear death. Seeing others as ourselves, do not strike, do not cause another to strike.

All tremble when faced with punishment; life is dear to all. Seeing others as ourselves, do not strike, do not cause another to strike.

Whosoever hurts creatures eager for happiness for the sake of his own happiness, nevertheless will not obtain it after his death.

Whosoever does not hurt creatures eager for happiness for the sake of his own happiness, will obtain it after death.

Never speak harsh words to anyone, for they will be returned to you. Angry words cause suffering and one who utters them will bear them in return.

If you remain as silent as a broken gong, you have already entered Nirvana, for violence no longer abides in you.

As the cowherd, with his stick, drives the herd to pasture, so old age and death drive the life out of all living beings.

The fool does evil without knowing it; he is consumed and tormented by his actions as by a fire.

One who does harm to one who does none, one who offends one who offends not, will soon suffer one of the ten states that follow:

Questions and Answers

He will endure intense pain, he will suffer disastrous losses and terrible injury, serious illness, madness.

Or he will come in conflict with authority, he will be the object of gross calumny, he will lose his near ones or his possessions.

Or else fire will destroy his dwelling-place; and at the time of the dissolution of his body he will be reborn in Hell.

Neither going naked or with matted hair, nor remaining dirty, nor fasting, nor sleeping on the bare ground, nor smearing the body with ashes, nor the practice of ascetic postures, can purify the mortal who has not cast away all doubt.

However richly he is dressed, if a man cultivates tranquillity of mind, if he is calm, resigned, master of himself, pure, if he does no harm to any creature, he is a Brahmin, he is an ascetic, he is a Bhikkhu.

Is there in this world a man beyond reproach that merits no blame, as a thoroughbred needs no blow from the whip?

Like a spirited horse, be quick and eager for the goal. By trust, virtue, energy, meditation, the quest for truth, perfection of knowledge and conduct, by faith destroy in you all suffering.

Those who build waterways lead the water where they want; those who make arrows straighten them; carpenters shape their wood; the sage controls himself.

One has the impression that these things were written for rather

primitive people. The series of calamities that will befall you if you do harm is quite amusing.

It would seem — provided of course that this is an exact record of the words that the Buddha spoke — that he must have changed the terms of his talks according to his audience and if he had to do with rustic people without education, he would speak a very material language with very practical and concrete comparisons so that they might understand him. There is a considerable difference of level in these verses. Some have become very famous, as, for example, the last verse here, where it is said that the artisan shapes his material to achieve what he has to do, and this striking conclusion: the sage controls himself.

Truly one has the impression that human mentality has progressed since that age. Thought has become more complex, psychology more profound, to the extent that these arguments appear almost puerile. But when we mean to practise them, then we realise that we have remained almost on the same level, and that if thought has progressed, practice, far from being better, seems to have become worse. And here there is a childlike simplicity, something rather healthy, an absence of perversion that unfortunately the human race no longer possesses.

There was a moral healthiness in those days which has now completely disappeared. These arguments make you smile, but the practice of what is taught here is much more difficult now than it was at that time. A kind of hypocrisy, pretension, underhand duplicity seems to have taken possession of the human mind and especially its way of being, and men have learnt to deceive themselves in a most pernicious way.

In those times, one could say, “Don’t do harm, you will be punished”; hearts were simple and the mind as well, and one said, “Yes, it is better not to do harm, because I will be punished.” But now, with an ironical smile, you say, “Oh! I shall surely find a way to avoid punishment.”

Mental capacity seems to have grown, mental power seems to have developed, men seem to be much more capable of playing

Questions and Answers

with ideas, of having mental command over all principles, but at the same time they have lost the simple and healthy candour of people who lived closer to Nature and knew less how to play with ideas. Thus humanity as a whole seems to have reached a very dangerous turning-point. Those who are trying to find a solution to the general corruption preach a return to the simplicity of yore, but of course that is quite impossible: you cannot go back.

We must go farther on, we must advance, climb greater heights and go beyond the arid search for pleasure and personal welfare, not through fear of punishment, even punishment after death, but through the development of a new sense of beauty, a thirst for truth and light, through understanding that it is only by widening yourself, illuminating yourself, setting yourself ablaze with the ardour for progress, that you can find both integral peace and enduring happiness.

One must rise up and widen — rise up... and widen.

18 April 1958

Old Age

Why this joy, this gladness, when the world is forever burning? O you who are enveloped in shadows, why do you not seek the light?

See then this poor decorated form, this mass of corruptible elements, of infirmities and vain desires in which nothing is lasting or stable.

This fragile body is but a nest of misery, of decrepitude and corruption; for life ends in death.

What pleasure is there in contemplating these white bones strewn like gourds in autumn?

In this fortress made of bone and covered with flesh and blood, only pride and jealousy, dissolution and death are established.

Even the gorgeous chariots of kings are worn out in the end. It is the same with this body which at last is worn out with age; but the true Law is never worn out and so one sage can pass it on to another.

The ignorant man grows older like a bullock; his weight increases but not his intelligence.

Many times have I passed in vain through the cycle of births in search of the builder of this house. And how painful is this cycle of births!

At last, I have found you, builder; never again shall you build this house that is my body. All the beams are shattered and the ridge of the roof has crumbled.

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My liberated mind has attained the extinction of all desires.

Those who have not lived a life of self-control and who, in their youth, have not known how to gather the true riches, perish like aged herons beside a lake with no fish.

Those who have not lived a life of self-control and who, in their youth, have not known how to gather the true riches are like shattered bows; they grieve for their lost strength.

There is one thing certain which is not clearly stated here, but which is at least as important as all the rest. It is this, that there is an old age much more dangerous and much more real than the amassing of years: the incapacity to grow and progress.

As soon as you stop advancing, as soon as you stop progressing, as soon as you cease to better yourself, cease to gain and grow, cease to transform yourself, you truly become old, that is to say, you go downhill towards disintegration.

There are young people who are old and there are old people who are young. If you carry in you this flame for progress and transformation, if you are ready to leave everything behind so that you may advance with an alert step, if you are always open to a new progress, a new improvement, a new transformation, then you are eternally young. But if you sit back satisfied with what has been accomplished, if you have the feeling that you have reached your goal and you have nothing left to do but enjoy the fruit of your efforts, then already more than half your body is in the tomb: it is decrepitude and the true death.

Everything that has been done is always nothing compared with what remains to be done.

Do not look behind. Look ahead, always ahead and go forward always.

25 April 1958

The Ego

If a man holds himself dear, let him guard himself closely. The sage should watch through one of the three vigils of his existence (youth, maturity, or old age).

One should begin by establishing oneself in the right path; then, one will be able to advise others. Thus the sage is above all reproach.

If one puts into practice what he teaches to others, being master of himself, he can very well guide others; for in truth it is difficult to master oneself.

In truth, one is one's own master, for what other master can there be? By mastering oneself, one acquires a mastery which is difficult to achieve.

The evil done by himself, originated by himself, emanating from him, crushes the fool as the diamond crushes a hard gem.

Just as the creeper clings to the Sal tree, even so one entrapped by his own evil actions does to himself the harm his enemy would wish him.

It is so easy to do oneself wrong and harm, but how difficult it is to do what is good and profitable!

The fool who, because of his wrong views, rejects the teachings of the adepts, the Noble Ones and the Just, brings about his own destruction, as the fruit of the bamboo kills the plant.

Doing evil, one harms oneself; avoiding evil, one purifies oneself; purity and impurity depend on ourselves; no one can purify another.

No man should neglect his supreme Good to follow another, however great. Knowing clearly what is his best line of conduct, he should not swerve from it.

The question here seems to be more about egoism than ego.

Egoism is a relatively easy thing to correct, because everyone knows what it is. It is easy to discover, easy to correct, if one truly wants to do it and is bent on it.

But the ego is much more difficult to seize, because, in fact, to realise what the ego is one must already be out of it, otherwise one cannot find it out. You are wholly moulded from it, from head to foot, from the outermost to the innermost, from the physical to the spiritual, you are steeped in ego. It is mixed with everything and you are not aware of what it is. You must have already conquered it, come out of it, freed yourself from it, at least partially, at least in some little corner of your being somewhere, in order to realise what the ego is.

The ego is what helps us to individualise ourselves and what prevents us from becoming divine. It is like that. Put that together and you will find the ego. Without the ego, as the world is organised, there would be no individual, and with the ego the world cannot become divine.

It would be logical to conclude, "Well, let us first of all become conscious individuals and then we shall send away the ego and become divine." Only, when we have become conscious individuals, we have grown so accustomed to living with our ego that we are no longer able to discern it and much labour is needed to become aware of its presence.

On the other hand, everyone knows what egoism is. When you want to pull everything towards you and other people do not interest you, that is called egoism; when you put yourself

at the centre of the universe and all things exist only in relation to you, that is egoism. But it is very obvious, one must be blind not to see that one is egoistic. Everybody is a little egoistic, more or less, and at least a certain proportion of egoism is normally acceptable; but even in ordinary life, when one is a little too egoistic, well, one receives knocks on the nose, because, since everyone is egoistic, no one much likes egoism in others.

It is taken for granted, it is part of public morality. Yes, one must be a little bit egoistic, not too much, so it is not conspicuous! On the other hand, nobody speaks of the ego, because nobody knows it. It is such an intimate companion that one does not even recognise its existence; and yet so long as it is there one will never have the divine consciousness.

The ego is what makes one conscious of being separate from others. If there were no ego, you would not perceive that you are a person separate from others. You would have the impression that you are a small part of a whole, a very small part of a very great whole. On the other hand, every one of you is most certainly quite conscious of being a separate person. Well, it is the ego that gives you this impression. As long as you are conscious in this way, it means that you have an ego.

When you begin to be aware that everything is yourself, and that this is only a very small point in the midst of thousands and thousands of other points of the same person that you are everywhere, when you feel that you are yourself in everything and that there is no separation, then you know that you are on the way towards having no more ego.

There even comes a time when it is impossible to conceive oneself and say, "It is not I", for even to express it in this way, to say that the All is you, that you are the All or that you are the Divine or that the Divine is you, proves that something still remains.

There is a moment — this happens in a flash and can hardly stay — when it is the All that thinks, it is the All that knows, it is the All that feels, it is the All that lives. There is not even... not even the impression that... you have reached that point.

Then it is all right. But until then, there is still a little remnant of ego somewhere; usually it is the part which looks on, the witness that looks on.

So do not assert that you have no more ego. It is not accurate. Say you are on the way towards having no more ego, that is the only correct thing to say.

I do not believe that it has happened to you, has it? — not yet! And yet it is indispensable, if you truly intend to know what the supramental is. If you are a candidate for supermanhood, you must resolve to dispense with your ego, to go beyond it, for as long as you keep it with you, the supermind will be for you something unknown and inaccessible.

But if through effort, through discipline, through progressive mastery, you surmount your ego and go beyond it, even if only in the tiniest part of your being, this acts like the opening of a small window somewhere, and by looking carefully through the window, you will be able to glimpse the supermind. And that is a promise. When you glimpse it, you find it so beautiful that you immediately want to get rid of all the rest... of the ego!

Please note that I am not saying that you must be totally free from all ego in order to have a glimpse of the supramental; for then that would be something almost impossible. No, to be free from ego, just a little bit somewhere, in some corner of your being, even only a little corner of the mind; if it is the mind and the vital, it is well and good, but if by chance — oh! not by chance — if by repeated efforts you have entered into contact with your psychic being, then the door is wide open. Through the psychic you can suddenly have a very clear and beautiful vision of what the supermind is, only a vision, not a realisation. That is the great way out. But even without going so far as this beautiful realisation, the psychic realisation, if you succeed in liberating some part of your mind or your vital, that makes a kind of hole in the door, a keyhole; through this keyhole you have a glimpse, just a little glimpse. And that is already very attractive, very interesting.

2 May 1958

The World

Do not follow the way of evil. Do not cultivate indolence of mind. Do not choose wrong views. Do not be of those who linger in the world.

Arise. Cast off negligence. Follow the teaching of wisdom. The sage knows happiness in this world and the other.

Follow the teaching of wisdom and not that of evil. The sage knows happiness in this world and the other.

One who looks upon the world as a bubble or a mirage, Yama the King of Death cannot find him.

Come, look upon the world as the brightly-coloured chariot of a Raja, which attracts the foolish, but where, in truth, there is nothing attractive.

One who, having been negligent, becomes vigilant, illuminates the earth like the moon coming forth from behind the clouds.

One whose good actions efface the evil he has done, illuminates the earth like the moon coming forth from behind the clouds.

The world is wrapped in darkness and few are those who find their way, who, like a bird escaping from a net, soar up towards heaven.

The swans take the path of the sun. Those who possess occult powers fly through the air. The sages leave this world after defeating Mara and his army of evil.

Questions and Answers

No evil is impossible to him who transgresses one law of the Doctrine, who utters falsehood and who disdains the higher world.

In truth, misers do not attain to the world of the gods and fools do not know the happiness of giving. But the sage delights in giving and thus knows happiness in the other world.

Rather than ruling the earth, rather than reaching heaven, rather than reigning over the worlds, it is better to enter the upward current.

There are four pieces of advice here which I would like to retain for our meditation. “Do not cultivate indolence of mind.” “Do not choose wrong views” — unfortunately this is something one does all the time. And, “Arise. Cast off negligence.”

The world has been so made — at least up to now, let us hope that it will not be so for much longer — that, spontaneously, a man who is not cultured, when he is brought into contact with ideas, always chooses wrong ideas.

And a child who is not educated always chooses bad company. It is a thing I experience constantly and concretely. If you keep a child in a special atmosphere and if, from a very early age, you instill in him a special atmosphere, a special purity, he has a chance of not making a wrong choice. But a child who is taken from the world as it is and is placed in a society where there are good and bad elements will go straight to those who can spoil him, teach him wrong things, that is to say, towards the worst company.

A man who has no intellectual culture, if you give him some mixed ideas, just at random, to choose from, he will always choose the stupid ones; because, as Sri Aurobindo has told us, this is a world of falsehood, of ignorance and an effort is needed, an aspiration; one must come in contact with one’s inmost being — a conscious and luminous contact — if one is to distinguish the true

from the false, the good influence from the bad. If you let yourself go, you sink into a hole.

Things are like that because what rules the world — oh! let us put it in the past tense, so that it becomes true — what ruled the world was falsehood and ignorance.

In fact, for the moment, it is still like that; one should have no illusions about it. But perhaps with a great effort and great vigilance we shall be able to make it otherwise... soon — the “perhaps” is for “soon”.

Surely it will come one day, but we want it soon, and that is why the last two recommendations please me: “Arise. Cast off negligence.”

9 May 1958

The Awakened One (The Buddha)

He whose victory has never been surpassed nor even equalled—which path can lead to Him, the Pathless, the Awakened One who dwells within the Infinite?

One in whom there is neither greed nor desire, how can he be led astray? Which path can lead to Him, the Pathless, the Awakened One who dwells within the Infinite?

Even the gods envy the sages given to meditation, the Awakened Ones, the Vigilant who live with delight in renunciation and solitude.

It is difficult to attain to human birth. It is difficult to live this mortal life. It is difficult to obtain the good fortune of hearing the True Doctrine. And difficult indeed is the advent of the Awakened Ones.

Abstain from evil; cultivate good and purify your mind. This is the teaching of the Awakened Ones.

Of all ascetic practices patience is the best; of all states the most perfect is Nirvana, say the Awakened Ones. He who harms others is not a monk. He who oppresses others is not a true ascetic.

Neither to offend, nor to do wrong to anyone, to practise discipline according to the Law, to be moderate in eating, to live in seclusion, and to merge oneself in the higher consciousness, this is the teaching of the Awakened Ones.

Even a rain of gold would not be able to quench the thirst of desire, for it is insatiable and the origin of sorrows. This the sage knows.

Even the pleasures of heaven are without savour for the sage. The disciple of the Buddha, of the Perfectly Awakened One, rejoices only in the extinction of all desire.

Impelled by fear, men seek refuge in many places, in the mountains, in the forests, in the groves, in sanctuaries.

But this is not a safe refuge; this is not the supreme refuge. Coming to this refuge does not save a man from all sufferings.

One who takes refuge in the Buddha, in the Dhamma¹ and the Sangha,² with perfect knowledge, perceives the Four Noble Truths:

Suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the Noble Eightfold Path which leads to cessation of suffering.

In truth, this is the sure refuge, this is the sovereign refuge. To choose this refuge is to be liberated from all suffering.

It is difficult to meet the Perfectly Noble One. Such a being is not born everywhere. And where such a sage is born, those around him live in happiness.

Happy is the birth of the Buddhas, happy the teaching of the true Law. Happy is the harmony of the Sangha, happy the discipline of the United.

¹ The True Doctrine.

² The community; the order of the Great Ones and the order of the monks.

One cannot measure the merit of the man who reveres those who are worthy of reverence, whether the Buddha or his disciples, those who are free from all desire and all error, those who have overcome all obstacles and who have crossed beyond suffering and grief.

This concerns the Four Truths and the Eightfold Path that lead to the annihilation of suffering. Here are the details given in the text:

The Four Noble Truths are:

- (1) Life — taken in the sense of ordinary life, the life of ignorance and falsehood — is indissolubly linked with suffering: suffering of the body and suffering of the mind.
- (2) The cause of suffering is desire, which is caused by ignorance of the nature of separative life.
- (3) There is a way to escape from suffering, to put an end to pain.
- (4) This liberation is obtained by following the discipline of the Eightfold Path which gradually purifies the mind from the Ignorance. The fourth Truth is called the method of the Eightfold Path.

The Noble Path consists in a training in the following eight stages:

- (1) *Correct seeing.* To see things as they are, that is to say, a pure, accurate vision, the best vision.

Three conditions characterise existence: pain, impermanence, the absence of a fixed ego. So the Dhammapada says. But it is not quite that, it is rather the absence of a fixed, durable and separate personality in the psychological aggregate, the lack of a true continuity in the personal consciousness. It is for this reason that, for example, in the ordinary state one cannot remember one's past lives nor have the sense of a conscious continuity through all one's lives.

The first point then is to see correctly, and to see correctly is to see that pain is associated with ordinary life, that all things

are impermanent and that there is no continuity in the personal consciousness.

(2) *Correct intention or desire.* But the same word “desire” should not have been used, because we have just been told that we should not have desire. It is rather “correct aspiration”. The word “desire” should be replaced by “aspiration”.

“To be freed from attachments and to have kind thoughts for everything that exists.” To be constantly in a state of kindness. To wish the best for all, always.

(3) *Correct speech that hurts none.* Never speak uselessly and scrupulously avoid all malevolent speech.

(4) *Correct behaviour — peaceful, honest.* From all points of view, not only materially, but morally, mentally. Mental honesty is one of the most difficult things to achieve.

(5) *Correct way of living. Not to cause harm or danger to any creature.* This is relatively easy to understand. There are people who carry this principle to the extreme, against all common sense. Those who put a handkerchief to their mouths, for example, so as not to swallow germs, who have the path in front of them swept so as not to step on an insect. This seems to me a little excessive, because the whole of life as it is at present is made up of destruction. But if you understand the text correctly, it means that one must avoid all possibility of doing harm, one must not deliberately endanger any creature. You can include here all living creatures and if you extend this care and this kindness to everything that lives in the universe, it will be very favourable to your inner growth.

(6) *Correct effort.* Do not make useless efforts for useless things, rather keep all the energy of your effort to conquer ignorance and free yourself from falsehood. That you can never do too much.

(7) The seventh principle comes to confirm the sixth: *correct vigilance.* You must have an active and vigilant mind. Do not live in a half-somnolence, half-unconsciousness — usually in life you let yourself go, come what may! This is what everyone does. Now and then you wake up and you realise that you have wasted your

time; then you make a big effort only to fall back again, a minute later, into indolence. It would be better to have something less vehement but more constant.

(8) And finally, *correct contemplation*. Egoless thought concentrated on the essence of things, on the inmost truth and on the goal to be attained.

How often there is a kind of emptiness in the course of life, an unoccupied moment, a few minutes, sometimes more. And what do you do? Immediately you try to distract yourself, and you invent some foolishness or other to pass your time. That is a common fact. All men, from the youngest to the oldest, spend most of their time in trying not to be bored. Their pet aversion is boredom and the way to escape from boredom is to act foolishly.

Well, there is a better way than that — to remember.

When you have a little time, whether it is one hour or a few minutes, tell yourself, "At last, I have some time to concentrate, to collect myself, to relive the purpose of my life, to offer myself to the True and the Eternal." If you took care to do this each time you are not harassed by outer circumstances, you would find out that you were advancing very quickly on the path. Instead of wasting your time in chattering, in doing useless things, reading things that lower the consciousness — to choose only the best cases, I am not speaking of other imbecilities which are much more serious — instead of trying to make yourself giddy, to make time, that is already so short, still shorter only to realise at the end of your life that you have lost three-quarters of your chance — then you want to put in double time, but that does not work — it is better to be moderate, balanced, patient, quiet, but never to lose an opportunity that is given to you, that is to say, to utilise for the true purpose the unoccupied moment before you.

When you have nothing to do, you become restless, you run about, you meet friends, you take a walk, to speak only of the best; I am not referring to things that are obviously not to be done. Instead of that, sit down quietly before the sky, before the sea or under trees, whatever is possible (here you have all of them) and

try to realise one of these things — to understand why you live, to learn how you must live, to ponder over what you want to do and what should be done, what is the best way of escaping from the ignorance and falsehood and pain in which you live.

16 May 1958

Happiness

Among those who hate, happy are we to live without hatred. Among men who hate, let us live free from hatred.

Among those who suffer, happy are we to live without suffering. Among men who suffer, let us live free from suffering.

Among those who are full of greed, happy are we to live without greed. Among the greedy, let us live free from greed.

Happy indeed are we who own nothing. We shall feed upon delight like the radiant gods.

Victory engenders enmity, and one who is vanquished lives in distress. The man of peace lives in gladness, disdaining both victory and defeat.

There is no greater fire than lust, no greater misfortune than hatred. There is no greater misery than existence, no bliss greater than the Supreme Peace.

Hunger is the worst malady; existence is the worst calamity. One who has understood this realises that Nirvana is the Supreme Happiness.

Health is the greatest acquisition, contentment the greatest treasure. A faithful friend is the best companion and Nirvana the Supreme Happiness.

Having tasted the sweetness of solitude and the Supreme Peace, a man is liberated from suffering and evil, for he partakes of the sweetness of devotion to the Truth.

It is good to contemplate the Noble Ones; to live near them is an endless happiness. One could be always happy by avoiding the sight of fools.

One who frequents fools is bound to suffer long; the company of fools is as painful as that of enemies. To live in the company of the sages is to share the happiness of one who lives among his kinsmen.

Seek therefore the company of the sage who is steadfast, learned, wise, devoted and noble. Follow the example of such a good and wise being, as the moon follows the path of the stars.

One of these verses is very beautiful. We could translate it like this: "Happy is he who possesses nothing, he will partake of the delight of the radiant gods." To possess nothing does not at all mean not to make use of anything, not to have anything at one's disposal. "Happy is he who possesses nothing": he is someone who has no sense of possession, who can make use of things when they come to him, knowing that they are not his, that they belong to the Supreme, and who, for the same reason, does not regret it when things leave him; he finds it quite natural that the Lord who gave him these things should take them away from him for others to enjoy. Such a man finds equal joy in the use of things as in the absence of things. When you have them at your disposal, you receive them as a gift of Grace and when they leave you, when they have been taken away from you, you live in the joy of destitution. For it is the sense of ownership that makes you cling to things, makes you their slave, otherwise one could live in constant joy and in the ceaseless movement of things that come and go and pass, that bring with them both the sense of fullness when they are there and, when they go, the delight of detachment.

Delight! Delight means to live in the Truth, to live in communion with Eternity, with the true Life, the Light that never fails.

Questions and Answers

Delight means to be free, free with the true Freedom, the Freedom of the constant, invariable union with the Divine Will.

Gods are those that are immortal, who are not bound to the vicissitudes of material life in all its narrowness, pettiness, unreality and falsehood.

Gods are those who are turned to the Light, who live in the Power and the Knowledge; that is what the Buddha means, he does not mean the gods of religion. They are beings who have the divine nature, who may live in human bodies, but free from ignorance and falsehood.

When you no longer possess anything, you can become as vast as the universe.

23 May 1958

Pleasure

One who gives himself entirely to what is unprofitable, who does not give himself to what is profitable, who sacrifices true knowledge for the sake of pleasure, will envy those who have chosen the path of self-knowledge.

Therefore do not seek after pleasure, much less what is unpleasant, for it is painful to be deprived of what is pleasing and equally painful to see what is unpleasant.

Therefore one should hold nothing dear, for the loss of what one loves is painful. No bondage exists for those who have neither love nor hatred.

What is pleasing gives rise to grief; what is pleasing gives rise to fear. One who is freed from what is pleasing, who feels no grief, what has he to fear?

Affection gives rise to grief; affection gives rise to fear. One who is freed from affection, who feels no grief, what has he to fear?

Attachment gives rise to grief; attachment gives rise to fear. One who is freed from attachment, who feels no grief, what has he to fear?

Desire gives rise to grief; desire gives rise to fear. One who is freed from desire, who feels no grief, what has he to fear?

Craving gives rise to grief; craving gives rise to fear. One who is freed from craving, who feels no grief, what has he to fear?

One holds dear a man who acts rightly, possesses intuition, who is righteous and knows the Truth, who fulfils his duty.

One who aspires to the ineffable Peace, one whose mind is awakened, whose thoughts are not entangled in the net of desire, that one is said to be “bound upstream” (towards perfection).

Just as, after a long absence, a man returning safely home is received by his kinsmen and friends who welcome him, even so it is with one who acts rightly; when he passes from this world to the other, his own good actions welcome him like a kinsman.

It always seems to me that the reasons usually given for becoming wise are poor reasons: “Don’t do this, it will bring you suffering; don’t do that, it will give birth to fear in you”... and the consciousness dries up more and more, it hardens, because it is afraid of grief, afraid of pain.

I think it would be better to say that there is a certain state of consciousness — which one can acquire by aspiration and a persistent inner effort — in which joy is unmixed and light shadowless, where all possibility of fear disappears. It is the state in which one does not live for oneself but where whatever one does, whatever one feels, all movements are an offering made to the Supreme, in an absolute trust, freeing oneself of all responsibility for oneself, handing over to Him all this burden which is no longer a burden.

It is an inexpressible joy not to have any responsibility for oneself, no longer to think of oneself. It is so dull and monotonous and insipid to be thinking of oneself, to be worrying about what to do and what not to do, what will be good for you and what will be bad for you, what to shun and what to pursue — oh, how wearisome it is! But when one lives like this, quite open, like a

flower blossoming in the sun before the Supreme Consciousness, the Supreme Wisdom, the Supreme Light, the Supreme Love, which knows all, which can do all, which takes charge of you and you have no more worries — that is the ideal condition.

And why is it not done?

One does not think of it, one forgets to do it, the old habits come back. And above all, behind, hidden somewhere in the unconscious or even in the subconscious, there is this insidious doubt that whispers in your ear: "Oh! if you are not careful, some misfortune will happen to you. If you forget to watch over yourself, you do not know what may happen" — and you are so silly, so silly, so obscure, so stupid that you listen and you begin to pay attention to yourself and everything is ruined.

You have to begin all over again to infuse into your cells a little wisdom, a little common sense and learn once more not to worry.

30 May 1958

Anger

One should cast away anger, one should reject pride, one should break all bonds. One who is not attached to name or form, who possesses nothing, is delivered from suffering.

Whosoever masters rising anger, as one who controls a moving chariot, that one indeed is worthy of being called a good charioteer. Others merely hold the reins.

Oppose anger with serenity, evil with good; conquer a miser by generosity and a liar by the truth.

Speak the truth; do not give way to anger; give the little you possess to one who asks of you; by these three attributes, men can approach the gods.

The sages who are void of violence, who are always in control of their senses, attain that imperishable state where pain is no more.

Those who are always vigilant and who discipline themselves day and night, whose minds are always turned towards Nirvana, will see their impurities disappear for ever.

Not only today but since ancient times, they have always been criticised, those who remain silent, those who speak much and those who speak little. None here below escapes criticism.

There has never been and never will be, nor is there now, one who receives only blame or only praise.

If a man is praised by the sages, who have observed him day after day, for being intelligent, without reproach, endowed with knowledge and virtue, who then would dare to blame him who is as pure as gold? Even the gods and Brahma praise him.

Be on your guard against the wrath of the body. Control your actions, and leaving behind wrong ways of acting, practise perfect conduct in action.

Be on your guard against wrath in speech. Control your words, and leaving behind wrong ways of speaking, practise good conduct in speech.

Be on your guard against wrath of mind. Control your thoughts, and leaving behind wrong ways of thinking, practise good conduct in thought.

The sages whose actions are controlled, whose words are controlled and whose thoughts are controlled, they in truth are perfectly controlled.

I suggest that every one of you should try — oh! not for long, just for one hour a day — to say nothing but the absolutely indispensable words. Not one more, not one less.

Take one hour of your life, the one which is most convenient for you, and during that time observe yourself closely and say only the absolutely indispensable words.

At the outset, the first difficulty will be to know what is absolutely indispensable and what is not. It is already a study in itself and every day you will do better.

Next, you will see that so long as one says nothing, it is not difficult to remain absolutely silent, but as soon as you begin to speak, always or almost always you say two or three or ten or twenty useless words which it was not at all necessary to say.

Questions and Answers

I give you this as an exercise till next Friday. We shall see how you succeed. You may, at the end of the week, on Friday, give me a brief note telling me how far you have succeeded — those who have tried. That's all.

6 June 1958

Impurity

Now you are like a withered leaf; the messengers of Yama await you. It is the eve of your departure, and you have made no provision for your journey!

Quickly make for yourself an island of refuge, strive hard and become wise. When you are cleansed and purified of all impurity, you will enter the heavenly home of the Noble Ones.

Now your days are numbered, you are in the presence of the God of death. You have no resting-place on the road, no provision for the journey.

Quickly make for yourself an island of refuge, strive hard and become wise. When you are cleansed and purified of all impurity, you will be reborn no more, you will no more be subject to decay.

Just as the smith refines the silver, so also, little by little from moment to moment, the wise man purifies himself of his impurities.

When rust appears on iron, the iron itself is corrupted by it. So also, a man's evil actions corrupt him and lead him to his doom.

Lack of repetition impairs the effect of mantras.¹ Neglect impairs the solidity of houses. Indolence impairs the beauty of the body. Lack of attention is the downfall of one who watches.

¹ Words charged with spiritual power.

Questions and Answers

Misconduct is the taint of a woman. Meanness is the taint of one who gives. Wrong-doing is a taint in this world and the other.

The greatest of all taints is ignorance. Cleanse yourselves of that taint alone and you will be free of all taints, O Bhikkhus.

Life is easy for one who is impudent as a crow, malicious, boastful, presumptuous and corrupt.

Life is hard for the modest one who seeks purity, who is detached, unassuming and whose judgment is correct.

Already in this world he is uprooted, the one who destroys life, who lies, who takes what he has not been given, who covets the wife of another and who is addicted to drink.

Know that evil things are difficult to master. Let not cravings and wickedness subject you to endless suffering.

Each one gives according to his faith or his liking; if you are discontented with the food and drink offered by another, you will not achieve concentration by night or by day.

But the one who uproots and destroys in himself the very root of such a feeling of resentment, achieves concentration by night and by day.

There is no fire like the fire of craving, no grip like that of hatred. There is no snare like that of delusion, no torrent like desire.

It is easy to see the faults of others, but difficult to perceive our own shortcomings. We winnow the faults of

others like chaff, but we hide our own like the wily gambler concealing his foul throw.

One who always criticises the faults of others and is irritated by them, far from becoming free of faults, increases his own vices.

There is no track in the sky, no Samana² outside the true path. Man delights in vanity. The Tathagatas³ have overcome these obstacles.

There is no track in the sky, no Samana outside the true path. No conditioned thing can last, but the Buddhas remain for ever immutable.

I have read your notes on the control of speech. Some have tried very seriously. I am happy with the result. I believe it will be good for everyone if you continue.

Someone has written me something which is very true: that when one begins, one has no reason to stop, one begins with one hour a day, but this becomes a kind of necessity, a habit and one continues quite naturally.

If your exercise truly has this result, then it will be an excellent thing.

We can select three things from what I have read this evening. The first is that you must persist in what you do if you want to get a result. The Dhammapada tells us, for example, that if you have a mantra and do not repeat it sufficiently, there is no use in having it and that if you are inattentive, you lose the benefit of vigilance, and that if you do not continue in the good habits that you acquire, they are useless — that is to say, you must persevere. As for example, with the exercise which I asked you to do last

² Ascetic.

³ The Buddhas who, according to tradition, came on earth to reveal the eternal Truth.

time; I asked you to do it with the idea that if you form the habit of doing it, that will help you much in overcoming your difficulties.

Already someone has told me, quite rightly, that while practising this half-silence, or at any rate this continence of speech, one achieves quite naturally the mastery of numerous difficulties in one's character and also one avoids a great many frictions and misunderstandings. This is true.

Another point to remember from our reading concerns impurity and the Dhammapada gives the example of bad will and wrong action. Wrong action, says our text, is a taint in this world as well as in others. In the next verse it is said that there is no greater impurity than ignorance, that is to say, ignorance is considered as the essential, the central fault, which urgently needs to be corrected, and what is called ignorance is not simply not knowing things, not having the superficial knowledge of things, it means forgetting the very reason of our existence, the truth that has to be discovered.

There was a third thing?... Yes, you must not cherish the illusion that if you want to follow the straight path, if you are modest, if you seek purity, if you are disinterested, if you want to lead a solitary existence and have a clear judgment, things will become easy.... It is quite the contrary! When you begin to advance towards inner and outer perfection, the difficulties start at the same time.

I have very often heard people saying, "Oh! now that I am trying to be good, everybody seems to be bad to me!" But this is precisely to teach you that one should not be good with an interested motive, one should not be good so that others will be good to you — one must be good for the sake of being good.

It is always the same lesson: one must do as well as one can, the best one can, but without expecting a result, without doing it with a view to the result. Just this attitude, to expect a reward for a good action — to become good because one thinks that this will make life easier — takes away all value from the good action.

You must be good for the love of goodness, you must be just

for the love of justice, you must be pure for the love of purity and
you must be disinterested for the love of disinterestedness; then
you are sure to advance on the way.

13 June 1958

The Just Man

A man is not just if he judges arbitrarily. The wise man is one who distinguishes the just from the unjust, who judges others in full knowledge according to law and equity; this guardian of the Law is called a just man.

The sage is not the man who speaks most. The man who is compassionate, friendly, fearless, is called a sage.

It is not by much speaking that the Doctrine is upheld; but he who has studied the Doctrine, even a little, and mentally realised it, he alone upholds it. He does not neglect it.

A man is not a Thera¹ because his hair is grey. He is ripe in years but he has aged fruitlessly.

But one who possesses the truth, virtue, non-violence and self-mastery, who is free from all impurity, who is wise, is indeed a Thera.

Neither eloquence nor a beautiful appearance grace a man who is jealous, selfish, deceitful. But one in whom such faults are completely uprooted and destroyed, that wise man is fully graced by them.

As for the man who is undisciplined and untruthful, his shaven head does not make him an ascetic. Full of desire and greed, how can he be a Samana?

He who is purged of all evil, both great and small, can be called a Samana, for he is purified of all evil.

¹ A senior monk.

A man is not a Bhikkhu simply because he takes alms for his food. The observance of vows is not enough to make him a Bhikkhu.

But he who is above both good and evil, who leads a pure life, who walks with understanding in this world, he can be called a Bhikkhu.

One who observes silence does not by that become a sage, if he is ignorant and foolish; but he who can weigh good and evil as in a balance and make his choice, him one can call a sage.

He who by contemplation measures this world and the other, he is a sage.

A man who does harm to living creatures does not become a Noble One. One who practises non-violence towards all creatures is called a Noble One.

It is neither by moral precepts and observances, nor by a wide knowledge, nor by practising meditation, nor by a solitary life, nor by thinking, “I have attained the bliss of liberation which is unknown to those who live in the world”, that one can be called a Bhikkhu. Be on your guard, O Bhikkhus, until you have attained the extinction of all desire.

We shall take the last text. It is an interesting one.

“It is neither by moral precepts and observances, nor by a wide knowledge, nor by practising meditation, nor by a solitary life, nor by thinking”, that one attains the true bliss; it is by getting rid of all desires. Certainly it is not easy to get rid of all desires, it sometimes needs a whole lifetime. But to tell the truth, it seems to be a very negative way, although at a certain stage of development, it is a discipline which it is very useful, even indispensable

to practise, if one does not want to deceive oneself. Because at first you begin by getting rid of the major desires, those that are most obvious and trouble you so much that you cannot even have any illusions about them; then come subtler desires that take the form of things that have to be done, that are necessary, even at times of commands from within, and it requires time and much sincerity to discover and overcome them; at last it seems as if you had done away with these wretched desires in the material world, in external things, in the world of feelings, in the emotions and sentiments, in the mental world as regards ideas, and then you find them again in the spiritual world, and there they are far more dangerous, more subtle, more penetrating and much more invisible and covered by such a saintly appearance that one dare not call them desires.

And when one has succeeded in overcoming all that, in discovering, dislodging and getting rid of them, even then one has done only the negative side of the work.

The Buddha said or has been made to say that when one is free from all desire, one necessarily enters into infinite bliss. This bliss may be a little dry and anyway it does not seem to me to be the quickest way.

If at the outset one were to seize the problem bodily, jump into it with courage and determination and, instead of undertaking a long, arduous, painful, disappointing hunt after desires, one gives oneself simply, totally, unconditionally, if one surrenders to the Supreme Reality, to the Supreme Will, to the Supreme Being, putting oneself entirely in His hands, in an upsurge of the whole being and all the elements of the being, without calculating, that would be the swiftest and the most radical way to get rid of the ego. People will say that it is difficult to do it, but at least a warmth is there, an ardour, an enthusiasm, a light, a beauty, an ardent and creative life.

It is true that without desire nothing much remains to sustain the ego and one has the impression that the consciousness becomes so hardened that if the ego crumbles into dust, then something of

one's self also falls into dust and one is ready to enter into a Nirvana which is annihilation pure and simple.

But what we consider here as the true Nirvana is the disappearance of the ego into the splendour of the Supreme. And this way is what I call the positive way, the self-giving that is integral, total, perfect, without reserve, without bargaining.

In the mere fact of not thinking of oneself, not existing for oneself, referring nothing to oneself, thinking only of what is supremely beautiful, luminous, delightful, powerful, compassionate and infinite, there is such a profound delight that nothing can be compared to it.

This is the only thing that deserves... that is worthy of being attempted. All the rest is only marking time.

The difference is between climbing a mountain by going round and round, slowly, laboriously, step by step, for hundreds of years, and spreading invisible wings and soaring straight to the summit.

20 June 1958

The Path

The best of all paths is the Eightfold Path; the best of all truths is the Fourfold Truth; the best of all states is freedom from attachment; the best among men is the One who sees, the Buddha.

Truly, this is the Path; there is no other which leads to purification of vision. Follow this Path and Mara will be confounded.

By following this Path, you put an end to suffering. This Path I have made known, since I learned to remove the thorns (of life).

The effort must come from oneself. The Tathagatas only point out the Path. Those who meditate and tread this Path are delivered from the bondage of Mara.

“All conditioned things are impermanent.” When one has seen that by realisation, he is delivered from sorrow. That is the Path of purity.

“All conditioned things are subject to suffering.” When one has seen that by realisation, he is delivered from sorrow. That is the Path of purity.

“All things are insubstantial.” When one has seen that by realisation, he is delivered from sorrow. That is the Path of purity.

He who though young and strong, does not act when it is time to act, is given to indolence, and his mind is full of vain thoughts; one who is so indolent will not find the Path of wisdom.

Moderation in speech, control of the mind, abstention from evil actions, thus these three modes of action are to be purified first of all, to attain the Path shown by the sages.

From meditation wisdom springs, without meditation wisdom declines. Knowing the two paths of progress and decline, a man should choose the Path which will increase his wisdom.

Cut down all the forest (of desires) and not one tree alone; for from this forest springs fear. Cut down this forest of trees and undergrowth, O Bhikkhus. Be free from desire.

As long as one has not rooted out of oneself entirely the desire of a man for a woman, the mind is captive, as dependent as a suckling on its mother.

Root out self-love, as one plucks with his hand an autumn lotus. Cherish only the Path of the peace of Nirvana that the Sugata¹ has taught us.

Here shall I live in the rainy season; I shall stay there in the winter and elsewhere in the summer. Thus thinks the fool and knows not what may befall him.

And this man who is attached to his children and his cattle, is seized by death and carried off, as a sleeping village is swept away by torrential floods.

Neither children, nor father, nor family can save us. When death seizes us, our kinsmen cannot save us.

¹ The Buddha.

Knowing this perfectly, the intelligent man, guided by good conduct, does not delay in taking up the path which leads to Nirvana.

Here are some very useful recommendations: moderation in speech, control of the mind, abstention from evil actions. This is very good.

Here is something radical, but it is also very good: "As long as one has not rooted out of oneself entirely the desire of a man for a woman, the mind is captive, as dependent as a suckling on its mother."

And finally: "Root out self-love, as one plucks with his hand an autumn lotus." These are good subjects for meditation.

These recommendations seem to have been meant for people who are just at the beginning of the Path from the intellectual point of view. We can easily imagine a gathering of country people, people with simple minds, to whom one has to say, "Listen carefully, it is no use making plans, for you do not know what will happen to you tomorrow. You are amassing wealth, you are taking your ease among your family, you are making schemes for tomorrow and for the day after, and you are not aware that death is on the watch and that at any moment it can fall on you."

All the same, there is a slightly more advanced stage of intellectual development in which these things need not be said — one must live them! Live in the consciousness that things are altogether impermanent, never become attached, if you are to be free to progress with the universe and grow according to the eternal rhythm. This one understands. But what is important is to practise it. Here one has the impression that these things were told to people who had never thought of them before and so they had the full power of an active force.

After all, in spite of all appearances, humanity progresses; it has progressed particularly in the mind. There are things that no longer need to be said.... Or else one must go to countries that are at a very primitive stage, and even so... ideas have spread

everywhere, the mental light has spread everywhere and in the most unexpected places one finds instances of receptivity and understanding.

One really has the impression that during the last century a light came and spread upon the earth with the result that certain ideas, which were once idea-forces, new ideas with the power to stir up the consciousness in men, have lost their relevance, they are now old. A new light is at work.

In practice, the progress is not very great, even in some respects perhaps there has been a retrogression, but in the mind, in the understanding, in the intellectual vision of things, there has truly been a great change.

It seems we are marching on the way at an accelerated pace and these things which used to be of the first importance are becoming almost commonplace in the light of new discoveries. Life as it is bad, disorder is everywhere, suffering is everywhere, confusion is everywhere, chaos is everywhere, ignorance is everywhere — we all know it, don't we? It seems so hackneyed.

But that one can emerge from it through a total realisation, a total transformation, through a new light that will establish order and harmony in things, is a message of hope that has to be given. This is the true, the dynamic message.

A new life must be built.

Then all these difficulties that seemed so unsurmountable — oh! they fall of themselves.

When you can live in light and joy, are you going to cling to shadow and suffering?

27 June 1958

Miscellany

If renouncing the slightest happiness enables him to realise a greater one, the intelligent man should renounce the lesser for the sake of the greater.

If he seeks his own happiness by harming others, bound by hate, he remains the slave of hatred.

To neglect what should be done and to do what should be neglected is to increase in arrogance and negligence.

To be constantly mindful of the true nature of the body, not to seek what is evil, to pursue with perseverance what is good, is to have right understanding; thus, all one's impurity disappears.

Having killed his father (ego), his mother (desire) and the two warrior kings (wrong views), having destroyed the kingdom (of the senses) and all its dependencies, the Brahmin lives free from evil.

Having killed father, mother, the two warrior kings and the tiger (mental hindrances), the Brahmin lives free from evil.

The disciples of Gautama are alert and truly awakened, for, day and night, their attention is turned to the Buddha, the Dhamma¹ and the Sangha.²

The disciples of Gautama are alert and truly awakened, for, day and night, their attention remains fixed on the Doctrine.

¹ The Law; the Teaching.

² The Community.

The disciples of Gautama are alert and truly awakened, for, day and night, their attention remains fixed on the Sangha.

The disciples of Gautama are alert and truly awakened, for, day and night, they remain aware of the true nature of the body.

The disciples of Gautama are alert and truly awakened, for, day and night, they delight in compassion.

The disciples of Gautama are alert and truly awakened, for, day and night, they take pleasure in meditation.

It is hard to renounce the world; it is equally hard to enjoy the world. Difficult and sorrowful is household life. It is painful to be with those who are not our equals and it is painful to wander in the cycle of births. Therefore, do not follow after sorrow nor be a wanderer without a goal.

The man who is full of faith and goodness, who possesses glory and wealth, is revered wherever he goes.

Men of goodness shine afar like the snowy peaks of the Himalayas. Whereas wicked men are no more visible than arrows shot in the night.

The man who eats alone, sleeps alone, walks alone untiring in his self-mastery, will delight in the solitary life of the forests.

Still you should not be mistaken. For I believe all these are images rather than material facts, because it is quite certain that eating alone, sleeping alone, living in the forest all alone is not enough to give you freedom of spirit.

It has been noticed that most people who live alone in the forest become friendly with all the animals and plants around them; but it is not at all the fact of being all alone that gives you the power of entering into an inner contemplation and living in communion with the Supreme Truth. Perhaps it is easier, when by force of circumstance you have nothing else to do, but I am not convinced of it. One can always invent occupations and it seems to me, according to my experience of life, that if one succeeds in subduing one's nature in the midst of difficulties, if one endeavours to be all alone within oneself with the eternal Presence, while keeping the same surroundings which the Grace has given us, the realisation which one obtains then is infinitely more true, more profound, more lasting.

To run away from difficulties in order to conquer them is not a solution. It is very attractive. In those who seek the spiritual life, there is something which says, "Oh! to sit down under a tree, all alone, to remain in meditation, not to have the temptation to speak or act, how fine it must be!" It is because there is a very strong formation in this direction, but it is very illusory.

The best meditations are those that one has all of a sudden, because they take possession of you as an imperative necessity. You have no choice but to concentrate, to meditate, to look beyond the appearances. And it is not necessarily in the solitude of the forest that it seizes you, it happens when something in you is ready, when the time has come, when the true need is there, when the Grace is with you.

It seems to me that humanity has made some progress and the true victory must be won in life itself.

You must know how to live alone with the Eternal and Infinite in the midst of all circumstances. You must know how to be free, with the Supreme as your companion, in the midst of all occupations. That is indeed the true victory.

14 July 1958

Niraya (Hell)

One who speaks untruth goes to Hell like one who, when he has done a thing, says: "I did not do it." Both, after death, will share the same fate, for these are men of evil.

Though they wear the yellow robe, those who are dissolute and evil-natured, their evil actions will cause them to be reborn in Hell.

It would be better to swallow a red-hot iron ball than to live on alms while leading a dissolute life.

Four punishments await the unscrupulous man who covets the wife of another: shame, troubled sleep, condemnation and Hell.

So he acquires an evil reputation and an evil birth; brief is the pleasure of the anxious pair, heavy the punishment of the law-giver. Let no man therefore seek the wife of another.

Just as Kusa grass cuts the hand if wrongly handled, so also asceticism wrongly understood leads to Niraya.

A duty carelessly fulfilled, a rule wrongly observed and a virtuous life followed out of fear, none of these will bring good results.

If a thing is to be done, do it with zeal. An ascetic with lax habits will stir up the dust (of the passions).

An evil deed is better left undone, for he who does it will be tormented by it. It is better to do a good deed, for he who does it will not have cause to repent it.

Questions and Answers

As a frontier city is well fortified both within and without, so one should guard oneself, so as not to waste a single moment of wakefulness; for those who lose this opportunity, even if only for a moment, will suffer indeed for it when in Hell.

Those who feel shame when there is no cause for shame, and those who feel no shame when there is cause to be ashamed, these deluded ones are destined to a painful state.

Those who are afraid of what should not be feared, and those who do not fear what is to be feared, these deluded ones are destined to a painful state.

Those who see evil where there is none, and those who do not see it where it is, these deluded ones are destined to a painful state.

Those who recognise evil to be evil, and good to be good, these who have right judgment are bound to enjoy happiness.

As in all these teachings there are always several ways of understanding them. The external way is quite commonplace. In all moral principles, the same thing is always said. This Niraya for example, which some take as a kind of hell where one is punished for one's sins, has also another sense. The true sense of Niraya is that particular kind of atmosphere which one creates around oneself when one acts in contradiction, not with outer moral rules or social principles, but with the inner law of one's being, the particular truth of each one which ought to govern all the movements of our consciousness and all the acts of our body. The inner law, the truth of the being is the divine Presence in every human being, which should be the master and guide of our life.

When you acquire the habit of listening to this inner law,

when you obey it, follow it, try more and more to let it guide your life, you create around you an atmosphere of truth and peace and harmony which naturally reacts upon circumstances and forms, so to say, the atmosphere in which you live. When you are a being of justice, truth, harmony, compassion, understanding, of perfect goodwill, this inner attitude, the more sincere and total it is, the more it reacts upon the external circumstances; not that it necessarily diminishes the difficulties of life, but it gives these difficulties a new meaning and that allows you to face them with a new strength and a new wisdom; whereas the man, the human being who follows his impulses, who obeys his desires, who has no time for scruples, who comes to live in complete cynicism, not caring for the effect that his life has upon others or for the more or less harmful consequences of his acts, creates for himself an atmosphere of ugliness, selfishness, conflict and bad will which necessarily acts more and more upon his consciousness and gives a bitterness to his life that in the end becomes a perpetual torment.

Of course this does not mean that such a man will not succeed in what he undertakes, that he will not be able to possess what he desires; these external advantages disappear only when there is within the inmost being a spark of sincerity which persists and makes him worthy of this misfortune.

If you see a bad man become unlucky and miserable, you must immediately respect him. It means that the flame of inner sincerity is not altogether extinguished and something still reacts to his bad actions.

Finally, that leads us again to the observation that you must never, never judge on appearances and that all the judgments you make from outward circumstances are always, necessarily false judgments.

To have a glimpse of the Truth, one must take at least one step back in one's consciousness, enter a little more deeply into one's being and try to perceive the play of forces behind the appearances and the divine Presence behind the play of forces.

25 July 1958

The Elephant

As the elephant on the battlefield endures the arrow shot from the bow, so also shall I patiently bear insult, for truly there are many of evil mind in the world.

It is a tamed elephant that is led to the battlefield; one whom the Raja rides. The best among men is he who patiently bears insult.

Trained mules are excellent, as also the thoroughbreds of Sindh and the mighty tuskers. Better yet is the man who has brought himself under control.

Not by mounting one of these animals does one attain the unexplored path, but by mastering oneself. By that mastery one attains it.

In the mating season it is difficult to control the mighty elephant Dhanapalako.¹ When he is chained he refuses to eat, he yearns only to be once more a wild elephant of the forest.

When a man is slothful and gluttonous, always sleepy and rolling from side to side like a fat hog in the mud—this fool is compelled to be born over and over again.

Once this mind wandered where it would from one thing to another, according to its pleasure, but now I shall master it completely as the mahout with his goad masters the elephant in rut.

¹ One who guards the treasure.

Delight in vigilance, guard carefully your mind. Lift yourself out of evil as the elephant sunk in a swamp.

If for company you find a prudent friend, who leads a good life, who is intelligent and self-controlled, overcoming all obstacles, do not hesitate to set out with him joyfully and courageously.

And if you do not meet with such a friend, who leads a good life, who is intelligent and self-controlled, then like a king renouncing a kingdom he has conquered, or like a solitary elephant in the forest follow your path alone.

It is better to live alone, for one cannot take a fool as a companion. It is better to live alone and do no evil, carefree, like the elephant in the jungle.

It is good to have friends when need arises. It is good to be satisfied with what one has. It is good, at the hour of death, to have acquired merit. It is good to leave all grief behind you.

In this world it is a joy to respect one's mother; it is a joy to respect one's father; it is a joy to honour the monks; it is a joy to revere the Brahmins.²

It is a joy to live purely throughout one's life. It is a joy to have a steadfast faith. It is a joy to acquire wisdom. It is a joy to abstain from all evil.

The first verse gives some very wise advice: the war elephant who has been well trained does not start running away as soon as he receives an arrow. He continues to advance and bears the pain, with no change in his attitude of heroic resistance. Those who wish

² The holy men; the men of wisdom.

to follow the true path will naturally be exposed to the attacks of all forms of bad will, which not only do not understand, but generally hate what they do not understand.

If you are worried, grieved or even discouraged by the malicious stupidities that men say about you, you will not advance far on the way. And such things come to you, not because you are unlucky or because your lot is not a happy one, but because, on the contrary, the divine Consciousness and the divine Grace take your resolution seriously and allow the circumstances to become a touchstone on your way, to see whether your resolution is sincere and whether you are strong enough to face the difficulties.

Therefore, if anyone sneers at you or says something that is not very charitable, the first thing you should do is to look within yourself for whatever weakness or imperfection has allowed such a thing to happen and not to be disconsolate, indignant or aggrieved, because people do not appreciate you at what you think to be your true value; on the contrary, you must be thankful to the divine Grace for having pointed out to you the weakness or imperfection or deformation that you must correct.

Therefore, instead of being unhappy, you can be fully satisfied and derive advantage, a great advantage from the harm that was intended against you.

Besides, if you truly want to follow the path and practise yoga, you must not do it for appreciation or honour, you must do it because it is an imperative need of your being, because you cannot be happy in any other way. Whether people appreciate you or do not appreciate you, it is of absolutely no importance. You may tell yourself beforehand that the further you are from ordinary men, foreign to the ordinary mode of being, the less people will appreciate you, quite naturally, because they will not understand you. And I repeat, it has absolutely no importance.

True sincerity consists in advancing on the way because you cannot do otherwise, to consecrate yourself to the divine life

because you cannot do otherwise, to seek to transform your being and come out into the light because you cannot do otherwise, because it is the purpose of your life.

When it is like that you may be sure that you are on the right path.

1 August 1958

Craving

The craving of a heedless man grows like the Maluva creeper. Like a monkey seeking fruits in the forest, he leaps from life to life.

For one who in the world is overcome by the craving that clings, his miseries increase like Birana grass after the rains.

For one who in this world can overcome this craving that clings and is so difficult to master, his sorrows fall away like water from a lotus leaf.

To all who are gathered here, I say for your welfare: pull out the roots of your craving, as you uproot Birana grass. Do not let Mara crush you again and again as a flood crushes a reed.

As a tree, though felled, springs up once more if the roots remain intact, even so sorrow will return again and again until all craving is rooted out.

The misguided man, who cannot resist the thirty-six strong currents of craving, is swept away by the flood of his eagerness for pleasure.

Everywhere these currents flow and the creeper (of craving) springs up and increases. Wherever you see it springing up, cut out its roots with the force of wisdom.

Allowing their minds to be attracted by the enjoyment of transient objects, men who crave pleasure become a prey to birth and to decay.

*Beset by craving, men run around like a hare in a trap.
Bound by the chains of attachment, they come again and
again to sorrow.*

*Beset by craving, men run around like a hare in a trap.
Therefore, O Bhikkhu, desiring deliverance from pas-
sion, destroy your craving.*

*One who, delivered from craving, yet runs back to it, lo,
he is like a freed man who returns to bondage.*

*What the wise call a strong bond is not made of iron,
wood or rope; but the craving for jewels and ornaments,
for wife and children, is a far stronger bond.*

*The wise say that it pulls you downward, and though it
seems to be loose, it is hard to be rid of. This too the
wise cut off; renouncing the pleasures of the senses, free
from craving, they take to the homeless life.*

*Those who are bound by their passions are drawn back
into the stream, like a spider caught in his own web.
This too the wise cut off; renouncing the pleasures of
the senses, free from craving, they take to the homeless
life.*

*Be free from the past, be free from the future, be free
from the present. Cross over to the other shore of exis-
tence; when the mind is wholly delivered, you shall come
no more to birth and death.*

*One who is troubled by evil thoughts, who is controlled
by his passions, who seeks only pleasure, his craving
grows steadily; he makes his bonds strong indeed.*

*One who delights in subduing evil thoughts, who is vig-
ilant and can distinguish impurities, he will put an end*

Questions and Answers

to his cravings, he shall break the bonds of Mara.

He who has reached the goal, who is without fear and free from craving and impurity, he has plucked out the thorns of existence; this is his last incarnation.

One who is free from craving, unattached, who knows the words and their meanings, who knows the arrangement of the texts in their sequence, he indeed has put on his last body. He alone is called “The Man of Great Wisdom.”

I have vanquished all, I know all; unconditioned, all-renouncing, delivered by the extinction of craving, having understood all by myself, whom shall I call my teacher?

The gift of Truth excels all gifts; the savour of Truth excels all savours; delight in Truth excels all delights; deliverance from craving overcomes all suffering.

Riches ruin the fool, but not one who seeks the other shore. By craving for riches, the fool ruins himself and others with him.

Weeds are the bane of the fields; passion the bane of mankind. Therefore whatever is given to those freed from passions yields abundant fruit.

Weeds are the bane of the fields; hatred the bane of mankind. Therefore whatever is given to those freed from hatred yields abundant fruit.

Weeds are the bane of the fields; delusion the bane of mankind. Therefore whatever is given to those freed from delusion yields abundant fruit.

Weeds are the bane of the fields; desires the bane of mankind. Therefore whatever is given to those freed from desires yields abundant fruit.

We shall keep the last one to meditate on.

8 August 1958

The Bhikkhu

To control the eye is good; to control the ear is good; to control the nose and the tongue is good.

It is good to control one's actions, words, mind. Control in all things is good. The Bhikkhu who controls himself entirely is delivered from all suffering.

The man who is master over his hands, his feet and his tongue, who controls himself wholly, who delights in meditation, who is calm and leads a solitary life, can be called a Bhikkhu.

The Bhikkhu who is master over his tongue and is moderate in speech, who is modest, who luminously interprets the Doctrine, in truth his words are as sweet as honey.

The Bhikkhu who lives by the Doctrine, who delights in the Doctrine, who meditates on the Doctrine, who knows the Doctrine thoroughly, surely cannot fall away from the Doctrine.

The Bhikkhu should not treat his own progress (in wisdom and goodness) lightly, nor envy the progress of others; for the Bhikkhu who is envious cannot achieve concentration.

Even if the progress he has made is slight, the Bhikkhu should not despise it; if his life is pure and his effort persevering, the gods themselves shall praise him for it.

One who is not attached to name and form, who does not think, "This belongs to me", and who does not

grieve over what does not exist, he, in truth, is called a Bhikkhu.

The Bhikkhu who lives a life of loving kindness and who is filled with faith in the teaching of the Enlightened One, that Bhikkhu will attain the peace of Nirvana, the supreme bliss from which every conditioned element has vanished.

Empty this boat, O Bhikkhu; once lightened, the boat of your body will sail more lightly and having rejected desire and hatred you shall enter Nirvana.

Break the five bonds (belief in the ego, doubt, belief in vain rites and ceremonies, craving and bad will). Renounce these five other bonds (the desire to live in the world of forms, the desire to live in the subtle world, pride, restlessness and ignorance). Cultivate these five (faith, energy, mindfulness, meditation, and wisdom). The Bhikkhu who is thus five times free is said to be “he who has crossed over the flood”.

Meditate, O Bhikkhus, do not be negligent. Your minds should not turn towards the pleasures of the senses; for if by negligence you swallowed a red-hot iron ball, when you felt the burning you would lament, crying, “Oh, how painful it is!”

For one without knowledge there is no meditation; without meditation there is no knowledge. One in whom there is both meditation and knowledge is near to Nirvana.

The Bhikkhu who has entered the abode of emptiness, the Bhikkhu of serene mind, enjoys delight beyond the human, in the clear vision of the Doctrine.

Each time that he concentrates on the appearance and disappearance of all conditioned things, he enjoys the happiness and the delight of those who have attained immortality.

These things are for the wise Bhikkhu the very basis of the religious life: mastery of the senses, contentment, conduct according to the code of discipline, association with noble friends who lead a life of constant purity.

The Bhikkhu should be cordial, kind and polite; thus in the fullness of his joy, he will put an end to suffering.

Just as the jasmine sheds its faded petals, so also the Bhikkhu sheds desire and hatred.

Calm in action, calm in speech, calm in mind, serene, emptied of all earthly appetites, this Bhikkhu is called "The Serene One".

Let him arouse himself, let him examine himself; thus self-guarded and vigilant, the Bhikkhu will live in happiness.

In truth, one is one's own protector, one's own refuge. Know therefore how to control yourself as the horse-dealer controls a noble steed.

Filled with gladness and faith by the teaching of the Buddha, the Bhikkhu attains the state of perfect peace, cessation of all compounded existence.

The young Bhikkhu who consecrates himself to the Teaching of the Enlightened One, illuminates this world like the moon coming forth from behind the clouds.

One piece of advice given here is that one should always be kind. It should not be mistaken for the sort of advice people normally give. It says something interesting, even very interesting. My comment is: Always be kind and you will be free from suffering, always be contented and happy, and you will radiate your quiet happiness.

It is particularly noticeable that all the digestive functions are extremely sensitive to an attitude that is critical, bitter, full of ill-will, to a sour judgment. Nothing disturbs the functioning of the digestion more than that. And it is a vicious circle: the more the digestive function is disturbed, the more unkind you become, critical, dissatisfied with life and things and people. So you can't find any way out. And there is only one cure: to deliberately drop this attitude, to absolutely forbid yourself to have it and to impose upon yourself, by constant self-control, a deliberate attitude of all-comprehending kindness. Just try and you will see that you feel much better.

22 August 1958

The Brahmin

Strive, O Brahmin! Seal up the current (of craving), cast away all pleasures of the senses. Knowing how to uproot the elements of existence you shall know the Uncreated.

When the Brahmin has attained the summit of the two paths (concentration and insight), all bonds fall away and he possesses the Knowledge.

One for whom neither the inner nor the outer exist, neither one nor the other, who is free from fear and bondage, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

One who is given to meditation and is freed of impurities, who is without stain, who has fulfilled his duty, who has attained the highest goal, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

By day the sun shines; by night the moon. In his armour the warrior shines; in meditation the Brahmin shines. Day and night, without ceasing, the Buddha is radiant.

The man who has rejected evil is a Brahmin. One whose behaviour is disciplined is a monk; an ascetic is one who is purged of impurities.

One should not strike a Brahmin, and the Brahmin should not strike back. Shame on one who strikes a Brahmin. Shame on the Brahmin who strikes back.

For a Brahmin there is nothing better than to restrain the mind from the pleasures of life. As he removes bad intentions, so he appeases his sufferings.

One who does no evil by act, word or thought, the man who is restrained in these three, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

Whosoever teaches you the Doctrine of the Perfectly Enlightened One, render him homage and venerate him as the Brahmin does the sacred fire.

Neither by matted hair, nor ancestry, nor by birth does one become a Brahmin. One in whom abide truth and righteousness, he is pure, he is a true Brahmin.

What value has your matted hair, O foolish man? What value has the antelope skin you wear? Within you lies a jungle of passions, you have only the appearance of purity.

The man dressed in cast-off robes, who is emaciated, whose veins stand out on his body, who meditates alone in the forest, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

But I do not call him a Brahmin, although he is of brahmin origin or born of a brahmin mother, he who is rich and arrogant. He who possesses nothing, who is attached to nothing, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

He who has broken all bonds, who no longer fears anything, who has overcome all ties, who is liberated, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

One who little by little has broken the thong (of mind) and the straps (of attachment), who has cut the chain (of doubt) with its links (of evil tendencies) and who has rejected the yoke (of ignorance), who is enlightened, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

He who is without resentment, who bears reproaches, blows and chains, whose patience is his true strength, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

He who is free from anger, who is faithful to his faith, good and without craving, who has mastered himself and taken a body for the last time, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

He who is no more attached to the pleasures of the senses than a drop of water to the lotus leaf, or a mustard seed to the point of a needle, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

He who, in this life, has realised the cessation of suffering, who has laid down the burden and has liberated himself (from the yoke of attachment), him I consider to be a Brahmin.

The intelligent man, gifted with profound wisdom, discerning the good and the evil path, who has attained the supreme goal, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

One who seeks the company neither of householders nor of monks, who has no home and few needs, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

One who does no harm to any creature, whether strong or weak, who does not kill nor cause to be killed, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

Friendly amid the unfriendly, calm amid the violent, unselfish amid the selfish, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

He from whom passion and hatred, pride and pretence have fallen away, as a mustard seed falls from the point of a needle, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

One who speaks only words that are sweet, instructive, true, and who offends no one, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

One who in this world takes nothing but what he is given, whether it be little or much, short or long, good or bad, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

One who has no more desires in this world or the other, who has no more craving, who is free, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

One in whom desire exists no more, one who has attained the perfection of knowledge, who has cast away all doubt and who has sounded the depths of immortality, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

One who in this world has broken all ties (of good and evil) and who is delivered from grief, from taints and impurities, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

One who, like the moon, is spotless, pure, clear, serene, from whom the thirst of earthly desires has vanished, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

One who has escaped from the cycle of births, this muddy path, this thorny road, and who has attained the other shore, is given to meditation, void of desire, free from doubt, detached from all things and at peace, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

One in whom all passion is destroyed and who, renouncing worldly pleasures, has left the household life and taken to the homeless life, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

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He in whom all craving is dead and who, renouncing worldly pleasures, has left the household life, who has quenched the thirst of becoming, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

One who has rejected all earthly ties and has gone beyond all heavenly ties, who is delivered from all ties, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

One who has put aside liking and disliking, who is indifferent, who is freed from all attachment and all fetters, who has conquered all the worlds, this hero I consider to be a Brahmin.

He who possesses the perfect knowledge of the birth and death of all beings and who is freed from all ties, he is a Blessed One, an Awakened One, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

He whose future state is unknown to the gods, the demigods and mortals, who is without desire and without impurity, who has become an adept, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

He who no longer possesses anything, neither past nor present nor future, who owns nothing, who no longer clings to anything, that one I consider to be a Brahmin.

The Noble, the Excellent, the Hero, the great Sage, the Victor, the Impassive, the Pure, the Enlightened, him I consider to be a Brahmin.

One who knows his previous lives, one who perceives the heavens and the hells, who has come to the end of births, who has attained perfect vision, the Sage accomplished

in all accomplishments, him in truth I consider to be a Brahmin.

Such is the conclusion of the Dhammapada and if we have put into practice — to use its image — only a mustard seed of all that has been taught to us, well, we have not wasted our time.

There is one thing which is not spoken of here, in the Dhammapada: a supreme disinterestedness and a supreme liberation is to follow the discipline of self-perfection, the march of progress, not with a precise end in view as described here, the liberation of Nirvana, but because this march of progress is the profound law and the purpose of earthly life, the truth of universal existence and because you put yourself in harmony with it, spontaneously, whatever the result may be.

There is a deep trust in the divine Grace, a total surrender to the divine Will, an integral adhesion to the divine Plan which makes one do the thing to be done without concern for the result. That is the perfect liberation.

That is truly the abolition of suffering. The consciousness is filled with an unchanging delight and each step you take reveals a marvel of splendour.

We are grateful to the Buddha for what he has brought for human progress and, as I told you at the beginning, we shall try to realise a little of all the beautiful things he has taught us, but we shall leave the goal and the result of our endeavour to the Supreme Wisdom that surpasses all understanding.

5 September 1958

Appendix

to

Questions and Answers 1929

Sri Aurobindo's explanations of certain phrases

and passages in *Questions and Answers 1929*

Appendix to Questions and Answers 1929

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

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

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

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

“Concentrate in the heart.”³ What is concentration? What is meditation?

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

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

² Page 1. ³ Page 1.

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

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

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

“We have all met in previous lives.”⁵

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

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

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

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

⁴ Page 1.

⁵ Page 3.

⁶ Page 4.

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

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

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

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

“The strength of such impulses as those of sex lies usually in the fact that people take too much notice of them.”⁸

What are the other impulses referred to?

It refers to strong vital impulses.

“The whole world is full of the poison. You take it in with every breath.”⁹

How long is a Sadhak subject to this fear of catching contagion? I feel I won't catch such a contagion now. Is my feeling trustworthy?

⁷ Page 5.

⁸ Page 5.

⁹ Page 6.

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

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

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

"But to those who possess the necessary basis and foundation we say, on the contrary, 'aspire and draw.' "¹¹

Does this capacity to aspire and draw indicate a great advance already made?

No. It is a comparatively elementary stage.

How can one distinguish between a dream of deeper origin and a vision?¹²

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

Sometimes one remembers the dreams, sometimes one does not.¹³ Why is it so?

¹⁰ Page 11. ¹¹ Page 11. ¹² Pages 13-14. ¹³ Page 14.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁴ Page 17. ¹⁵ Pages 17-18.

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

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

Not so elementary.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁶ Page 23. ¹⁷ Page 23-24. ¹⁸ Page 25.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yes.

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

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

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

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

²⁰ Page 27. ²¹ Pages 27-28. ²² Page 30.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

²⁵ Page 40. ²⁶ Page 42.

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

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

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

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

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

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

²⁷ Pages 50-51. ²⁸ Page 89.

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

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

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

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

Note on the Texts

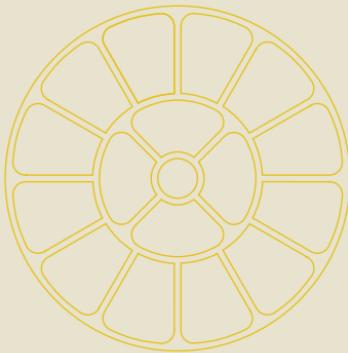
Questions and Answers 1929. This collection of fifteen conversations of 1929 was first published in 1931 for private circulation under the title *Conversations of the Mother*. The conversations were first made available to the public in 1940 as the main part of the book *Words of the Mother*. This book was reprinted in 1943, 1946 and 1949. The 1929 conversations appeared separately in 1956 under the title *Conversations*. That book was reprinted in 1961, 1966, 1971, 1973 and 1982. In 1989 it was printed together with the Mother's conversations of 1930–1931 under the title *Conversations 1929, 1930–1931*; a second impression of that book was issued in 1997.

The conversations of 1929 were also published in 1977 as the first part of *Questions and Answers*, Volume 3 of the Collected Works of the Mother (first edition); in that volume the conversations were titled *Questions and Answers 1929*. The present volume contains the same text.

Questions and Answers 1930–1931. These twenty-six reports of the Mother's conversations with disciples in 1930 and 1931 were recorded by a disciple in abbreviated long-hand and later reconstructed and elaborated. Several of them were published in 1949 in two journals of the Ashram, the monthly *Mother India* and the annual *Sri Aurobindo Circle*. Twenty-five talks were published under the title *Words of the Mother: Third Series* in 1951 and in 1966. A new talk, "Difficulties in Yoga", was included in the collection when it was brought out in 1977 as part of *Questions and Answers*, Volume 3 of the Collected Works of the Mother (first edition). In that volume the talks were entitled *Questions and Answers 1930–1931*. The present volume contains the same text. In 1989 these talks were printed together with the Mother's 1929 conversations under the title *Conversations 1929, 1930–1931*; a second impression was printed in 1997.

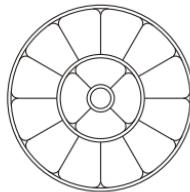
Commentaries on the Dhammapada. The Mother based her commentaries on the *Dhammapada* on a French translation of the Pali text made by a French disciple. The commentaries, given in French, were tape-recorded and then transcribed. The text and commentaries were first published in 1960 under the title *Commentaires sur le Dhammapada*. A second edition appeared in 1964. An English translation was serialised in the quarterly journal *Advent* from November 1960 to February 1965. This translation was revised when the work was published in 1977 as part of *Questions and Answers*, Volume 3 of the Collected Works of the Mother. The present volume contains the same text. In 1989 the text and commentaries were first published independently as a book in English; a second impression of the book was issued in 1995.

Appendix to *Questions and Answers* 1929. These explanations by Sri Aurobindo were written in answer to queries posed by various disciples between 1933 and 1937. Most of them were addressed to a particular disciple in January 1937. The collection was published in 1972 in *The Mother with Letters on the Mother*, Volume 25 of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library.



THE MOTHER

Questions and Answers 1950-1951



The Mother

Questions and Answers 1950 - 1951

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry

VOLUME 4
COLLECTED WORKS OF THE MOTHER

Second Edition

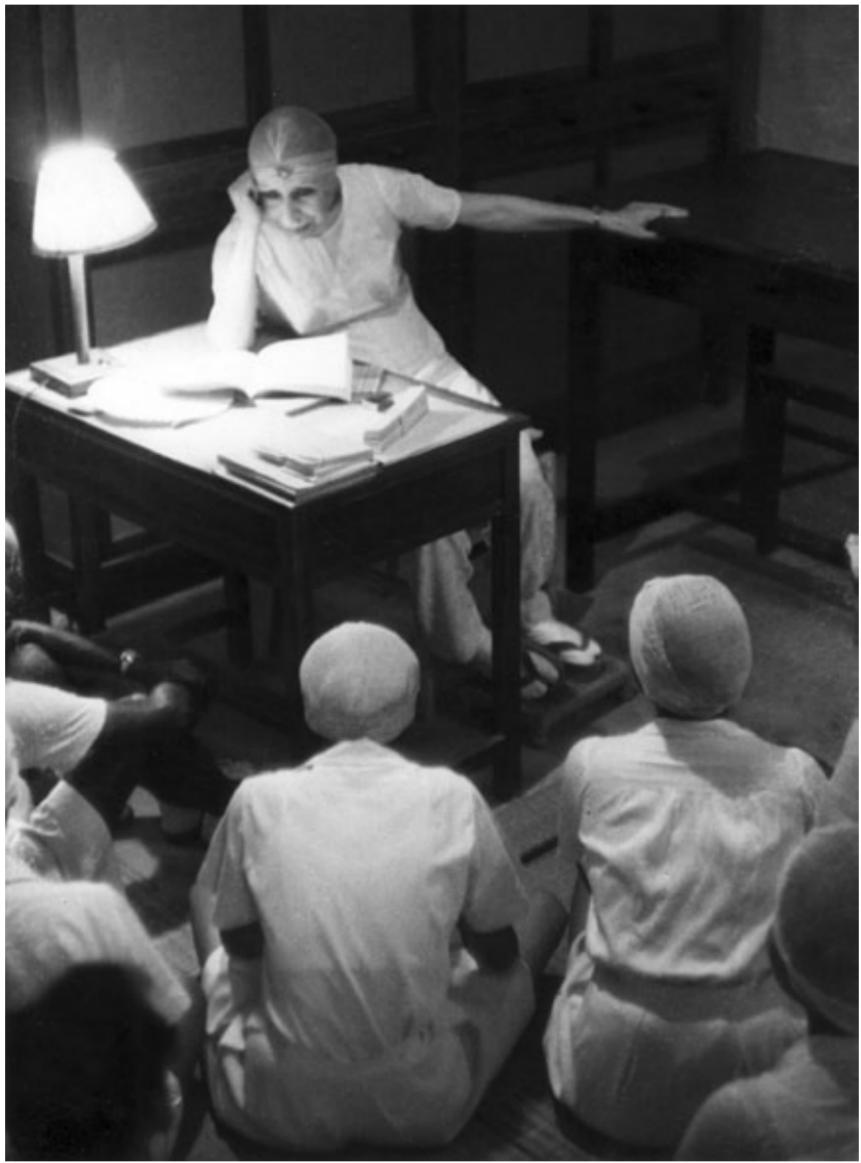
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The Mother taking a class, April 1950

Publisher's Note

This volume consists of talks given by the Mother in 1950 and 1951 to the students of her French class as well as some sadhaks of the Ashram. She usually began by reading out a passage from one of her works or her French translation of one of Sri Aurobindo's works, and then invited questions. During this period the Mother discussed several of her recent essays on education, her conversations of 1929, some letters of Sri Aurobindo and his small book *The Mother*.

It is worth tracing the origin of the Mother's French class, in which these talks were given. The Ashram school was founded by the Mother in 1943, and by the end of the decade its first students had learned French fairly well. As more and more children joined the school, there were not enough teachers in French. When the new school year began in December 1950, the Mother decided to take the highest class in French three times a week. At first she spoke to the students and some of the teachers, but gradually many sadhaks of the Ashram were allowed to join the class. As a result, the questions they asked arose from many different levels of understanding.

Further information on the talks and their publication is provided in the Note on the Text.

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1950–1951

21 December 1950

“O Consciousness, immobile and serene, Thou watchest at the confines of the world like a sphinx of eternity. And yet to some Thou confidest Thy secret. These can become Thy sovereign will which chooses without preference, executes without desire.”

Prayers and Meditations, 10 November 1914

This immobile Consciousness is the “Mother of Dreams”,¹ the sphinx of eternity who keeps vigil on the confines of the world like an enigma to be solved. This enigma is the problem of our life, the very *raison d'être* of the universe. The problem of our life is to realise the Divine or rather to become once again aware of the Divine who is the Universe, the origin, cause and goal of life.

Those who find the secret of the sphinx of eternity become that active and creative Power.

To choose without preference and execute without desire is the great difficulty at the very root of the development of true consciousness and self-control. To choose in this sense means to see what is true and bring it into existence; and to choose thus, without the least personal bias for any thing, any person, action, circumstance, is exactly what is most difficult for an ordinary human being. Yet one must learn to act without any preference, free from all attractions and likings, taking one's stand solely on the Truth which guides. And having chosen in accordance with the Truth the necessary action, one must carry it out without any desire.

If you observe yourself attentively, you will see that before acting you need an inner impetus, something which pushes you.

¹ “The Mother of Dreams”, a poem by Sri Aurobindo: *Collected Poems*, p. 67.

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In the ordinary man this impetus is generally desire. This desire ought to be replaced by a clear, precise, constant vision of the Truth.

Some call this the Voice of God or the Will of God. The true meaning of these words has been falsified, so I prefer to speak of "the Truth", though this is but a very limited aspect of That which we cannot name but which is the Source and the Goal of all existence. I deliberately do not use the word God because religions have given this name to an all-powerful being who is other than his creation and outside it. This is not correct.

However, on the physical plane the difference is obvious. For we are yet all that we no longer want to be, and He, He is all that we want to become.

How can we know what the divine Will is?

One does not know it, one feels it. And in order to feel it one must will with such an intensity, such sincerity, that every obstacle disappears. As long as you have a preference, a desire, an attraction, a liking, all these veil the Truth from you. Hence, the first thing to do is to try to master, govern, correct all the movements of your consciousness and eliminate those which cannot be changed until all becomes a perfect and permanent expression of the Truth.

And even to will this is not enough, for very often one forgets to will it.

What is necessary is an aspiration which burns in the being like a constant fire, and every time you have a desire, a preference, an attraction it must be thrown into this fire. If you do this persistently, you will see that a little gleam of true consciousness begins to dawn in your ordinary consciousness. At first it will be faint, very far behind all the din of desires, preferences, attractions, likings. But you must go behind all this and find that true consciousness, all calm, tranquil, almost silent.

Those who are in contact with the true consciousness see all

the possibilities at the same time and may deliberately choose even the most unfavourable, if necessary. But to reach this point, you must go a long way.

Should preferences be neutralized or forgotten?

One should not have them!

When the mind becomes silent, when it stops judging, pushing itself forward with its so-called knowledge, one begins to solve the problem of life. One must refrain from judging, for the mind is only an instrument of action, not an instrument of true knowledge — true knowledge comes from elsewhere.

If one refrained from judging, one would arrive at an ever more precise knowledge of the Truth and nine-tenths of the world's misery would disappear.

The great disorder in the world would to a large extent be neutralized if the mind could admit that it does not know.

“When we have passed beyond enjoyings, we shall have Bliss. Desire was the helper, Desire is the bar.”

Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Glimpses*, Cent. Vol. 16, p. 377

...according to the stage where you are.

Naturally, I speak to those who sincerely want to become conscious of their true truth and to express it in their life.... I think this holds true for all who are here.

And I tell the teachers that they must teach more and more in accordance with the Truth; for if we have a school here, it is in order that it be different from the millions of schools in the world; it is to give the children a chance to distinguish between ordinary life and the divine life, the life of truth — to see things in a different way. It is useless to want to repeat here the ordinary life. The teacher's mission is to open the eyes of the children to something which they will not find anywhere else.

23 December 1950

Mother reads out her article “Concentration and Dispersion” (*On Education*), then comments on it:

To solve a problem, to learn a lesson, a lot of concentration and attention is needed, everyone knows that — an intellectual attention and concentration. But concentration is not only an intellectual thing, it may be found in all the activities of the being, including bodily activities. The control over the nerves should be such as would allow you a complete concentration on what you are doing and, through the very intensity of your concentration, you acquire an immediate response to external touches. To attain this concentration you need a conscious control of the energies.

Are you conscious of the energies you receive and those you spend?

One is more or less conscious of the energy one spends, especially when one wastes it too much! It is a question here of the constant exchange between receiving and spending! Before the age of reason, little children receive a lot of energy and they spend it lavishly, without thinking, and this allows them to play for hours together without getting tired. But gradually, as thought develops, one begins to measure and calculate the energy spent — usually this is futile, for unless you have the knowledge of the process of receiving energy, it is better to spend freely what you get than let it stagnate within you.

First, you must become conscious of the receiving of energies, their passing into your being and their expenditure. Next, you must have a sort of higher instinct which tells you whence the most favourable energies come; then you put yourself in contact with them through thought, through stillness or any other process — there are many. You must know what energy you want, whence it comes, of what it is composed. Later comes

the control of the energy received. Ninety per cent of men do not absorb enough energy or they take in too much and do not assimilate what they take—as soon as they have had a sufficient dose they immediately throw it out by becoming restless, talking, shouting, etc. You must know how to keep within you the received energy and concentrate it fully on the desired activity and not on anything else. If you can do this, you won't need to use your will. You need only gather together all the energies received and use them consciously, concentrate with the maximum attention in order to do everything you want.

And you must know how to give a real value to what you *want* to do—what the higher part of your being wants to do—for to do what one *likes* to do is not difficult.

What is concentration?

It is to bring back all the scattered threads of consciousness to a single point, a single idea. Those who can attain perfect attention succeed in everything they undertake; they will always make a rapid progress. And this kind of concentration can be developed exactly like the muscles; one may follow different systems, different methods of training. Today we know that the most pitiful weakling, for example, can with discipline become as strong as anyone else. One should not have a will which flickers out like a candle.

The will, concentration must be cultivated; it is a question of method, of regular exercise. If you will, you can.

But the thought "What's the use?" must not come in to weaken the will. The idea that one is born with a certain character and can do nothing about it is a stupidity.

25 December 1950

A disciple explains to the children that the shortest day of the year corresponds to the greatest declination of the sun to the south, about the 21st of December; then the sun again mounts to the north. Mother comments:

That is why the 25th of December was a festival of Light long before Jesus Christ. This festival was in vogue long before Christianity; it originated in Egypt and very probably the birthday of Christ was fixed on the same day as that of the return of the Light.

Then Mother reads the first part of her article “Energy Inexhaustible” (*On Education*).

How is it that as mental activities increase, the capacity to renew one's energies diminishes?

In adults mental activity tends to paralyse the spontaneous movement of exchange of energies. Till he is fourteen, every child, apart from a few rare exceptions, is a little animal; he renews his energies spontaneously like an animal by means of the same activities and exchanges. But the mind introduces a disequilibrium in the being; spontaneous action is replaced by something that wants to know, to regulate, to decide, etc., and to get back this capacity to renew spontaneously one's energies, one must rise to a higher rung above the instincts, that is, from ordinary mental activity one must pass directly into intuition.

“Yet there is a source of energy which, once discovered, never dries up, whatever the circumstances and the physical conditions in life. It is the energy that can be

described as spiritual, that which is received not from below, from the depths of inconscience, but from above, from the supreme origin of men and the universe, from the all-powerful and eternal splendours of the super-conscious. It is there, everywhere around us, penetrating everything and to enter into contact with it and receive it, it is sufficient to sincerely aspire for it, to open oneself to it in faith and confidence so as to enlarge one's consciousness for identifying it with the universal Consciousness.”

“Energy Inexhaustible”, *On Education*

In these articles I am trying to put into ordinary terms the whole yogic terminology, for these *Bulletins* are meant more for people who lead an ordinary life, though also for students of yoga — I mean people who are primarily interested in a purely physical material life but who try to attain more perfection in their physical life than is usual in ordinary conditions. It is a very difficult task but it is a kind of yoga. These people call themselves “materialists” and they are apt to get agitated or irritated if yogic terms are used, so one must speak their language avoiding terms likely to shock them. But I have known in my life persons who called themselves “materialists” and yet followed a much severer discipline than those who claim to do yoga.

What we want is that humanity should progress; whether it professes to lead a yogic life or not matters little, provided it makes the necessary effort for progress.

What is the difference between meditation and concentration?

Meditation is a purely mental activity, it interests only the mental being. One can concentrate while meditating but this is a mental concentration; one can get a silence but it is a purely mental silence, and the other parts of the being are kept immobile and inactive so as not to disturb the meditation. You may pass twenty

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hours of the day in meditation and for the remaining four hours you will be an altogether ordinary man because only the mind has been occupied—the rest of the being, the vital and the physical, is kept under pressure so that it may not disturb. In meditation nothing is directly done for the other parts of the being.

Certainly this indirect action can have an effect, but... I have known in my life people whose capacity for meditation was remarkable but who, when not in meditation, were quite ordinary men, even at times ill-natured people, who would become furious if their meditation was disturbed. For they had learnt to master only their mind, not the rest of their being.

Concentration is a more active state. You may concentrate mentally, you may concentrate vitally, psychically, physically, and you may concentrate integrally. Concentration or the capacity to gather oneself at one point is more difficult than meditation. You may gather together one portion of your being or consciousness or you may gather together the whole of your consciousness or even fragments of it, that is, the concentration may be partial, total or integral, and in each case the result will be different.

If you have the capacity to concentrate, your meditation will be more interesting and easier. But one can meditate without concentrating. Many follow a chain of ideas in their meditation — it is meditation, not concentration.

Is it possible to distinguish the moment when one attains perfect concentration from the moment when, starting from this concentration, one opens oneself to the universal Energy?

Yes. You concentrate on something or simply you gather yourself together as much as is possible for you and when you attain a kind of perfection in concentration, if you can sustain this perfection for a sufficiently long time, then a door opens and you pass

beyond the limit of your ordinary consciousness — you enter into a deeper and higher knowledge. Or you go within. Then you may experience a kind of dazzling light, an inner wonder, a beatitude, a complete knowledge, a total silence. There are, of course, many possibilities but the phenomenon is always the same.

To have this experience all depends upon your capacity to maintain your concentration sufficiently long at its highest point of perfection.

To have this experience is it necessary to concentrate every time?

In the beginning, yes, for you have not the capacity to keep what you have acquired, to maintain your concentration at its maximum — you slip back and lose even the memory of the experience you have had. But if you once follow a path, it is easier to follow the same path a second time and so on. The second concentration is therefore easier than the first one. You must persevere in your concentration till you come to the point when you no longer lose the inner contact.

From that time onward you must remain in this inner and higher consciousness from where you can do everything. You see your body and the material world and you know what is to be done and how to do it.

That is the first aim of concentration, but naturally not the last.

To attain that concentration much effort is necessary; an immediate or even a quick result is rarely possible. But if the inner door has once been opened, you may be sure that it will open again if you know how to persevere.

As long as the door has not been opened, you may doubt your capacity, but once opened, no more doubt is possible, if you go on willing and aspiring.

This experience has a considerable value.

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What does “Mother of Dreams”¹ mean?

When he speaks of the “immobile and serene Consciousness”, Sri Aurobindo often uses poetic terms which are very suggestive. He has used the term “Mother of Dreams” because he has put himself in the place of one who is below, one who sees, perceives something mysterious, altogether wonderful, inaccessible and almost incomprehensible; but if you look from another point of view, you may say that it is the creative Consciousness, the Origin of the universe, the universal Mother, the creative Power, and so on.

When we play badly we find that we have no energy, but if we play well, with great enthusiasm, we find that energy comes. Why?

This is perfectly true. To enter into contact with terrestrial energy, one must establish a certain harmony within oneself. If you know the game well, if you know how to make the moves and if you take an enthusiastic interest, if you have a sort of ambition (quite childish perhaps), a desire to win, then as you go on succeeding you feel a kind of inner joy, not perhaps very profound, but creating the harmony necessary for the interchange of energy. On the other hand, those who do not know how to accept defeat, who get angry and bad-tempered when things do not go according to their wish, lose their energy more and more.

Also, if you slip into depression, you cut every source of energy — from above, from below, from everywhere. That is the best way of falling into inertia. You must absolutely refuse to be depressed.

Depression is always the sign of an acute egoism. When you feel that it is coming near, tell yourself: “I am in a state of egoistic illness, I must cure myself of it.”

¹ Sri Aurobindo, “The Mother of Dreams”, *Collected Poems*, p. 67.

28 December 1950

Mother reads out her article “Correct Judgment” (*On Education*). After examining various elements that falsify our judgment, Mother adds this commentary:

The sense organs are under the influence of the psychological state of the individual because something comes in between the eye's perception and the brain's reception. It is very subtle; the brain receives the eye's perceptions through the nerves; there is no reasoning, it is so to say instantaneous, but there is a short passage between the eye's perception and the cell which is to respond and evaluate it in the brain. And it is this evaluation of the brain which is under the influence of feelings. It is the small vibration between what the eye sees and what the brain estimates which often falsifies the response. And it is not a matter of sincerity, for even the most sincere persons do not know what is happening, even very calm people, without any violent emotion, who do not even feel an emotion, are influenced in this way without being aware of the intervention of this little falsifying vibration.

At times moral notions also intermix and falsify the judgment but we must throw far away from us all moral notions; for morality and Truth are very far from each other (if I am shocking anybody by saying this, I am sorry, but it is like that). It is only when you have conquered all attraction and all repulsion that you can have a correct judgment. As long as there are things that attract you and things that repel you, it is not possible for you to have an absolutely sure functioning of the senses.

Everybody knows, for example, that when there is an accident, there may be two, three or ten witnesses, but they do not see the same thing at all; one thing happens but there are no two

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persons who see it in the same way. With the inner shock, they perceive only a very small part of what happens.

But there is a way of reconciling the impressions — the idea and the opposite idea — it is by considering them as two ends of one and the same line; then by putting between these two ends innumerable other ideas which follow each other, you come to find that there is an accord among them. You also find out that this is a very interesting exercise.

“He alone who is above likes and dislikes, desires and preferences can look at things with perfect impartiality, through senses that are in their functioning objective, like that of an extremely delicate and perfected machine, to which is added the clarity of a living consciousness.”

“Correct Judgment”, On Education

I say “objective perception”. To see objectively is to see and judge without adding anything from oneself, free from all personal reaction. One must learn to see a thing without mixing up in it any personal feelings.

And I add that this “perfected machine” can do nothing without the clarity of a living consciousness. When the consciousness is *one*, you can know by identity; that is, by uniting your consciousness with the object or the person you want to know or judge impartially, you enter into an inner contact with this object or person, and then it is possible for you to know with absolute certainty....

Also what deforms and falsifies is the anxiety for the consequences. To have an absolutely true judgment, you must know how to execute and act without desire — only one in a thousand can do that. Almost all are anxious about the result or have the ambition to obtain a result. You must not be anxious about the results; simply do a thing because you have seen that it is that which must be done: tell yourself, “I am doing this because this

is the thing to be done, and whatever may happen afterwards is not my concern."

That evidently is an ideal and until it is reached the action will always be mixed. Therefore unless you are moved by a clear vision of the Truth, you must take as your rule to do always what you have to do, for it is that and nothing else that has to be done.

30 December 1950

“We are not aiming at success — our aim is perfection.

*“We are not seeking fame or reputation; we want to
prepare ourselves for a Divine manifestation.”*

“Tournaments”, On Education

What is perfection?

Some people put perfection at the apex. It is generally thought that perfection is the maximum one can do. But I say that perfection is not the apex, it is not an extreme. There is no extreme — whatever you may do, there is always the possibility of something better, and it is exactly this possibility of something better which is the very meaning of progress.

Since there is no extreme, how can we attain perfection?

*If we make some progress, could it be said that we are
going towards perfection?*

You are mixing up perfection and progress. You do not necessarily progress towards perfection. In progress there is perhaps a certain perfection, but it can't be said that progress is perfection. Progress is rather an ascent.

Perfection is a harmony, an equilibrium.

But what is equilibrium? Who here has studied a little physics?

*In a balance, when the two scales are equally loaded, it
is said that an equilibrium is established.*

That's it. And so what do I mean when I say that perfection is an equilibrium?

When, in a given circumstance, what is against the realisation, that is to say the opposition, is conquered by a conscious force, the result is the manifestation of the realisation.

Yes, it is more or less like that, but I should put it otherwise.

The idea of perfection is something which comes to us from the Divine, it descends from plane to plane; and we climb back from plane to plane.

This is still an evolutionary idea. It is always said that when a creation reaches its maximum possibility, this is perfection; but it is not that! and it is exactly against this idea that I protest. All this is only a rung in the progress. That is, Nature goes to the extreme limit of what she has, and when she sees that she can go no further, can no longer stir, she destroys everything and begins again. This can't be called a perfection, for perfection cannot be demolished. Perfection will come only when Nature can no longer undo what she has begun. For the moment there is no instance where she has not successively undone what she had begun, believing that it was not enough or it was not that which she wanted to do. Hence it cannot be said that she has attained perfection in her creation. It would be the maximum only if she had no need to undo what she has done.

You say that we do not seek success, but is not success a sort of perfection?

For the ordinary human mentality success is perhaps a perfection, but not for us.

Perfection is not a static state, it is an equilibrium. But a progressive, dynamic equilibrium. One may go from perfection to perfection. There can come a state from which it would not be necessary to descend to a lower rung in order to go farther;

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at the moment the march of Nature is like that, but in this new state, instead of being obliged to go back to be able to start again, one can walk always forward, without ever stopping. As things are, one comes to a certain point and, as human beings as they are at present cannot progress indefinitely, one must pass to a higher species or leave the present species and create another. The human being as he is at the moment cannot attain perfection unless he gets out of himself—man is a transitional being. In ordinary language it may be said: “Oh, this man is perfect”, but that is a literary figure. The maximum a human being can attain just now is an equilibrium which is not progressive. He may attain perhaps a static equilibrium but all that is static can be broken for lack of progress.

Is not perfection the fulfilment of the Divine in all the parts of the being?

No, what you are thinking of is again a rung in progress and not perfection.

Now we are going to try to find a definition which can fit all instances, that is, the individual, the collectivity, the earth and the universe.

We may say that perfection will be attained in the individual, the collectivity, on the earth and in the universe, when, at *every moment*, the receptivity will be equal in quality and quantity to the Force which wants to manifest.

That is the supreme equilibrium.

Hence, there must be a perfect equilibrium between what comes from above and what answers from below, and when the two meet, that is perfect equilibrium, which is the Realisation — a realisation in constant progress.

“It is better to be than to seem. We do not need to appear to be good if our sincerity is perfect. And by perfect sincerity we mean that all our thoughts, feelings,

sensations and actions should express nothing but the central Truth of our being.”

“Tournaments”, On Education

When you are absolutely sincere, you make a constant effort to live in harmony with the highest ideal of your being, the truth of your being. At every moment, in all that you think, all that you feel and all that you do, you try as perfectly as possible, as completely as possible, to put yourself in harmony with the highest ideal or, if you are conscious of it, with the truth of your being — then you have reached true sincerity. And if you are like that, if truly you do not act from egoistic motives or for personal reasons, if you act guided by your inner truth, that is, if you are perfectly sincere, it is absolutely the same to you whether the whole world judges you in one way or another. In this state of perfect sincerity you do not need to appear good or to be approved by others, for the first thing you experience when you are in harmony with your true consciousness is that you do not care what you look like. Whether you look like this or like that, whether you seem indifferent, cold, distant, proud, all this is of no importance; provided, I repeat this, you are absolutely sincere, that is, you never forget that you live in order to realise your inner, central truth.

Does not perfection consist in pleasing the Divine and no one else?

Yes, if you like, but when one is not absolutely sincere, one deceives oneself very easily, and if one feels comfortable, one says: “Oh, I am sure that I please the Divine.”

4 January 1951

Mother reads out her article “Transformation” (*On Education*), then comments on it:

We want an integral transformation, the transformation of the body and all its activities.

Formerly, when one spoke of transformation one meant solely the transformation of the inner consciousness. One tried to discover in oneself this deep consciousness and rejected the body and its activities like an encumbrance and a useless thing, in order to attend only to the inner movement. Sri Aurobindo declared that this was not enough; the Truth demanded that the material world should also participate in this transformation and become an expression of the deeper Truth. But when people heard this, many thought that it was possible to transform the body and its activities without bothering in the least about what was happening within — naturally this is not quite true. Before you can undertake this work of physical transformation, which of all things is the most difficult, your inner consciousness must be firmly established, solidly established in the Truth, so that this transformation may be the final expression of the Truth — “final” for the moment at least.

The starting-point of this transformation is receptivity, we have already spoken about it. That is the indispensable condition for obtaining the transformation. Then comes the change of consciousness. This change of consciousness and its preparation have often been compared with the formation of the chicken in the egg: till the very last second the egg remains the same, there is no change, and it is only when the chicken is completely formed, absolutely alive, that it itself makes with its little beak a hole in the shell and comes out. Something similar takes place at the moment of the change of consciousness. For a long

time you have the impression that nothing is happening, that your consciousness is the same as usual, and, if you have an intense aspiration, you even feel a resistance, as though you were knocking against a wall which does not yield. But when you are ready within, a last effort—the pecking in the shell of the being—and everything opens and you are projected into another consciousness.

I said that it was a revolution of the basic equilibrium, that is, a total reversal of consciousness comparable with what happens to light when it passes through a prism. Or it is as though you were turning a ball inside out, which cannot be done except in the fourth dimension. One comes out of the ordinary three-dimensional consciousness to enter the higher four-dimensional consciousness, and into an infinite number of dimensions. This is the indispensable starting-point. Unless your consciousness changes its dimension, it will remain just what it is with the superficial vision of things, and all the profundities will escape you.

Is there anyone here who has already had the experience of this reversal of consciousness and who can explain what he has experienced?

X: It was like a pain in the heart which lasted for a day. The next day, when I woke up it was as if I were coming out from a profound meditation and all my thoughts, all my actions seemed to be directed by something or someone who was watching beside my head. All the words which came out of my mouth were right.

What was this pain like? a pressure? a tearing apart? a tension?

X: It was as though something in me was not happy, but all that changed during the night; the next day the uneasiness had gone.

Questions and Answers

It was undoubtedly a mental opening to the higher consciousness, an ascent of the mental consciousness towards the higher consciousness. And it was probably a resistance in the emotional vital which caused the pain, that disagreeable sensation which disappeared during the night with the liberation of the consciousness in a higher domain.

Y: When I stood before Sri Aurobindo, I felt a kind of sharp pain. I prayed to Sri Aurobindo to give me something. And suddenly the pain was changed into an intense joy.

This was a contact with your psychic being.

Z: One has often the experience of an ascent of the consciousness above the earth. One seems to enter a region where all problems, all questions disappear rather than receive an answer. They seem no longer of any importance. But still this is not “going from knowledge to knowledge”.

This is an opening of the inner being to the divine Presence in the psychic centre, and there you know at every moment not only what must be done but why it should be done and how it should be done, and you have the vision of the truth of things behind their appearances. Instead of seeing things in the usual way, that is, from outside, and so much from outside that, except in a few rare cases, one is incapable even of knowing what another person thinks (you must make a great effort, you see only the surface of things and nothing of what goes on behind); well, after this inner opening and this identification with the Presence in the psychic centre, you see things from within outwards, and the outer existence becomes an expression, more or less deformed, of what you see within: you are aware of the inner existence of beings and their form; their outer existence

is only a more or less deformed expression of this inner truth. And it is because of this that I say that the basic equilibrium is completely changed. Instead of being outside the world and seeing it as something outside you, you are inside the world and see outer forms expressing in a more or less clumsy fashion what is within, which for you is the Truth.

8 January 1951

Mother reads out her article “What a Child Should Always Remember” (*On Education*).

You say that one should have “the certitude of Truth’s final victory”. But doesn’t this certitude seem very different from, and often the very opposite of, what one teaches in ordinary life?

Yes. Generally it is believed that things always end badly in Nature. Everyone knows the story of those who have met a lamentable end after having enjoyed great success in their life; of those who had extraordinary capacities and who finally lost them; of a nation which for a long period was the model of a marvellous civilisation — the civilisation vanishes and the nation is changed into something so deplorable that one can no longer recollect what it was. It seems that the story of the earth is a story of victories followed by defeats and not of defeats followed by victories.

But in fact, whenever it is a question of universal and divine things, what is needed is the universal vision and divine understanding of things in order to know how the truth expresses itself. There is a kind of general pessimism which says that even if things begin well they end badly, that it is weakness, hypocrisy, falsehood and wickedness which always seem to have the upper hand. That is why those who see the world in their own personal dimension have said that the world is bad and that we have only to finish with it and get out of it as soon as possible. Teachers have taught this but their teaching only proves that their vision is too narrow and in the dimension of their human individuality.

In truth, the movements of Nature are like those of the tides: they advance, they recede, advance and recede; in the universal

life and even in terrestrial life, this means a progressive advance, though apparently it is cut up by withdrawals. But these withdrawals are only an appearance, as when one draws back to spring forward. You seem to be drawing back but it is simply in order to go much farther.

You will tell me that all this is very well, but how to give a child the certitude that the truth will triumph? For, when he learns history, when he observes Nature, he will see that things don't always end well.¹

Children must be taught to see the divine manifestation in the world and not the side which ends badly.

No, if the child thinks that the Divine is different from the world, his idea that everything ends badly will be quite justified.

Children must be given the idea of divine justice.

But we know nothing about it, for this justice does not manifest in the world as it is today.

However, if one observes things a little deeply, one perceives that there is progress, that things become better and better, though apparently they do not improve. And for a consciousness seated a little higher, it is quite evident that all evil—at least what we call evil—all falsehood, all that is contrary to the

¹ In 1963, at the time this conversation was first published, Mother made the following remark:

“After all, as long as there is death, things always end badly. It is only victory over death which will make it possible for things not to end badly; that is when the return into the Inconscience will no longer be necessary to allow a new progress.

“The whole process of development, at least terrestrial development, is like that. I do not know how it happens on the other planets! Traditions say that a universe is created, then withdrawn in the *pralaya*, then a new one comes and so on; and according to them we should be the seventh universe, and being the seventh universe, we are that which will not return into *pralaya* but progress constantly without going back. It is because of this, besides, that there is in the human being this need of permanence and of an uninterrupted progress; it is because the time has come.”

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Truth, all suffering, all opposition is the result of a disequilibrium. I believe that one who is habituated to seeing things from this higher plane sees immediately that it is like that. Consequently, the world cannot be founded upon a disequilibrium, for if so it would have long since disappeared. One feels that at the origin of the universe there must have been a supreme Equilibrium and, perhaps, as we said the other day, a progressive equilibrium, an equilibrium which is the exact opposite of all that we have been taught and all that we are accustomed to call "evil". There is no absolute evil, but *an* evil, a more or less partial disequilibrium.

This may be taught to a child in a very simple way; it may be shown with the help of material things that an object will fall if it is not balanced, that only things in equilibrium can keep their position and duration.

There is another quality which must be cultivated in a child from a very young age: that is the feeling of uneasiness, of a moral disbalance which it feels when it has done certain things, not because it has been told not to do them, not because it fears punishment, but spontaneously. For example, a child who hurts its comrade through mischief, if it is in its normal, natural state, will experience uneasiness, a grief deep in its being, because what it has done is contrary to its inner truth.

For in spite of all teachings, in spite of all that thought can think, there is something in the depths which has a feeling of a perfection, a greatness, a truth, and is painfully contradicted by all the movements opposing this truth. If a child has not been spoilt by its milieu, by deplorable examples around it, that is, if it is in the normal state, spontaneously, without its being told anything, it will feel an uneasiness when it has done something against the truth of its being. And it is exactly upon this that later its effort for progress must be founded.

For, if you want to find one teaching, one doctrine upon which to base your progress, you will never find anything — or, to be more exact, you will find something else, for in accordance

with the climate, the age, the civilisation, the teaching given is quite conflicting. When one person says, "This is good", another will say, "No, this is bad", and with the same logic, the same persuasive force. Consequently, it is not upon this that one can build. Religion has always tried to establish a dogma, and it will tell you that if you conform to the dogma you are in the truth and if you don't you are in the falsehood. But all this has never led to anything and has only created confusion.

There is only one true guide, that is the inner guide, who does not pass through the mental consciousness.

Naturally, if a child gets a disastrous education, it will try ever harder to extinguish within itself this little true thing, and sometimes it succeeds so well that it loses all contact with it, and also the power of distinguishing between good and evil. That is why I insist upon this, and I say that from their infancy children must be taught that there is an inner reality—within themselves, within the earth, within the universe—and that they, the earth and the universe exist only as a function of this truth, and that if it did not exist the child would not last, even the short time that it does, and that everything would dissolve even as it comes into being. And because this is the real basis of the universe, naturally it is this which will triumph; and all that opposes this cannot endure as long as this does, because it is That, the eternal thing which is at the base of the universe.

It is not a question, of course, of giving a child philosophical explanations, but he could very well be given the feeling of this kind of inner comfort, of satisfaction, and sometimes, of an intense joy when he obeys this little very silent thing within him which will prevent him from doing what is contrary to it. It is on an experience of this kind that teaching may be based. The child must be given the impression that nothing can endure if he does not have within himself this true satisfaction which alone is permanent.

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Can a child become conscious of this inner truth like an adult?

For a child this is very clear, for it is a perception without any complications of word or thought — there is that which puts him at ease and that which makes him uneasy (it is not necessarily joy or sorrow which come only when the thing is very intense). And all this is much clearer in the child than in an adult, for the latter has always a mind which works and clouds his perception of the truth.

To give a child theories is absolutely useless, for as soon as his mind awakes he will find a thousand reasons for contradicting your theories, and he will be right.

This little true thing in the child is the divine Presence in the psychic — it is also there in plants and animals. In plants it is not conscious, in animals it begins to be conscious, and in children it is very conscious. I have known children who were much more conscious of their psychic being at the age of five than at fourteen, and at fourteen than at twenty-five; and above all, from the moment they go to school where they undergo that kind of intensive mental training which draws their attention to the intellectual part of their being, they lose almost always and almost completely this contact with their psychic being.

If only you were an experienced observer, if you could tell what goes on in a person, simply by looking into his eyes!... It is said the eyes are the mirror of the soul; that is a popular way of speaking but if the eyes do not express to you the psychic, it is because it is very far behind, veiled by many things. Look carefully, then, into the eyes of little children, and you will see a kind of light — some describe it as candid — but so true, so true, which looks at the world with wonder. Well, this sense of wonder, it is the wonder of the psychic which sees the truth but does not understand much about the world, for it is too far from it. Children have this but as they learn more, become more intelligent, more educated, this is effaced, and you see all sorts

of things in their eyes: thoughts, desires, passions, wickedness — but this kind of little flame, so pure, is no longer there. And you may be sure it is the mind that has got in there, and the psychic has gone very far behind.

Even a child who does not have a sufficiently developed brain to understand, if you simply pass on to him a vibration of protection or affection or solicitude or consolation, you will see that he responds. But if you take a boy of fourteen, for example, who is at school, who has ordinary parents and has been ill-treated, his mind is very much in the forefront; there is something hard in him, the psychic being has gone behind. Such boys do not respond to the vibration. One would say they are made of wood or plaster.

If the inner truth, the divine presence in the psychic is so conscious in the child, it could no longer be said that a child is a little animal, could it?

Why not? In animals there is sometimes a very intense psychic truth. Naturally, I believe that the psychic being is a little more formed, a little more conscious in a child than in an animal. But I have experimented with animals, just to know; well, I assure you that in human beings I have rarely come across some of the virtues which I have seen in animals, very simple, unpretentious virtues. As in cats, for example: I have studied cats a lot; if one knows them well they are marvellous creatures. I have known mother-cats which have sacrificed themselves entirely for their babies — people speak of maternal love with such admiration, as though it were purely a human privilege, but I have seen this love manifested by mother-cats to a degree far surpassing ordinary humanity. I have seen a mother-cat which would never touch her food until her babies had taken all they needed. I have seen another cat which stayed eight days beside her kittens, without satisfying any of her needs because she was afraid to leave them alone; and a cat which repeated more than fifty times the same

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movement to teach her young one how to jump from a wall on to a window, and I may add, with a care, an intelligence, a skill which many uneducated women do not have. And why is it thus? — since there was no mental intervention. It was altogether spontaneous instinct. But what is instinct? — it is the presence of the Divine in the genus of the species, and that, that is the psychic of animals; a collective, not an individual psychic.

I have seen in animals all the reactions, emotional, affective, sentimental, all the feelings of which men are so proud. The only difference is that animals cannot speak of them and write about them, so we consider them inferior beings because they cannot flood us with books on what they have felt.

*When I was a child if I did something bad immediately
I felt uneasy and I would decide never to do that again.
Then my parents also used to tell me never again to do
it. Why? Because I had myself decided not to do it any
more.*

A child should never be scolded. I am accused of speaking ill of parents! But I have seen them at work, you see, and I know that ninety per cent of parents snub a child who comes spontaneously to confess a mistake: "You are very naughty. Go away, I am busy" — instead of listening to the child with patience and explaining to him where his fault lies, how he ought to have acted. And the child, who had come with good intentions, goes away quite hurt, with the feeling: "Why am I treated thus?" Then the child sees his parents are not perfect — which is obviously true of them today — he sees that they are wrong and says to himself: "Why does he scold me, he is like me!"

11 January 1951

Mother comments upon some of the qualities enumerated in her article “What a Child Should Always Remember” (*On Education*).

“To be modest”

This is to take oneself at one’s true worth.

Generally people pass from an excessive appreciation of their personal value to an equally excessive discouragement. One day they say, “I am wonderful”, and the next day, “Oh! I am good for nothing, I can do nothing.” That is like a pendulum, isn’t it? There is nothing more difficult than knowing exactly what one is; one must neither overrate oneself nor depreciate oneself, but understand one’s limits and know how to advance towards the ideal set before oneself. There are people who see in a big way and immediately imagine they can do everything. There are petty officers, for example, who imagine themselves capable of winning all the battles of the world, and small people who think they surpass everybody in the world. On the other hand, I have known some people who had abilities but who spent their time thinking, “I am good for nothing.” Generally the two extremes are found in the same person. But to find someone who knows exactly where he stands and exactly where he can go, is very rare. We have avoided speaking of vanity because we expect that you won’t be filled with vanity as soon as you score a success.

Just imagine, there are plants which are vain! I am speaking of plants one grows for oneself. If one pays them compliments, by words or by feelings, if one admires them, well, they hold up their head—with vanity! It is the same with animals. I am going to tell you a short amusing story.

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In Paris there is a garden called “The Garden of Plants”: there are animals there also, as well as plants. They had just received a magnificent lion. It was of course in a cage. And it was furious. There was a door in the cage behind which it could hide. And it would hide itself just when the visitors came to see it! I saw that and one day I went up to the cage and began speaking to it (animals are very sensitive to spoken language, they really listen). I began speaking softly to my lion, I said to it, “Oh! How handsome you are, what a pity that you are hiding yourself like this, how much we would like to see you....” Well, it listened. Then, little by little, it looked at me askance, slowly stretched its neck to see me better; later it brought out its paw and, finally, put the tip of its nose against the bars as if saying, “At last, here’s someone who understands me!”

“To be generous”

I shall not speak here of material generosity which naturally consists in giving others what one has. But even this virtue is not very widespread, for as soon as one becomes rich one thinks more often of keeping one’s wealth than of giving it away. The more men possess, the less are they generous.

I want to speak of moral generosity. To feel happy, for example, when a comrade is successful. An act of courage, of unselfishness, a fine sacrifice have a beauty in them which gives you joy. It may be said that moral generosity consists in being able to recognise the true worth and superiority of others.

13 January 1951

“An aimless life is always a miserable life.”

“The Science of Living”, On Education

Why?

If one has an aim, one can follow quietly the way which leads to the goal.

It is not necessary to have a goal in order to follow the way quietly. So many men who have no goal follow quite calmly the course of their daily round without making any effort!

An aim gives joy.

Sometimes it takes an entire lifetime to attain one's aim; one would then find joy only at the end of one's life!

An aim is an ideal and an ideal is an enrichment.

Yes, but one may have an altogether material ideal; it is not the ideal which gives joy.

An aim gives a meaning, a purpose to life, and this purpose implies an effort; and it is in effort that one finds joy.

Exactly. It is the effort which gives joy; a human being who does not know how to make an effort will never find joy. Those who are essentially lazy will never find joy—they do not have the strength to be joyful! It is effort which gives joy. Effort makes the being vibrate at a certain degree of tension which makes it possible for you to feel the joy.

But is the effort which brings joy an effort imposed by circumstances or an effort which makes for progress?

You are mixing up two things: one physical, the other psychological. It is quite obvious that an act done because one has decided to do it and an act imposed by circumstances, more or less favourable, do not have at all the same result. It is known, for instance, that people who follow yogic discipline often fast. Many yogic disciplines require very long fastings and those who practise them are generally very happy to do so, for that is their own choice. But take this very person and put him in circumstances where food is scarce, either because it cannot be had or because this person has no money, and you will see him in a lamentable state, complaining that life is terrible, though the conditions may be identically the same; but in one case there was the decision not to eat, whilst in the other the man did not eat because he could not do otherwise. That is obvious, but this is not the only reason.

It is only effort, in whatever domain it be — material effort, moral effort, intellectual effort — which creates in the being certain vibrations which enable you to get connected with universal vibrations; and it is this which gives joy. It is effort which pulls you out of inertia; it is effort which makes you receptive to the universal forces. And the one thing above all which spontaneously gives joy, even to those who do not practise yoga, who have no spiritual aspiration, who lead quite an ordinary life, is the exchange of forces with universal forces. People do not know this, they would not be able to tell you that it is due to this, but so it is.

There are people who are just like beautiful animals — all their movements are harmonious, their energies are spent harmoniously, their uncalculating efforts call in energies all the time and they are always happy; but sometimes they have no thoughts in their head, sometimes they have no feelings in their heart, they live an altogether animalish life. I have known people

like that: beautiful animals. They were handsome, their gestures were harmonious, their forces quite balanced and they spent without reckoning and received without measure. They were in harmony with the material universal forces and they lived in joy. They could not perhaps have told you that they were happy—joy with them was so spontaneous that it was natural—and they would have been still less able to tell you why, for their intelligence was not very developed. I have known such people, who were capable of making the necessary effort (not a prudent and calculated effort but a spontaneous one) in no matter what field: material, vital, intellectual, etc., and in this effort there was always joy. For example, a man sits down to write a book, he makes an effort which sets vibrating something in his brain to attract ideas; well, suddenly, this man experiences joy. It is quite certain that, whatever you do, even the most material work, like sweeping a room or cooking, if you make the necessary effort to do this work to the maximum of your ability, you will feel joy, even if what you do is against your nature. When you want to realise something, you make quite spontaneously the necessary effort; this concentrates your energies on the thing to be realised and that gives a meaning to your life. This compels you to a sort of organisation of yourself, a sort of concentration of your energies, because it is this that you wish to do and not fifty other things which contradict it. And it is in this concentration, this intensity of the will, that lies the origin of joy. This gives you the power to receive energies in exchange for those you spend.

“To work for your perfection the first step is to become conscious of yourself.”

“The Science of Living”, On Education

“To know oneself and control oneself”,¹ what does this mean?

¹ “The Science of Living”, *On Education*.

This means to be conscious of one's inner truth, conscious of the different parts of one's being and their respective functions. You must know why you do this, why you do that; you must know your thoughts, know your feelings, all your activities, all your movements, of what you are capable, etc. And to know oneself is not enough: this knowledge must bring a conscious control. To know oneself perfectly is to control oneself perfectly.

But there must be an aspiration at every moment. It is never too early to begin, never too late to continue. That is, even when you are quite young, you can begin to study yourself and know yourself and gradually to control yourself. And even when you are what is called "old", when you are quite aged, it is not too late to make the effort to know yourself better and better and control yourself better and better. That is the Science of Living.

To perfect oneself, one must first become conscious of oneself. I am sure, for instance, that the following situation has arisen many times in your life: someone asks you suddenly, "Why have you done that?" Well, the spontaneous reply is, "I don't know." If someone asks you, "What are you thinking of?" You reply, "I don't know." "Why are you tired?" — "I don't know." "Why are you happy?" — "I don't know", and so on. I can take indeed fifty people and ask them suddenly, without preparation, "Why have you done that?" and if they are not inwardly "awake", they will all answer, "I don't know." (Of course I am not speaking here of those who have practised a discipline of self-knowledge and of following up their movements to the extreme limits; these people can, naturally, collect themselves, concentrate and give the right answer, but only after a little while.) You will see that it is like that if you look well at your whole day. You say something and you don't know why you say it — it is only after the words are out of your mouth that you notice that this was not quite what you wanted to say. For instance, you go to see someone, you prepare beforehand the words you are going to speak, but once you are in front of the person in question, you say nothing or it is other words which

come from your mouth. Are you able to say to what extent the atmosphere of the other person has influenced you and stopped you from saying what you had prepared? How many people can say that? They do not even observe that the person was in such or such a state and that it was because of this that they could not tell him what they had prepared. Of course, there are very obvious instances when you find people in such a bad mood that you can ask nothing of them. I am not speaking of these. I am speaking of the clear perception of reciprocal influences: what acts and reacts on your nature; it is this one does not have. For example, one becomes suddenly uneasy or happy, but how many people can say, "It is this"? And it is difficult to know, it is not at all easy. One must be quite "awake"; one must be constantly in a very attentive state of observation.

There are people who sleep twelve hours a day and say the rest of the time, "I am awake"! There are people who sleep twenty hours a day and the rest of the time are but half awake!

To be in this state of attentive observation, you must have, so to say, antennae everywhere which are in constant contact with your true centre of consciousness. You register everything, you organise everything and, in this way, you cannot be taken unawares, you cannot be deceived, mistaken, and you cannot say anything other than what you wanted to say. But how many people normally live in this state? It is this I mean, precisely, when I speak of "becoming conscious". If you want to benefit most from the conditions and circumstances in which you find yourself, you must be fully awake: you must not be taken by surprise, you must not do things without knowing why, you must not say things without knowing why. You must be constantly awake.

You must also understand that you are not separate individualities, that life is a constant exchange of forces, of consciousnesses, of vibrations, of movements of all kinds. It is as in a crowd, you see: when everyone pushes all go forward, and when all recede, everyone recedes. It is the same thing in the inner world, in your consciousness. There are all the time forces

and influences acting and reacting upon you, it is like a gas in the atmosphere, and unless you are quite awake, these things enter into you, and it is only when they have gone well in and come out as if they came from you, that you become aware of them. How many times people meet those who are nervous, angry, in a bad mood, and themselves become nervous, angry, moody, just like that, without quite knowing why. Why is it that when you play against certain people you play very well, but when you play against others you cannot play? And those very quiet people, not at all wicked, who suddenly become furious when they are in a furious crowd! And no one knows who has started it: it is something that went past and swept off the consciousness. There are people who can let out vibrations like this and others respond without knowing why. Everything is like that, from the smallest to the biggest things.

To be individualised in a collectivity, one must be absolutely conscious of oneself. And of which self? — the Self which is above all intermixture, that is, what I call the Truth of your being. And as long as you are not conscious of the Truth of your being, you are moved by all kinds of things, without taking any note of it at all. Collective thought, collective suggestions are a formidable influence which act constantly on individual thought. And what is extraordinary is that one does not notice it. One believes that one thinks "like that", but in truth it is the collectivity which thinks "like that". The mass is always inferior to the individual. Take individuals with similar qualities, of similar categories, well, when they are alone these individuals are at least two degrees better than people of the same category in a crowd. There is a mixture of obscurities, a mixture of unconsciousness, and inevitably you slip into this unconsciousness. To escape this there is but one means: to become conscious of oneself, more and more conscious and more and more attentive.

Try this little exercise: at the beginning of the day, say: "I won't speak without thinking of what I say." You believe, don't you, that you think all that you say! It is not at all true, you will

see that so many times the word you do not want to say is ready to come out, and that you are compelled to make a conscious effort to stop it from coming out.

I have known people who were very scrupulous about not telling lies, but all of a sudden, when together in a group, instead of speaking the truth they would spontaneously tell a lie; they did not have the intention of doing so, they did not think of it a minute before doing it, but it came "like that". Why? — because they were in the company of liars; there was an atmosphere of falsehood and they had quite simply caught the malady!

It is thus that gradually, slowly, with perseverance, first of all with great care and much attention, one becomes conscious, learns to know oneself and then to become master of oneself.

15 January 1951

“It is only by observing these movements (of our being) with great care, by bringing them, as it were, before the tribunal of our highest ideal, with a sincere will to submit to its judgment, that we can hope to educate in us a discernment which does not err.”

“The Science of Living”, On Education

One must be clearly aware of the origin of one's movements because there are contradictory velleities in the being — some pushing you here, others pushing you there, and that obviously creates a chaos in life. If you observe yourself, you will see that as soon as you do something which disturbs you a little, the mind immediately gives you a favourable reason to justify yourself — this mind is capable of gilding everything. In these conditions it is difficult to know oneself. One must be absolutely sincere to be able to do it and to see clearly into all the little falsehoods of the mental being.

If in your mind you go over the various movements and reactions of the day like one repeating indefinitely the same thing, you will not progress. If this reviewing is to make you progress, you must find something within you in whose light you yourself can be your own judge, something which represents for you the best part of yourself, which has some light, some goodwill and which precisely is in love with progress. Place that before you and, first of all, pass across it as at a cinema all that you have done, all that you have felt, your impulses, your thoughts, etc.; then try to coordinate them, that is, find out why this has followed that. And look at the luminous screen that is before you: certain things pass across it well, without throwing a shadow; others, on the contrary, throw a little shadow; others yet cast a shadow altogether black and disagreeable. You must do this

very sincerely, as though you were playing a game: under such circumstances I did such and such a thing, feeling like this and thinking in this way; I have before me my ideal of knowledge and self-mastery, well, was this act in keeping with my ideal or not? If it was, it would not leave any shadow on the screen, which would remain transparent, and one would not have to worry about it. If it is not in conformity, it casts a shadow. Why has it left this shadow? What was there in this act that was contrary to the will to self-knowledge and self-mastery? Most often you will find that it corresponds to unconsciousness — then you file it among unconscious things and resolve that next time you will try to be conscious before doing anything. But in other cases you will see that it was a nasty little egoism, quite black, which had come to distort your action or your thought. Then you place this egoism before your "light" and ask yourself: "Why has it the right to make me act like that, think like that?..." And instead of accepting any odd explanation you must search and you will find in a corner of your being something which thinks and says, "Ah, no, I shall accept everything but that." You will see that it is a petty vanity, a movement of self-love, an egoistic feeling hidden somewhere, a hundred things. Then you take a good look at these things in the light of your ideal: "Is cherishing this movement in conformity with my seeking and the realisation of my ideal or not? I put this little dark corner in front of the light until the light enters into it and it disappears." Then the comedy is over. But the comedy of your whole day is not finished yet, you know, for there are many things which have to pass thus before the light. But if you continue this game — for truly it is a game, if you do this sincerely — I assure you that in six months you will not recognise yourself, you will say to yourself, "What? I was like that! It is impossible!"

You may be five years old or twenty, fifty or sixty and yet transform yourself in this way by putting everything before this inner light. You will see that the elements which do not conform with your ideal are not generally elements which you have to

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throw wholly out of yourself (there are very few of this kind); they are simply things not in their place. If you organise everything — your feelings, your thoughts, your impulses, etc. — around the psychic centre which is the inner light, you will see that all inner disorder will change into a luminous order.

It is quite evident that if a similar procedure were adopted by a nation or by the earth, most of the things which make men unhappy would disappear, for the major part of the world's misery comes from the fact that things are not in their place. If life were organised in such a way that nothing was wasted and each thing was in its place, most of these miseries would not exist any longer. An old sage has said:

“There is no evil. There is only a lack of balance.

“There is nothing bad. Only things are not in their place.”

If everything were in its place, in nations, in the material world, in the actions and thoughts and feelings of individuals, the greater part of human suffering would disappear.

There are two things to be considered: consciousness and the instruments through which consciousness manifests. Let us take the instruments: there is the mental being which produces thoughts, the emotional being which produces feeling, the vital being which produces the power of action and the physical being that acts.

The man of genius may use anything at all and make something beautiful because he has genius; but give this genius a perfect instrument and he will make something wonderful. Take a great musician; well, even with a wretched piano and missing notes, he will produce something beautiful; but give him a good piano, well-tuned, and he will do something still more beautiful. The consciousness is the same in either case but for expression it needs a good instrument — a body with mental, vital, psychic and physical capacities.

If physically you are badly built, badly set up, it will be difficult for you, even with good training, to do gymnastics as well as one with a beautiful well-built body. It is the same

with the mind — one who has a well-organised mind, complex, complete, refined, will express himself much better than one who has a rather mediocre or badly organised mind. First of all, you must educate your consciousness, become conscious of yourself, organise your consciousness according to your ideal, but at the same time do not neglect the instruments which are in your body.

Take an example. You are in your body with your deepest ideal but you find yourself before a school class and you have to teach something to the students. Well, this light is up there, this light of consciousness, but when you have to explain to your class the science you have to teach, is it more convenient to have a fund of knowledge or will the inspiration be such that you will not need this fund of knowledge? What is your personal experience?... You find, don't you, that there are days when everything goes well — you are eloquent, your students listen to you and understand you easily. But there are other days when what you have to teach does not come, they do not listen to you — that is, you are bored and are boring. This means that in the former case your consciousness is awake and concentrated upon what you are doing, while in the second it is more or less asleep — you are left to your most external means. But in this case, if you have a fund of knowledge you can tell your students something; if you have a mind trained, prepared, a good instrument responding well when you want to make use of it, and if you have also gathered all necessary notes and notions all will go very well. But if you have nothing in your head and, besides, you are not in contact with your higher consciousness, then you have no other recourse than to take a book and read out your lesson — you will be obliged to make use of someone else's mind.

Take games. There too you find days when everything goes well; you have done nothing special previously, but even so you succeed in everything; but if you have practised well beforehand, the result is still more magnificent. If, for example, you find yourself facing someone who has trained himself slowly,

seriously, with patience and endurance, and who all of a sudden has a strong aspiration, well, this one will beat you in spite of your aspiration unless your aspiration is very much superior to that of your adversary. If you have opposite you someone who knows only the technique of the game but has no conscious aspiration, while you are in a fully conscious state, evidently it is you who will defeat him because the quality of consciousness is superior to the quality of technique. But one cannot replace the other. The one which is superior is more important, granted, but you must also have nerves which respond quickly, spontaneous movements; you must know all the secrets of the game to be able to play perfectly. You must have both the things. What is higher is the consciousness which enables you to make the right movement at the right moment but it is not exclusive. When you seek perfection, you must not neglect the one under the pretext that you have the other.

Should one play in order to win?

When you have a three or four-year old consciousness, this is an altogether necessary stimulant. But you may have a four-year old consciousness even at the age of fifty, may you not? No, when you have a ripe consciousness you must not play in order to win. You must play for the sake of playing and to learn how to play and to progress in games and in order that your play may become the expression of your inner consciousness at its highest — it is this which is important. For example, people who like to play well do not go and choose bad players to play with, simply for the pleasure of winning — they choose those who are the best players and play with them. I remember having learned to play tennis when I was eight, it was a passion; but I never wished to play with my little comrades because I learned nothing (usually I used to defeat them), I always went to the best players. At times they looked surprised, but in the end they played with me — I never won but I learned much.

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“To complete this movement of inner discovery, it is good not to neglect the mental development. For the mental instrument can be equally a great help or a great hindrance. In its natural state the human mind is always limited in its vision, narrow in its understanding, rigid in its conceptions, and a certain effort is needed to enlarge it, make it supple and deep.”

“The Science of Living”, On Education

Unfortunately, most people, the more they think, the more they believe themselves superior. The mind is satisfied with itself and does not aspire much for progress—it thinks it knows everything. And many people believe that their way of thinking is the best; they cannot understand that there are *always* several ways of thinking about the same subject. And the more their thought is strong and precise, the more are they convinced that there is only *one* way of thinking. That is why I have said here that certain exercises can enlarge your thought and give you the habit of seeing things from several points of view at the same time:

“It is very necessary that one should consider everything from as many points of view as possible. There is an exercise in this connection which gives great suppleness and elevation to thought; it is as follows. A clearly formulated thesis is set; against it is opposed the antithesis, formulated with the same precision. Then by careful reflection, the problem must be widened or transcended until a synthesis is found which unites the two contraries in a larger, higher and more comprehensive idea.”

Ibid.

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Give me a thesis.

X: *Thesis: Each one carries his cross in the world. Antithesis: There are men who are above all human affliction.*

And the synthesis?

Y: *There is one part of the being in everyone which is above all affliction.*

Z: *There are different types of people in the world.*

W: *The cross is necessary to leap beyond suffering.*

That is not a synthesis.

X: *In my thesis I spoke of ordinary men. In the antithesis I speak of extraordinary men.*

Yes, but you believe that extraordinary men do not have their cross! Even higher beings have their cross to bear.

It is a question of a difference of consciousness. In some it is the external states of consciousness which are most developed; others, on the contrary, have taken care to develop the higher states of consciousness. So, to say “each one bears his cross” is true of the external consciousness (of material happenings, happenings which touch the vital being, the emotional being and the mental being); for such people there will always be a considerable number of catastrophes, all the more because catastrophes seem to be proportionate to the capacity of the individual, they seem to be dealt out according to his capacity to bear things. It may just be that those who have greater capacities have an over-plus of suffering and misfortune.

But there are people who are above all misfortune and yet misfortunes exist for them. Why? Because the inner consciousness in them is stronger, more developed than the other consciousness (I do not speak here of “transformed” beings, for in them one can conceive of a state of things in which even the physical being is above suffering; we are speaking of men as they are at present). If your consciousness is seated in a place where these external things do not exist, then it may be said that you do not bear your cross because you are above it. Yet there are exceptions, there are human beings who are above afflictions, yet carry their cross. How can we reconcile these two apparently contradictory things?

Misfortunes are of different kinds.

No, human miseries and misfortunes are always of the same nature; there are sufferings that come from yourself, from circumstances or from the general state of things, that is, you are subject to these sufferings from your birth and none can escape them. They do not always have the same intensity but they are always there. Hence it seems there is a contradiction and yet this is not correct: because for some people it is as if the thing did not exist, even when it exists! As if it was not, even while it was! Neither the one nor the other is wholly true, neither the one nor the other is wholly false.

There is a state of human consciousness (it is not yet super-human, it is truly human) in which the two things may coexist. One may have sufferings and not feel them, be as if they did not exist. That is, a misfortune, a “cross” touches only the outer consciousness, the physical, the mental, the vital, but the psychic — in truth, the psychic is above all suffering. Let us take a very simple example: an illness. A physical disorder brings suffering, at times much suffering, but there are people who are in such a state of consciousness that their physical sufferings do not exist, they are not real for them. It is the same thing with separation;

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if you love someone and are separated from that person, you suffer — this is one of the most common of sufferings, it is the ties which are broken — well, in a certain state of consciousness the real link between two beings cannot be broken, for it does not belong to the domain where things break. Therefore one is above what may happen.

But before one reaches a higher state of consciousness, there is a stage where one can develop in oneself the faculty of reason — a clear, precise, logical reason, sufficiently objective in its vision of things. And when one has developed this reason well, all impulses, feelings, desires, all disturbances can be put in the presence of this reason and that makes you reasonable. Most people, when something troubles them, become very unreasonable. When, for example, they are ill, they pass their time saying, “Oh, how ill I am, how frightful it is; is it going to last like that all the time?” And naturally it gets worse and worse. Or when some misfortune befalls them, they cry out: “It is only to me that these things happen and I was thinking that everything was fine before”, and they burst into a fit of tears, a fit of nerves. Well, not to speak of superman, in man himself there is a higher capacity called reason, which is able to look at things calmly, coolly, reasonably. And this reason tells you, “Don’t worry, that will improve nothing, you must not grumble, you must accept the thing since it has come.” Then you immediately become calm. It is a very good mental training, it develops judgment, vision, objectivity and at the same time it has a very healthy action upon your character. It helps you to avoid the ridiculousness of giving way to your nerves and lets you behave like a reasonable person.

There is one thing very difficult for the mind to do but very important, according to me: you must never allow your mind to judge things and men. To say, “This is good, that is bad, this is right, that is wrong, this one has this defect, that one has that bad thing, etc.” — this is depreciatory judgment.

For people who exercise their intelligence, the more intelligent they are, the more do they grow aware that they know

nothing at all and that with the mind one can know nothing. One may think in a particular way, judge and see in a particular way, but one is never sure of anything — and never will be sure of anything. One can always say, “Perhaps it is like that” or “Perhaps it is like this” and so on, indefinitely, because the mind is not an instrument of knowledge.

Above the thoughts, there are pure ideas; thoughts serve to express pure ideas. And Knowledge is well above the domain of pure ideas, as these are well above thought. One must hence know how to climb from thought to pure idea, and pure idea is itself nothing but a translation of Knowledge. And Knowledge can be obtained only by a total identification. So, when you put yourself in your small human mentality, the mentality of the physical consciousness which is at work all the time, which looks at everything, judges everything from the height of its derisive superiority, which says, “That is bad, it should not be like that”, you are sure to be always mistaken, without exception. The best is to keep silent and look well at things, and little by little you make notes within yourself and keep the record without pronouncing any judgment. When you are able to keep all that within you, quietly, without agitation and present it very calmly before the highest part of your consciousness, with an attempt to maintain an attentive silence, and wait, then perhaps, slowly, as if coming from a far distance and from a great height, something like a light will manifest and you will know a little more of truth.

But as long as you excite your thoughts and cut them up into little bits, you will never know anything. I shall repeat this to you a hundred times if necessary, but I can assure you that so long as you are not convinced of this you will never come out of your ignorance.

Is there an exact number of pure ideas?

To know that, you must go and see the Supreme and ask Him! I am not interested in statistics!

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Here is a little story. One of my friends had made a trip to India and was requested to give an account of his travels. An old, very credulous lady was there and she asked him, “In India, do they count the souls?” He answered, “Yes.” “How many are there?” asked the old lady. He answered, “One only.”

25 January 1951

“The vital being in us is the seat of impulses and desires, of enthusiasm and violence, of dynamic energy and desperate depression, of passions and revolt. It can set in motion everything, build up and realise, it can also destroy and mar everything. It seems to be, in the human being, the most difficult part to train. It is a long labour requiring great patience, and it demands a perfect sincerity, for without sincerity one will deceive oneself from the very first step, and all endeavour for progress will go in vain.”

“*The Science of Living*”, *On Education*

It is very difficult to find the borderland between a true need and a desire (the yogic ideal, of course, is never to have any need, and therefore not to want anything), but this essay is written for all men of goodwill who try to know themselves and control themselves. And there we really face a problem which compels an extraordinary sincerity, for the very first way in which the vital meets life is through desire — and yet, there are necessities. But how to know if things are really necessary, not desired?... For that you must observe yourself very, very attentively, and if there is anything in you which produces something like a small intense vibration, then you may be sure that there lies a desire. For example, you say, “This food is necessary for me” — you believe, you imagine, you think that you need such and such a thing and you find the necessary means to obtain the thing. To know if it is a need or a desire, you must look at yourself very closely and ask yourself, “What will happen if I cannot get the thing?” Then if the immediate answer is, “Oh, it will be very bad”, you may be sure that it is a matter of desire. It is the same for everything. For every problem you draw back, look at yourself and ask, “Let us

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see, am I going to have the thing?" If at that moment something in you jumps up with joy, you may be certain there is a desire. On the other hand, if something tells you, "Oh, I am not going to get it", and you feel very depressed, then again it is a desire.

If the vital is not to deceive you, you must not only be very mindful but your sincerity must also be almost miraculous — it is not to discourage you that I have used the word "miraculous"; on the contrary, it is in order to give you a greater aspiration for sincerity.

"With the collaboration of the vital no realisation seems impossible, no transformation impracticable."

"The Science of Living", On Education

It is this which is so wonderful. I believe the vital is very conscious of its power and that is why it is important: it has that dynamic energy which makes no difficulty too difficult for it; but it must be on the right side. If it collaborates, everything is wonderful, but it is not easy to get from it this constant collaboration. It is a very good worker, it works very, very well, but in working it seeks always its own satisfaction, it wants to get something from the work, all the pleasure that can be drawn from it, all the advantage that can be had, and when this satisfaction is not given for one reason or another (there may be many reasons), it is not happy, not at all happy: "That's not fair, I work, and I am given nothing in return"; then it sulks, it does not move, it keeps mum, and at times it says, "I do not exist." Then all energy runs out from the body, you get tired, exhausted, you can no longer do anything. And all of a sudden this becomes worse, for I must tell you that the mind is very friendly with the vital — not the reasoning mind but the physical mind is very, very friendly with the vital; so, as soon as the vital begins to say, "I have nothing to do with that, I have been badly treated, I won't have anything to do with it", the mind naturally comes in to encourage it, to explain, give good reasons, and it is the same

old story: "Life is not worth living, people are truly disgusting and all circumstances are against me, it is better to leave it all", and so on. This happens very often, but at times there is a little glimmer of reason somewhere which tells you, "Ah, enough of this comedy!"

But if this becomes very strong and you do not react in time, then you fall into despair: "Really this life is not made for people like me; I would be happier elsewhere, in heaven where everybody is very nice and one can do whatever one wants", etc., whence paradisiac conceptions — indeed I think it is these two accomplices, the mind and the vital, who have invented paradise! For if life, existence, does not conform to your desires, you begin to lament: "Oh, I have had enough of it, this world is miserable and deceitful, I want to die." Then there is a moment when this situation becomes serious; discouragement changes into revolt and depression into dissatisfaction: I speak of people who are rather ill-natured — there are people who are ill-natured (it is not their fault!) and there are people who are good-natured (it is not their fault either!) but things are like that — well, those who are ill-natured get angry, revolt, want to break and pull down everything: "You will see, they do not do what I want, they will be punished!" Then this becomes a little more serious, because the mind is always there to serve as the accomplice and it begins to have wonderful ideas of revenge — from discouragement you do one kind of stupid thing, from wickedness you do another. The stupidities of discouragement concern you personally, whilst the stupidities of wickedness concern others; and sometimes these latter stupidities are very serious. If you have a little goodwill, it is better at the time when such fits seize you to make it a rule not to stir, telling yourself, "I am not going to move, I shall wait for the storm to pass", for in a few moments one can destroy or ruin months of regular effort.

But here I give you a consolation:

"These crises are of less duration and are less dangerous"

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in the case of those who have established a contact with their psychic being sufficient to keep alive in them the flame of aspiration and the consciousness of the ideal to be realised. They can, with the help of this consciousness, deal with their vital as one deals with a child in revolt, with patience and perseverance showing it the truth and light, endeavouring to convince it and awaken in it the goodwill which for a moment was veiled.”

“The Science of Living”, On Education

And the last consolation. For those who are truly sincere, truly good-willed, all these fits can be changed into a means for progress. Each time that you have an attack of this kind, a sort of storm, you can change the crisis into a new progress, into one more step towards the goal. If precisely you have the necessary sincerity to look straight in the face, within you, at the cause of the fit — the wrong you have done, the wrong you have thought, the wrong you have felt — if you see the weakness, the violence or the vanity (for I forgot to tell you that the vital is much more full of vanity than the mind), if you look at all that full in the face and if you recognise honestly and sincerely that what has happened is due to your fault, then you are able to put a red-hot iron as it were on the affected spot. You can purify the weakness and turn it into a new consciousness. And you find after the storm that you have grown a little more, you have truly made a progress.

“Progress may be slow, falls may be frequent, but if a courageous will is maintained one is sure to triumph some day and see all difficulties melt and vanish before the radiant consciousness of truth.”

Ibid.

If I lay stress here upon defects and difficulties, it is not to

discourage you from making an effort but to tell you that you must do things with the necessary courage and precisely not be disheartened because you are not successful at once; but if the aspiration is there in you, if the will is there in you, it is absolutely certain that sooner or later you will succeed. And I am saying this for people who live in very ordinary circumstances, less favourable perhaps than yours, but who can, even so, learn to know themselves and conquer themselves, master themselves, control themselves. Therefore, if the conditions are favourable you have a much greater chance of succeeding. One thing is always necessary, not to give up the game—for it is a great game and the result is worth the trouble of playing it through.

“Lastly, we must, by means of a rational and clear-seeing physical education, make our body strong and supple so that it may become in the material world a fit instrument for the truth-force which wills to manifest through us.”

Ibid.

It is much easier to organise the body than the vital, for instance. But the mind and the vital, with the character and temperament they have, what do they not do with this poor slave of a body! After having ill-treated it, perhaps ruined it (it protests a little, falls ill a little), this is what the two accomplices say: “What a beast is this body, it cannot follow us in our movement!” Unhappily, the body obeys its masters, the mind and the vital, blindly, without any discrimination. The mind comes along with its theories: “You must not eat that, it will harm you; you must not do that, it is bad”, and if the mind is not wise and clear-sighted, the poor body suffers the consequences of the orders it receives. I do not speak of the orders it receives from the vital. The mind with its rigid principles and the vital with its excesses and outbursts and passions are quick to destroy the body’s equilibrium and to create a condition of fatigue, exhaustion and illness.

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“It must be freed from this tyranny; that can be done only through a constant union with the psychic centre of the being.”

“The Science of Living”, On Education

That is evidently the cure of all ills.

“The body has a remarkable capacity of adaptation and endurance. It is fit to do so many more things than one can usually imagine. If instead of the ignorant and despotic masters that govern it, it is ruled by the central truth of the being, one will be surprised at what it is capable of doing.”

Ibid.

During the last war, it was proved that the body was capable of enduring such suffering as is normally impossible to endure. You have surely read or heard these stories of war in which the body was made to suffer and endure terrible things, and it withstood all that, it proved that it had almost inexhaustible capacities of endurance. Some people happened to be under conditions that should have killed them; if they survived, it was because they had in them a very strong will to survive and the body obeyed that will.

“In this sound and balanced life a new harmony will manifest in the body, reflecting the harmony of the higher regions, which will give it the perfect proportions and the ideal beauty of form.”

Ibid.

That is the last stage. If you compare the human body as it now is with a higher ideal of beauty, obviously very few would pass the examination. In almost everyone there is a sort of unbalance in the proportions; we are so accustomed to it that

we do not notice it, but if we look from the standpoint of the higher beauty, it becomes visible; very few bodies would bear comparison with perfect beauty. There are a thousand reasons for this unbalance but only one remedy, to instil into the being this instinct, this sense of true beauty, a supreme beauty which will gradually act on the cells and make the body capable of expressing beauty. This is still a thing which is not known: the body is infinitely more plastic than you believe. You must have surely noticed (perhaps very vaguely) that those who live in an inner peace, in an inner beauty, a light, and perfect goodwill, have an expression which is not quite the same as of people who live in bad thoughts, in the lower part of their nature. When the human being is at his best, above his base animality, he reflects something which is not there when he lives in a state of beastiality.

If one tried to change one's form out of egoism or that famous thing, vanity, naturally, one would not succeed, for it is something deeper which has the power to act; but if one could refrain from having at all times bad will, wicked thoughts, one would see a kind of harmony beginning to express itself gradually in the forms and features, for it is a fact that the body expresses the inner states.

But you forget one thing. If you have in the whole day five or six hours of higher consciousness, you feel that it is already much, and the rest of the time you live more or less like a little animal, you let yourself go, you are driven by circumstances. And you forget completely to approach the Thing which is above, which can prevent you from descending into the lower regions of your nature.

You could get much more from your body if you only took the trouble.

You must not despise it nor scold it too much, for it is not the culprit; if you follow a suitable method to train and educate your body, you will have an infinitely greater output than you have now. It is quite recently that men have begun to speak of

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physical culture as an important thing; if you go back a hundred years, it was the privilege of those who had nothing else to do. A hundred years ago it was a luxury. When someone said, "I do not want to send my child to school, he must earn his living", there were many who answered, "No, pardon me, you make a serious mistake; if you do not prepare your child for his adult life, he will be incapable of doing what he should do." People said this about the mind but it was not said about the body. So many children lived in more or less good conditions, with a body which was indeed a difficulty, but it used to be said, "That will get corrected, that will be all right...." With training and patience you can acquire a body with which you can get along in life. Nowadays, people recognise the value of a healthy and balanced life. And I have said that this harmony will be progressive:

"This harmony will be progressive, for the truth of the being is never static, it is a continual unfolding of a growing, a more and more global and comprehensive perfection. As soon as the body learns to follow the movement of progressive harmony, it will be possible for it, through a continuous process of transformation, to escape the necessity of disintegration and destruction. Thus the irrevocable law of death will have no reason for existing any more."

"... These four attributes of the Truth will spontaneously express themselves in our being. The psychic will be the vehicle of true and pure love, the mind that of infallible knowledge, the vital will manifest an invincible power and strength and the body will be the expression of a perfect beauty and a perfect harmony."

"The Science of Living", On Education

This is a thing very little known among mystics and religious people: in each part of the being the Divine manifests Himself

differently. In the higher parts He manifests as Power, Love, etc., but in the physical He manifests as Harmony and Beauty.

Hence, the problem of the expression of physical beauty is a spiritual problem.

27 January 1951

“More than a third of our existence is passed in sleep....”

“On Dreams”, Words of Long Ago

Physical sleep therefore well deserves our attention. I said “physical sleep”, for we are inclined to believe that the whole of our being goes to sleep when the body is asleep.

“It is often said that in sleep men’s true nature is revealed.”

Ibid.

Their true nature does not mean their deeper nature but their spontaneous nature which is not under control, for the control of the will ceases during sleep. And all that one does not do in the waking state, one does during sleep because the control of the will is removed.

“All the desires that have been repressed without being dissolved ... try to seek satisfaction while the will is asleep.

“And as desires are veritable dynamic centres of formation, they tend to organise in and around us an assemblage of circumstances most favourable to their satisfaction.”

Ibid.

In another lesson we spoke of the power of mental formation: the mind shapes entities which have a more or less independent life and try to manifest themselves. Here I do not speak of thought but of desire. Desire belongs to the vital domain but at the core of this desire there is always a thought, and

the desire becomes all the more active and dynamic when it holds in itself this power of mental formation and the power of vital realisation. The vital is the centre of dynamism of the being, of active energy, and the two combined make something very strong which has a considerable tendency towards realising itself. Besides, everything in the universe tends towards manifestation, and things which are prevented from manifesting lose, by that very fact, their force and capacity. Most of the methods aiming at self-control have indeed made use of repression, of the suppression of movements with the idea that if one continues this suppression long enough, one succeeds in killing the element that is not wanted. This would be quite true if it were a question only of the physical world, but behind the physical world there is the subconscious world and behind the subconscious world there lies the immensity of the Inconscient. And what you do not know is this that unless you destroy within you the desire itself, that is, the seed of the formation, this formation which you are preventing from manifesting is so to say repressed in the subconscious — driven down and repressed right at the bottom — and if you go and search in the subconscious you will find that it is waiting there to do its work. That is why so many people who have for years and years been able to control an unwanted movement are suddenly taken by surprise when this movement rushes up from below with all the greater force the longer it has been repressed. Hence dreams are of great use because this movement of repression exists no longer, the conscious will not being there (for it falls asleep or goes elsewhere) and the desire repressed below leaps up and manifests itself in the form of dreams, so much so that you come to know a good many things about your own nature; that is why it is said that man can discover in sleep and dreams his true nature; it is not his true nature, his deeper nature, which is his psychic nature, but the spontaneous, uncontrolled nature.

"Thus is destroyed in a few hours of the night the fruit

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of many efforts made by our conscious thought during the day....

“We should therefore learn to recognise our dreams and, above all, to distinguish between them, for they vary greatly in their nature and quality. Often in the same night we may have several dreams which belong to different categories, depending on the depth of our sleep.”

“On Dreams”, Words of Long Ago

I do not know if anyone here has observed the phenomenon, but according to the hours of the night or according to how long you have slept, your sleep changes its quality. If you take the trouble of observing (there are very few people however who do take the trouble), it may happen that roused suddenly at an abnormal hour, you have noticed that you were not in the same state of sleep twice. There are also hours when you have different types of dreams; if you are careful you will see this very clearly. There are hours when it is very difficult for you to wake up, for you are in deep sleep, you are altogether unconscious of external things. At other times, on the contrary, just a little noise, however slight, is sufficient to startle you out of your sleep.

During the night I am not afraid of certain things, but during the day I am afraid of them. Why?

That means your vital being is older than your physical being.

“There is no doubt that from many points of view our subconscious has greater knowledge than our habitual consciousness.”

Ibid.

Here I am going to correct one word: it is not the subconscious which has more knowledge than our normal consciousness but the superconscious, that which escapes our consciousness, not

because it is lower but because it is higher. When at night we put a problem to ourselves, the problem goes to the higher regions of our being and in the morning we get the answer, the solution, because there, in the depths of our consciousness, we know things which we do not know in our external consciousness.

During sleep one has often the impression of entering into a region of light, of higher knowledge, but on waking up one brings back only the impression, the memory.

Why?

That is because in the ladder of being which climbs from the most external to the highest consciousness, there are gaps, breaks of continuity, and when the consciousness rises, descends and goes up again, it passes through some kind of dark holes where there is nothing. Then it enters into a sleep, a sort of unconsciousness, and wakes up as best it can on the other side and hardly remembers what it has brought back from above. This is what happens very frequently and particularly in the state called *samādhi*.¹ People who enter into *samādhi* find out that between their active external consciousness and their consciousness in meditation, there lies a blank. Up there, they are almost necessarily conscious—conscious of the state in which they find themselves—but when coming down again towards their body, on the way they enter into a kind of hole where they lose everything—they are unable to bring back the experience with them. Quite a discipline is needed to create in oneself the many steps which enable the consciousness not to forget what it has experienced up there. It is not an impossible discipline but it is extremely long and requires an unshakable patience, for it is as if you wanted to build up in you a being, a body; and for that you require first of all the necessary knowledge, but also such a prolonged persistence and perseverance as would discourage

¹ Ecstasy or yogic trance.

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many. But it is altogether indispensable if you want to take part in the knowledge of your higher being.

Is it useful to note down one's dreams?

Yes, for more than a year I applied myself to this kind of self-discipline. I noted down everything — a few words, just a little thing, an impression — and I tried to pass from one memory to another. At first it was not very fruitful, but at the end of about fourteen months I could follow, beginning from the end, all the movements, all the dreams right up to the beginning of the night. That puts you in such a conscious, continuously conscious state that finally I was not sleeping at all. My body lay stretched, deeply asleep, but there was no rest in the consciousness. The result was absolutely wonderful; you become conscious of the different phases of sleep, conscious absolutely of everything that happens there, to the least detail, then nothing can any longer escape your control. But if during the day you have a lot of work and you truly need sleep, I advise you not to try!

In any case, there is one thing altogether indispensable, not to make the least movement when you wake up; you must learn to wake up in a state of complete immobility, otherwise everything disappears.

Has the mind need of rest apart from the physical body and the physical brain?

Yes, an absolute need. And it is only in silence that the mind can receive the true light from above. I do not think that the mental being is liable to fatigue; if it feels tired, that is rather a reaction of the brain. It is only in silence that it can rise above itself. But from the point of view of sleep and dreams of which we were speaking, there is a very remarkable phenomenon. I have tried it out. If you are able to establish not only silence in your head but also repose in your vital, the stoppage of all the activities of your

being, and if coming out of the domain of forms you enter into what is called Sachchidananda, the supreme consciousness, then with three minutes of that state you can have more rest than in eight hours of sleep. It is not very easy, no.... It is the consciousness absolutely conscious but completely still, in the full original Light. If you get that, if you are able to immobilise everything in you, then your whole being participates in this supreme consciousness and I have well observed that as regards rest (and I mean by rest bodily rest, the repose of the muscles) three minutes of that state were equivalent to eight hours of ordinary sleep.

Does the vital body also need rest?

Yes. The vital body surrounds the physical body with a kind of envelope which has almost the same density as the vibrations of heat observable when the day is very hot. And it is this which is the intermediary between the subtle body and the most material vital body. It is this which protects the body from all contagion, fatigue, exhaustion and even from accidents. Therefore if this envelope is wholly intact, it protects you from everything, but a little too strong an emotion, a little fatigue, some dissatisfaction or any shock whatsoever is sufficient to scratch it as it were and the slightest scratch allows any kind of intrusion. Medical science also now recognises that if you are in perfect vital equilibrium, you do not catch illness or in any case you have a kind of immunity from contagion. If you have this equilibrium, this inner harmony which keeps the envelope intact, it protects you from everything. There are people who lead quite an ordinary life, who know how to sleep as one should, eat as one should, and their nervous envelope is so intact that they pass through all dangers as though unconcerned. It is a capacity one can cultivate in oneself. If one becomes aware of the weak spot in one's envelope, a few minutes' concentration, a call to the force, an inner peace is sufficient for it to be all right, get cured, and for the untoward thing to vanish.

3 February 1951

“What do you want the Yoga for? To get power? To attain to peace and calm? To serve humanity?

“None of these motives is sufficient to show that you are meant for the Path.”

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The main trouble is that you think with words, but these words are empty of meaning; most of the time they are mere words — you talk of the Divine, you talk of the Supreme, you talk of Yoga, you say many things, but does all that correspond in your head to something concrete, to a thought, a feeling, a clear idea, an experience? Or are they simply words?

It is said that Yoga is the “final goal of life”, but what do you expect from this final goal? Some say it means to know oneself; that is the personal and individual aspect. If it is pushed a little farther it means to be conscious of the truth of one’s being: why are you born and what should you do? And if it is pushed still farther, you may become conscious of your relations with other human beings; and a little farther yet, you may ask what is the role, the aim of humanity in the world? And yet again, what is the condition of the earth from the psychological standpoint? What is the universe, what is its goal, its role? In this way, you move from stage to stage and finally you see the problem in its totality. You must see the thing, the experience behind the words. Here we speak of Yoga but elsewhere one would speak differently; some would say, “I am seeking my *raison d'être*”, and so on. Those who have a religious bent will say, “I want to find the divine Presence.” There are fifty ways of saying the thing but it is the *thing* which is important; you must feel it in your head, in your heart, everywhere. It must be concrete, living, otherwise you cannot advance. You must come out of words and

get into action — get into the experience, get into life. (*Mother turns to a child*) Do you intend to do Yoga?

Yes, Mother.

Why do you want to do Yoga?

To feel the Presence of the Divine.

And you?

To realise the Divine, and for that one must perfect oneself.

And you, why does Yoga interest you?

Because I am able to know myself.

And you?

To do what one feels as the inner truth.

And you, are you doing Yoga?

At times.

You are honest, but why at times?...

(*Addressing another child*) Do you have any idea as to what Yoga is?

I think it is a way by which...

What is there at the end of the way?

The constant Presence of the Divine.

(*Turning to another child*) In Yoga what is it that interests you most?

I do not understand what Yoga is. Is it in concentrating on you?

It is a good symbol.

Anyway, happily nobody has said that he desired Yoga to obtain power. There are countries and people who know vaguely that there is something called yoga, and they begin it with the idea that they will become superior to others, will get a greater power than others and consequently will be able to dominate others — this is the worst reason, the most selfish, that which brings the most harmful consequences. Others who are greatly troubled, who have a very difficult life, who have worries, sorrows, many cares, say, "Oh, I shall find something that will give me peace, tranquillity, and I shall be able to get a little rest." And they rush into Yoga thinking they are going to be quite happy and satisfied. Unfortunately, it is not altogether like that. When you begin the Yoga for reasons of this kind, you are sure to meet great difficulties on the way. And then there is this great virtue in men's eyes: "philanthropy", "love of humanity"; so many people say, "I am going to do Yoga to be able to serve humanity, make the unhappy happy, organise the world in the happiest way for everybody." I say this is not sufficient — I do not say that this is bad in itself, although I have heard an old occultist say wittily: "It won't be so very soon that there will be no more misery in the world, because there are too many people who are happy to live on this misery." It was a witticism but it is not altogether wrong. If there were no misery to soothe, the philanthropist would no longer have any reason for his existence — he is so satisfied with himself, he has so strong an impression that he is not selfish! I knew such people who would be very

unhappy if there were no more misery upon earth! What would they do if there were no longer any misery to relieve, what would be their activity and what their glorification? How would they be able to show people "I am not selfish!", and that they are generous, full of kindness?

"Do you want the Yoga for the sake of the Divine?... If so, then only can it be said that you have a call for the Path."

"This is the first thing necessary — aspiration for the Divine."

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The first movement of aspiration is this: you have a kind of vague sensation that behind the universe there is something which is worth knowing, which is probably (for you do not yet know it) the only thing worth living for, which can connect you with the Truth; something on which the universe depends but which does not depend upon the universe, something which still escapes your comprehension but which seems to you to be behind all things.... I have said here much more than the majority of people feel about the thing, but this is the beginning of the first aspiration — to know that, not to live in this perpetual falsehood where things are so perverted and artificial, this would be something pleasant; to find something that is worth living for.

"The next thing you have to do is to tend this aspiration, to keep it always alert and awake and living."

Ibid.

Instead of telling yourself once in a while, "Oh, yes! I am thinking of finding the Divine", just when there is something unpleasant, when you are a little disgusted because you feel tired — indeed, there are very many flimsy reasons — all of a sudden you remember that there is such a thing as yoga, something like

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the Divine to know who can get you out of this flatness of life.

“And for that what is required is concentration — concentration upon the Divine with a view to an integral and absolute consecration to its Will and Purpose.”

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This is the second step. That is to say, you begin wanting to find and know the Divine and live it. You must feel at the same time that the thing is so precious, so important that your entire life is not sufficient for acquiring it. Then, the first movement is a self-giving; you tell yourself, “I do not want any longer to belong to myself, for the sake of my little personal satisfaction, I wish to belong to this marvellous thing which one must find, must know, must live and for which I aspire.”

“Concentrate in the heart. Enter into it; go within and deep and far, as far as you can. Gather all the strings of your consciousness that are spread abroad, roll them up and take a plunge and sink down.”

Ibid.

Naturally, when I speak of the heart, I do not mean the physical organ, the viscera, but the psychological or psychic centre of the being.

Mother then reads a question asked during her talk in 1929:

“What is one to do to prepare oneself for the Yoga?”

Ibid.

I replied to the person who put this question to me: “Become conscious first of all.” So the person tried to become conscious and a few months later came and told me, “Oh, what a nasty present you gave me! Formerly, in my relations with people,

they all used to seem so nice; I had goodwill, they were so nice towards me, and now, since becoming conscious, I see all kinds of things in myself that are not quite pretty, and at the same time I see in others things that are not at all beautiful!" I answered her, "Quite possible! If you do not want trouble, it is better not to come out of your ignorance."

The first step therefore is to find out whether one wants to see and know the truth or wants to remain comfortably in one's ignorance.

"What is the attitude today of the average man?... Does he not rise in anger and revolt directly he meets something that partakes of the genuinely divine? Does he not feel that the Divine means the destruction of his cherished possessions?"

Ibid.

This means very clearly that so long as you remain in your small individual egoism, you will never be ready to make the gesture, to take the plunge, which will enable you to identify yourself with the Divine.

In this connection I could tell you something: long ago there were people who came here because they thought that joining the Ashram was sufficient to make one immortal. And they aspired much for immortality. Naturally, they were old people who did not see a very long road before them and desired to extend it indefinitely — for that is what men understand by "immortality", an indefinite prolongation of what they are. So, to the first person who made this remark, I replied, "I do not know if everyone can become immortal — probably not — but even among those who have the capacity of becoming immortal, how many are ready to pay the price for it?" Because the number of things which have to be left behind is so considerable that perhaps half-way they would say, "Ah, no, the price is too much." I remember a painter with whom I had a talk about the possibility of immortality and

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who asked me what a new world would be like. I told him things would be, for instance, luminous in themselves and there would no longer be this kind of reflected light which comes here upon earth from the sun. And as I was speaking I saw his face becoming longer, more and more grave; finally he said, "But then how can one do painting without the shadow which brings out the light of things?..." I told him, "You have given exactly the key to the problem."

There were many people, a very large number, who asked me what the new life would be like and to whom I said, "There will be an interchange of forces, a circulating energy; the structure of the body will be quite different, all these ungainly organs will disappear and be replaced by psychological functions; and the necessity of eating, always eating, will disappear." Once again I saw faces getting longer and longer! People said, "Oh! And all the good things we eat, all that will go?"

These are small instances, there are many others, things more important. The most important, the most difficult thing is to renounce one's ego, for to somebody who is not ready, to renounce his ego is like dying and dying much more than a physical death, for to him the death of the ego is like a dissolution of the being — this is not correct but it begins by giving this sort of impression. To be immortal one must renounce all limitations and the ego is the greatest of limitations; hence if "I" am not immortal, what is the good of that?

In the same talk someone had asked Mother how all those then present had happened to meet, and Mother had answered:

"We have all met in previous lives. Otherwise we would not have come together in this life."

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It can be said that it is chance or that it is because we have always been together, and both are equally true. As this lady

liked occultism I told her also, "We have met in a previous life" and that is true, isn't it? But it is a way of seeing things. Also, "We all belong to the same family", this too is true but not in the way in which human beings look at it.

I also said, "We have worked together through the ages for the victory of the Divine and His manifestation upon earth." This is quite evident, for the universe has been created for that and therefore every part of the universe, whatever it be, works for it, knowingly or unknowingly, but works for it all the same.

5 February 1951

Mother reads the beginning of the talk of 14 April. Having spoken of the dangers of Yoga ("If you cannot get rid of ambition, do not touch the thing. It is fire that burns."), Mother speaks of the two methods of Yoga:

"There are two paths of Yoga, one of tapasyā (discipline) and the other of surrender."

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What is surrender?

It means that one gives oneself entirely to the Divine.

Yes, and then what happens? If you give yourself entirely to the Divine, it is He who does the Yoga, it is no longer you; hence this is not very difficult; while if you do tapasya, it is you yourself who do the yoga and you carry its whole responsibility—it is there the danger lies. But there are people who prefer to have the whole responsibility, with its dangers, because they have a very independent spirit. They are not perhaps in a great hurry—if they need several lives to succeed, it does not matter to them. But there are others who want to go quicker and be more sure of reaching the goal; well, these give over the whole responsibility to the Divine.

"The first effect of Yoga, however, is to take away the mental control, and the hungers that lie dormant are suddenly set free; they rush up and invade the being.... What you should do is to keep the thing [the sex impulse] away from you, to disassociate from it, take as little notice of

it as possible and, even if you happen to think of it, to remain indifferent and unconcerned."

Ibid.

This is much more difficult than to sit upon a difficulty! It is much more difficult to stand back from the difficulty, to look at it as something which does not concern you, which does not interest you, does not belong to you, which belongs to the world and not to you—but it is only by doing this that you can succeed. This demands a kind of liberation of spirit and a confidence in your inner being: you must believe that if you take the right attitude, it is the best that will happen to you; but if you are afraid when something unpleasant happens to you, then you can do nothing. You must have this confidence within you, whatever the difficulty, whatever the obstacle. Most of the time, when something unpleasant happens, you say, "Is it going to increase? What other accident is yet going to happen!" and so on. You must tell yourself, "These things are not mine; they belong to the subconscious world; naturally I have nothing to do with them and if they come again to seize me, I am going to give a fight." Naturally you will answer that this is easy to say but difficult to do. But if truly you take this attitude of confidence, there is no difficulty that you will not be able to conquer. Anxiety makes the difficulty greater.

Evidently there is one difficulty: in your conscious being something does not want the difficulty, wishes sincerely to overcome it, but there are numberless movements in other parts of your consciousness of which you are not conscious. You say, "I want to be cured of that"; unfortunately it is not sufficient to say "I want", there are other parts of the consciousness which hide themselves so that you may not be busy with them, and when your attention is turned away these parts try to assert themselves. That is why I say and shall always repeat, Be perfectly sincere; do not try to deceive yourself, do not say, "I have done all that I could." If you do not succeed, it means that you do not do

all that you can. For, if you truly do “all” that you can, you will surely succeed. If you have any defect which you want to get rid of and which still persists, and you say, “I have done all that I could”, you may be sure that you have not done all that you should have. If you had, you would have triumphed, for the difficulties that come to you are exactly in proportion to your strength — nothing can happen to you which does not belong to your consciousness, and all that belongs to your consciousness you are able to master. Even the things and suggestions that come from outside can touch you only in proportion to the consent of your consciousness, and you are made to be the master of your consciousness. If you say, “I have done all that I could and in spite of everything the thing continues, so I give up”, you may be already sure that you have not done what you could. When an error persists “in spite of everything” it means that something hidden in your being springs up suddenly like a Jack-in-the-box and takes the helm of your life. Hence, there is only one thing to do, it is to go hunting for all the little dark corners which lie hidden in you and, if you put just a tiny spark of goodwill on this darkness, it will yield, will vanish, and what appeared to you impossible will become not only possible, practicable, but *it will have been done*. You can in this way in one minute get rid of a difficulty which would have harassed you for years. I absolutely assure you of it. That depends only on one thing: that you truly, sincerely, want to get rid of it. And it is the same for everything, from physical illnesses up to the highest mental difficulties. One part of the consciousness says, “I don’t want it”, but behind there hides a heap of things which say nothing, do not show themselves, and which just want that things continue as they are — generally out of ignorance; they do not believe that it is necessary to be cured, they believe that everything is for the best in the best of worlds. As the lady with whom I had those conversations used to say, “The trouble begins as soon as you want to change.” A great French writer has repeated this and has made out of it his pet theory: “Misery begins when you want to

perfect yourself; if you do not wish to perfect yourself, you won't have any misery!" I may tell you that this is absolutely wrong, but there are, all the same, things in you that want absolutely to be left alone, not to be disturbed in any way: "Oh! What a nuisance you are, leave us alone!"

"The whole world is full of the poison [doubt, hesitation, depression]. You take it in with every breath. If you exchange a few words with an undesirable man or even if such a man merely passes by you, you may catch the contagion from him.... So long as you belong to humanity and so long as you lead the ordinary life, it does not matter much if you mix with the people of the world; but if you want the divine life, you will have to be exceedingly careful about your company and your environment."

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To try to solve this problem ascetics used to go away into forests and sit under a tree; there, of course, they had not to fear any contagion from other human beings. But it is very difficult to go to the very end of this resolution, for it quickly gets known that a saint is sitting under a tree in meditation, and immediately everybody rushes there! Not only does he not escape from the difficulty, but he increases it, for there is not a thing more dangerous than to teach others. You know just a little and you begin to teach others, and you are immediately compelled to say more than you know, because people put questions to you which you cannot answer, unless you are a hero of silence. In the world, those who want to pass themselves off as spiritual teachers—when people come and ask them something they do not know, they invent it. Therefore, if in your inner discipline you begin to pretend, you may be sure of falling into the worst hole—of all things pretence is the most ruinous. In the world you may perhaps pass for what you are not, for people allow themselves

to be easily deceived, and that will not lead you to a catastrophe (although if you exaggerate, it always leads to a catastrophe), but in the spiritual world, you don't have to deal with human beings, you have to deal with the Divine; it is impossible for you to pretend that you are this or that, for the Divine knows better than you, doesn't He? He knows what you are and it is not what you will say which will influence Him.

In all spiritual disciplines the first thing that you are taught is not to narrate your experiences to others. If you need to clarify your mind, tell your experiences to your spiritual teacher and to no one else, and even before your spiritual teacher you must be very careful. When you present or explain to him what has happened in you, if you observe yourself closely, you will see that there are things in you of which you are not wholly aware; in your experiences often there are gaps, interruptions in the continuity (it is extremely difficult to get at the continuity of consciousness and to follow the movement to the end); then, if you narrate your experience without wanting to add anything whatsoever, without failing in sincerity, even so you put in what is not there. When people come and tell me something, an inner event, they find me at times inattentive, not attaching much importance to what I am being told — it is not that, it is that I listen to what is within, I see what is perfectly exact and the little facts that have been added. And it is because of this that generally I do not encourage these things. I know that people may feel relieved, comforted, if they can tell me what has happened, but then one must come with a wonderfully scientific spirit. A scientist would never tell you, "It is this", "It is that", unless he has made all the possible experiments to have the proof of what he says. And for spiritual things one must follow the same method. Instead of saying, "I did that, things happened like that", one must say, "I had the impression that... things seemed to be like this" and "It looked as if there was a connection between this and that..." and not only as a conversational phrase, but as something which expresses truly a mental state. If you seek for a clarification, you

yourself must not explain the thing in advance, for once you have given me the explanation, I have no longer any explanation to give you! You bring me flowers, for instance, flowers of all kinds, but you do not arrange them, you tell me, "Here I bring you some flowers, it is for you to make a bouquet out of them." In this way, it is much more easy for me, isn't it? I can take those that I need and give you the explanation of what's happened! But if you bring me a ready-made bouquet where I see flowers which are not flowers, which are imitations, I have nothing to tell you, for I need solely things which are so to say "pure". Therefore, remember this advice: I am always ready to listen to you but do not bring to me ready-made things. Give me the exact record of what has happened and even so you may be sure that as soon as there is a mental transcription, the mind always knows how to fill up the holes—it likes things to be logical, continuous; and without your knowing it, quite spontaneously it supplies elements which were missing in your experience. I do not blame anyone, I know that it is a spontaneous phenomenon. One must be extremely attentive in order to be quite exact and precise.

*Is it not dangerous to say, "My movements are not mine,
I have not to think of them"?*

Yes, evidently, if you say, "I can do nothing, that belongs to Nature, the movement has to follow its natural course", you do exactly what I have told you not to do, you make use of the Divine as a fine cloak to cover the satisfaction of your desires. But the opposite movement, "I am good for nothing because such an idea has crossed my mind" is equally wrong, isn't it?

Naturally, if an impulse happens to come to you which you do not want, the first thing to do is to will that it does not come again; but if, on the contrary, you do not sincerely want it to disappear, then keep it, but do not try to do yoga. You should not take the path unless you have resolved beforehand to overcome all difficulties. The decision must be sincere and complete. You

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will notice, besides, as you gradually advance, that what you believed to be complete is not so, what you considered to be sincere is not so, and then you will progress little by little; but to succeed you must have as total a will for progress as possible. If you have this will and if an impulse seizes you with violence, keep the will firm, your being must not vacillate; you must expect these things to come, but when they come, tell yourself, "Well, they come from below, I do not want them to recur, they are not mine." This is not the same thing as saying, "Let it go, since it is Nature."

There must already be a beginning of realisation in the vital for it to revolt against the impulses that come to it. Most human beings and even those who expect to do yoga say, as soon as the impulse comes, "It is quite all right, there is nothing to do, it is all right." Then, if something in you revolts, if something says, "I don't want it", that is the higher part of your being. What takes the resolution to do yoga is not your body or your vital, not even your mind, it is the higher part of your mind or it is your psychic being. It is that alone which can take the resolution — your body does not know very well what it is all about, your vital looks at the beginning of transformation with some anxiety, the mind with its ideas declares, "This can be done in that way, can be explained like this", and so on. So if you have made a resolution, it comes from the higher part of your being, and it is upon this that you have to take your support, not upon anything else — that is the "I". And it must understand in the end that it is not a personal "I", but universal and divine.

But is it not the vital itself which finally should take the decision to change?

I may assure you that the vital, left to itself, will never take the decision to be transformed — it is quite satisfied with itself and, over and above this, being an accomplice of the mind, the mind will furnish it with all possible explanations for whatever it does.

People who live in their vital consciousness are, even when they do not say so, always very satisfied with themselves. They are also very satisfied with all that happens to them and they always say of their impulses, "How interesting it is, how interesting!" So, if you wait for the vital to take the decision, you may have to wait for a long time!

You must teach your vital that it must obey. Before feeling any satisfaction, it must understand that it has nothing else to do but obey. That is why I say that it is not very easy to begin the yoga; if you are not sincere, do not begin.

The body is very obedient; truly it tries to do its best, but it does not know whom to obey, for generally it is not in direct contact with the higher being or the psychic. Impulses come to it directly from the mind or from the mind clothed with the vital, and it does what they desire. Before the vital takes a decision (and I have told you, it is not very easy for it to take a decision), a light must begin to dawn in the highest part of the mind, a light which puts you in touch with a higher consciousness or with your psychic, and it is upon this light that you must take your support to explain things to the mind, to the vital and finally to the body.

8 February 1951

"The outer being is like a crust. In ordinary people the crust is so hard and thick that they are not conscious of the Divine within them. If once, even for a moment only, the inner being has said, 'I am here and I am yours', then it is as though a bridge has been built and little by little the crust becomes thinner and thinner until the two parts are wholly joined and the inner and the outer become one."

Questions and Answers 1929 (14 April)

Have you ever thought of unifying your being? Have you been disturbed, sometimes, to see that now you are one person, at other times another, at one time you want to do one thing, at another time you cannot do it, that you find yourself facing an individuality which you can call *yourself* and yet at the same time there are many parts of this individuality which escape you?

I have not attempted the unification of the different personalities which may be in me, but I have tried to put them face to face, the good opposite the bad, and I have never found in the good a sufficient dynamism to fight against the bad.

Have you never thought that your judgment of what is "good" and "bad" was a purely human judgment? And that it might not necessarily tally with the judgment of the divine Presence within you? The "bad" things you could not get rid of were probably things not in their place, things not properly balanced, and it would be a great pity if they were eliminated because, perhaps, a part of your energy and of your divine Presence would disappear at the same time. People who do not do yoga under the direction

of a guide follow ordinary moral notions and at times they feel very perplexed because with all their goodwill they do not get the expected result; that happens because generally they wish to approve of their being instead of transforming it and because moral notions are very bad. In the work of unification of the being, you must needs have imagination enough to be able to put the movements you have, the movements you wish to keep, to put them before what you are capable of imagining as most akin to the divine Presence; naturally, at first it is only an imagination quite far from the truth, but it would help you to get out a little from moral narrowness and also from the limitations of your consciousness. For example, you have the idea of putting what you are and what you do before a consciousness which is at once infinite and eternal. These two words do not perhaps make much sense at the beginning, but they compel you to break the limits and to put yourself in front of something which surpasses you so much on every side that its judgment cannot be the same as that of a human mentality. One must begin absolutely like that. If you try to analyse yourself according to moral principles, you may be sure of going contrary to the divine plan. Not that the Divine is amoral, mark that, but this is not a kind of morality that mankind understands at all, it is not the same.

“Ambition has been the undoing of many Yogis....

“A story is told of a Yogi who had attained wonderful powers. He was invited by his disciples to a great dinner. It was served on a big low table. The disciples asked their Master to show his power in some way. He knew he should not, but the seed of ambition was there in him and he thought, ‘After all, it is a very innocent thing and it may prove to them that such things are possible and teach them the greatness of God.’ So he said, ‘Take away the table, but only the table, let the table-cloth remain as it is with all the dishes upon it.’ The disciples cried out, ‘Oh, that cannot be done, everything will fall

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down.' But he insisted and they removed the table from under the cloth. Lo, the miracle! The cloth and all that was upon it remained there just as though the table was underneath. The disciples wondered. But all of a sudden the Master jumped up and rushed out screaming and crying, 'Nevermore shall I have a disciple, nevermore! Woe is me! I have betrayed my God.'"

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This is a temptation that every teacher meets at each step, for the very simple reason that ordinary humanity, in a general way, not being in personal contact with the divine powers, understands nothing of what an illumined consciousness may be and asks for material proofs. It is on this demand that most religions are established and, for reasons which I may very frankly call "political", they have put at the origin of their religion a more or less considerable number of miracles as having been performed by the founders, and they have thus more or less crudely encouraged among ignorant people the taste, the necessity for seeing what they call "miracles" in order to believe in the divine power of a person. This is an extraordinary ignorance, because it is not at all necessary to have a divine power or consciousness to perform miracles. It is infinitely more easy to perform miracles with the help of small entities of the vital world who are material enough to be in touch with the physical world and act upon it, than to live in the consciousness of the higher regions and to work upon Nature only through the intermediary of all the other domains. It has been repeated over and over again to all human intellects that the proof of a being's divinity is that he can raise the dead, cure maladies, and do many other things of the same kind (except making a fool wise).¹ Well, I guarantee that

¹ Mother added later: This is a Mohammedan story, I believe. As it was said that Jesus raised the dead, healed the sick, made the dumb speak, gave sight to the blind, one day an idiot was brought to him, to be made intelligent and Jesus ran away! "Why did you run away?" he was asked. "I can do everything," he answered, "except give intelligence to an idiot."

this is not a proof; it proves only one thing, that these “Masters” are in contact with the powers of the vital world and that with the help of those beings they can perform these miracles, that’s all. If one relies upon that to recognise the superiority of a man, one would make a glaring mistake. Naturally, there are other religions which are established on revelations made to their founders. These revelations are more or less happy mental transcriptions of the knowledge they received. This is already of a higher order but it is not yet a proof. And I would finally say, the human demand for proofs is not at all favourable to one’s development. Because the true divine power has organised the world according to a certain plan and in this plan there was no question of things happening in an illogical way; otherwise from the very beginning the world would have been illogical and it is not so. Men imagine for the most part one of two things, either that there is a material world to which they belong, that all comes from there, all returns there and all ends there — these are the unbelievers — or, the believers, most of them, that there is something which they call “God” and then the physical world, and that this physical world is the creation of that God who knows what he is doing or does what he wants; and the confusion lies in saying that everything happens by a kind of arbitrariness, natural or supernatural. There are very few people who know that there exists in the universe an infinite number of gradations and that each one of these gradations has its own reality, its own life, its own law, its own determinism, and that the creation did not come about “like that”, by an arbitrary will, in an arbitrary way but is a deploying of consciousness and each thing has evolved as a logical result of the preceding one. I am telling you all this as simply as I can, you see, it is a very incomplete expression, but if I wanted to tell you the story exactly as it is, it would be a little difficult to make you understand. Only I would like you to know my conclusion (I have already spoken about it several times, more or less in detail), it is this: each one of these numberless regions has its own very logical determinism

— everything proceeds from cause to effect; but these worlds, although differentiated, are not separate from each other and, by numerous processes which we may study, the inner or higher worlds are in constant contact with the lower or external worlds and act upon these, so that the determinism of one changes the determinism of the other. If you take the purely material domain, for instance, and if you notice that the material laws, the purely material laws are altered by something all of a sudden, you ought to say that it was a “miracle”, because there is a rupture of the determinism of one plane through the intervention of another, but usually we do not call this a miracle. For example, when the human will intervenes and changes something, that seems to you quite natural, because you have been accustomed to it from your childhood; you remember, don't you, the example I gave you the other day: a stone falls according to the law of its own determinism, but you wish to interrupt its fall and you stretch out your hand and catch it; well you ought to call this a “miracle”, but you don't because you are used to it (but a rat or a dog would perhaps call it a miracle if they could speak). And note that it is the same for what people call a “miracle”; they speak of a “miracle” because they are absolutely ignorant, unaware of the gradations between the will which wants to express itself and the plane on which it expresses itself. When they have a mental or a vital will, the thing seems quite natural to them, but when it is a question of the will of a higher world — the world of the gods or of a higher entity — which all of a sudden upsets all your little organisation, that seems to you a miracle. But it is a miracle simply because you are unable to follow the gradations by which the phenomenon took place. Therefore, the Supreme Will, that which comes from the very highest region, if you saw it in its logical action, if you were aware of it continually, it would seem to you altogether natural. You can express this in two ways: either say, “It is quite natural, it is like this that things must happen, it is only an expression of the divine Will”, or, each time you see on the material plane an intervention coming

from another plane, you ought to say, "It is miraculous!" So I may say with certainty that people who want to see miracles are people who cherish their ignorance! You understand my logic, don't you? These people love their ignorance, they insist upon seeing miracles and being astounded! And that is why people who have done yoga seriously consider it altogether fatal to encourage this tendency; hence it is forbidden.

There is a "miracle" because you do not give people time to see the procedure by which you do things, you do not show them the stages. Thus, some men have reached higher mental regions and do not need to follow step by step all the gradations of thought; they can jump from one idea to a far distant conclusion without the intermediary links; this is usually called intuition (it is not altogether an "intuition"; it is that the idea, to begin with, is at a great height and from there these people can see while descending the whole totality of things and consequences without passing through all the gradations as ordinary human thought is obliged to do). It is an experience I have had; when I used to speak with Sri Aurobindo, we never had the need to go through intermediary ideas; he said one thing and I saw the far off result; we used to talk always like that, and if a person had happened to be present at our conversations he would have said, "What are they talking about!" But for us, you know, it was as clear as a continuous sentence. You could call that a mental miracle — it was not a miracle, it was simply that Sri Aurobindo had the vision of the totality of mental phenomena and hence we had no need to waste a good deal of time in going through all the gradations. For any person capable of following the line, the thing would have been quite natural and logical; for ignorant people it was a "miracle".

"They [powers] have to be used in the same way as they came. They come by union with the Divine. They must be used by the will of the Divine and not for display."

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If you use power to show that you possess it, it becomes so full of falsehood and untruth that finally it disappears. But it is not always thus, because, as I said at the beginning, when it concerns a power like the power of healing or the power of changing an altogether external thing—of making an unfavourable circumstance favourable, of finding lost objects, all these countless little “miracles” which are found in all religions—it is much more easy and even more effective to do these “miracles” with the help of the entities of the vital world which are not always recommendable, far from it; and then these beings make fun of you. This begins very well, very brilliantly, and usually finishes very badly.

I know the story of a man who had a few small powers and indulged in all kinds of so-called “spiritualist” practices, and through repeated exercises he had succeeded in coming into conscious contact with what he called a “spirit”. This man was doing business; he was a financier and was even a speculator. His relations with his “spirit” were of a very practical kind! This spirit used to tell him when the stocks and shares would go up and when they would come down; it told him, “Sell this”, “Buy that”—it gave him very precise financial particulars. For years he had been listening to his “spirit” and had followed it, and was fantastically successful; he became tremendously rich and naturally boasted a lot about the spirit which “guided” him. He used to tell everybody, “You see, it is really worthwhile learning how to put oneself in contact with these spirits.” But one day he met a man who was a little wiser, who told him, “Take care.” He did not listen to him, he was swollen with his power and ambition. And it was then that his “spirit” gave him a last advice, “Now you can become the richest man in the world. Your ambition will be fulfilled. You have only to follow my direction. Do this: put all that you have into this transaction and you will become the richest man in the world.” The stupid fool did not even realise the trap laid for him: for years he had followed his “guide” and succeeded, so

he followed the last direction; and he lost everything, to the last penny.

So you see, these are small entities who make fun of you, and to make sure of you they work these little miracles to encourage you, and when they feel that you are well trapped, they play a fine trick upon you and it is all over with you.

We have said that there is only one safety, never to act except in harmony with the divine Will. There is one question: how to know that it is the divine Will which makes you act? I replied to the person who put to me this question (although this person did not agree with me) that it is not difficult to distinguish the voice of the Divine: one cannot make a mistake. You need not be very far on the path to be able to recognise it; you must listen to the still, small peaceful voice which speaks in the silence of your heart.

I forgot one thing: to hear it you must be absolutely sincere, for if you are not sincere, you will begin by deceiving yourself and you will hear nothing at all except the voice of your ego and then you will commit with assurance (thinking that it is the real small voice) the most awful stupidities. But if you are sincere, the way is sure. It is not even a voice, not even a sensation, it is something extremely subtle—a slight indication. When everything goes well, that is, when you do nothing contrary to the divine Will, you will not perhaps have any definite impression, everything will seem to you normal. Of course, you should be eager to know whether you are acting in accordance with the divine Will, that is the first point, naturally, without which you can know nothing at all. But once you are eager and you pay attention, everything seems to you normal, natural, then all of a sudden, you feel a little uneasiness somewhere in the head, in the heart or even in the stomach—generally one doesn't give it a thought; you may feel it several times in the day but you reject it without giving it any attention; but it is no longer quite the same; then, at that moment, you must stop, no matter what you may be doing, and look, and

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if you are sincere, you will notice a small black spot (a tiny wicked idea, a tiny false movement, a small arbitrary decision) and that's the source of the uneasiness. You will notice then that the little black spot comes from the ego which is full of preferences; generally it does what it likes; the things it likes are called good and those it does not like are called bad — this clouds your judgment. It is difficult to judge under these conditions. If you truly want to know, you must draw back a step and look, and you will know then that it is this small movement of the ego which is the cause of the uneasiness. You will see that it is a tiny thing curled back upon itself; you will have the impression of being in front of something hard which resists or is black. Then with patience, from the height of your consciousness, you must explain to this thing its mistake, and in the end it will disappear. I do not say that you will succeed all at once the very first day, but if you try sincerely, you will always end with success. And if you persevere, you will see that all of a sudden you are relieved of a mass of meanness and ugliness and obscurity which was preventing you from flowering in the light. It is those things which make you shrivel up, prevent you from widening yourself, opening out in a light where you have the impression of being very comfortable. If you make this effort, you will see finally that you are very far from the point where you had begun, the things you did not feel, did not understand, have become clear. If you are resolved, you are sure to succeed.

This is the first step towards unifying yourself, becoming a conscious being who has a central will and acts only according to this will, which will be a constant expression of the divine Will. It is worth trying.

And I may tell you from my personal experience that there is nothing in the world more interesting. If you begin making this effort you will find that your life is full of interest — you know, of the ordinary life of people at least a third is a kind of dull boredom (I say a third, but for some two-thirds of the day is a

dull boredom), and all that gets volatilised! Everything becomes so interesting, the least little thing, the least casual meeting, the least word exchanged, the least thing displaced — everything is full of life and interest.

10 February 1951

“You must be able, if you are ready to follow the Divine order, to take up whatever work you are given, even a stupendous work, and leave it the next day with the same quietness with which you took it up and not feel that the responsibility is yours. There should be no attachment — to any object or any mode of life. You must be absolutely free.”

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I would like someone to tell me what he understands by “be absolutely free”, for it is a very important question. I shall tell you why.

Most people confuse liberty with licence. For the ordinary mind, to be free is to have the chance of committing every stupidity that one likes, without anybody intervening. I say one must be “absolutely free”, but it is a very dangerous advice unless one understands the meaning of the words. Free from what? — free from attachments, evidently. It is exactly that. It is the story of the Buddha¹ who answers the young man expert in all the arts, “I am an expert in the art of self-control. If men congratulate me or praise me, it leaves me tranquil and indifferent. If they blame me, that leaves me equally tranquil and indifferent.”

Try then to question yourself to see to what extent you are above all blame and praise. Not that you must feel so superior to others that what they say seems to you of no importance, it is not that. It is that you have become aware of the general state of ignorance, including yours, and when others believe that something is good, you know “It is not so good as that”, and

¹ “Self-Control”, *Words of Long Ago*.

when they believe it is bad you can say, "It is not so bad as that." Everything is completely mixed up and finally nobody can judge anybody. Therefore you are completely indifferent to all praise and all blame. And the conclusion would be: so long as the divine consciousness in me or in one whom I have chosen as my Guru does not tell me "This is to be done", "This is not to be done", I am indifferent to what others may tell me. For I think that the divine presence in the one in whom I have put my trust is capable of knowing what is good and what is bad, what is to be done and what is not to be done.

And that is the best way of being free. Let your surrender to the Divine be entire and you will become completely free.

The only way of being truly free is to make your surrender to the Divine entire, without reservation, because then all that binds you, ties you down, chains you, falls away naturally from you and has no longer any importance. If someone comes and blames you, you may say, "On what authority does he blame me, does he know the supreme will?" And the same thing when you are congratulated. This is not to advise you not to profit by what comes to you from others—I have learnt throughout my life that even a little child can give you a lesson. Not that he is less ignorant than you but he is like a mirror which reflects the image of what you are; he may tell you something which is not true but also may show you something that you did not know. You can hence profit a great deal by it if you receive the lesson without any undesirable reaction.

Every hour of my life I have learnt that one can learn something; but I have never felt bound by the opinion of others, for I consider that there is only one truth in the world which can know something, and this is the Supreme Truth. Then one is quite free. And it is this freedom that I want of you—free from all attachment, all ignorance, all reaction; free from everything except a total surrender to the Divine. This is the way out from all responsibility towards the world. The Divine alone is responsible.

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It is not possible, is it, for the surrender to be total from the very beginning?

Generally, no. It needs time. But there are instantaneous conversions; to explain all that to you in detail would take too much time. You know perhaps that in all schools of initiation it used to be said that it takes thirty-five years to change one's character! So you must not expect the thing to be done in a minute.

If one is to be indifferent to everything, why are prizes given to the children?

You do not expect a schoolboy to be a yogi, do you? I have just said that it takes thirty-five years to attain that and to change one's character.

You see, individual, human authority, like the authority of a father of the family, of a teacher, of the head of a state, is a symbolic thing. They have no real authority but authority is given to them to enable them to fulfil a role in social life as it now is, that is to say, a social life founded upon falsehood and not at all on truth, for truth means unity and society is founded on division. There are people who work out their role, their function, their symbol more or less well—nobody is faultless, all is mixed in this world. But he who takes his role seriously, tries to fill it as honestly as possible, may receive inspirations which enable him to play his part a little more truly than an ordinary man. If the teacher who gives marks kept in mind that he was the representative of the divine truth, if he constantly took sufficient trouble to be in tune with the divine Will as much as this is possible for him, well, that could be very useful; for the ordinary teacher acts according to his personal preferences—what he does not like, what he likes, etc.—and he belongs to the general falsehood, but if at the time of giving marks, the teacher tries sincerely to put himself

in harmony with a truth deeper than his small narrow consciousness, he may serve as an intermediary of this truth and, as such, help his students to become conscious of this truth within themselves.

This is precisely one of the things that I wanted to tell you. Education is a sacerdacy, teaching is a sacerdacy, and to be at the head of a State is a sacerdacy. Then, if the person who fulfils this role aspires to fulfil it in the highest and the most true way, the general condition of the world can become much better. Unfortunately, most people never think about this at all, they fill their role somehow—not to speak of the innumerable people who work only to earn money, but in this case their activity is altogether rotten, naturally. That was my very first basis in forming the Ashram: that the work done here be an offering to the Divine.

Instead of letting oneself go in the stream of one's nature, of one's mood, one must constantly keep in mind this kind of feeling that one is a representative of the Supreme Knowledge, the Supreme Truth, the Supreme Law, and that one must apply it in the most honest, the most sincere way one can; then one makes great progress oneself and can make others also progress. And besides, one will be respected, there will be no more indiscipline in the class, for there is in every human being something that recognises and bows down before true greatness; even the worst criminals are capable of admiring a noble and disinterested act. Therefore when children feel in a teacher, in a school master, this deep aspiration to act according to the truth, they listen to you with an obedience which you would not get if one day you were in a good mood and the next day you were not, which is disastrous for everybody.

*If one needs thirty-five years to change one's character,
how can one make, from now, a total surrender to the
Divine?*

It may go quicker, you know! All depends on the way that one follows.

You remember, we spoke once of the attitude of the baby cat and that of the baby monkey.² If you agree to be like a docile baby cat (there are also baby cats which are very undisciplined, I have seen them), like a docile little child, this may go very fast. Note that it is very easy to say, "Choose the attitude of the baby cat", but it is not so easy to do. You must not believe that adopting the attitude of the baby cat lets you off from all personal effort. Because you are not a baby cat, human beings are not baby cats! There are in you innumerable elements which are accustomed to trusting only themselves, which want to do their own work, and it is much more difficult to control all these elements than to let oneself go in all circumstances. It is very difficult. First of all, there is always that wonderful work of the mind which likes so very much to observe, criticise, analyse, doubt, try to solve the problem, say, "Is it good thus?", "Would it not be better like that?", and so on. So that goes on and on, and where is the baby cat?... For the baby cat does not think! It is free from all this and hence it is much easier for it!

Whatever be the way you follow, personal effort is always necessary till the moment of identification. At that moment all effort drops from you like a worn-out robe, you are another person: what was impossible for you becomes not only possible but indispensable, you cannot do otherwise.

You must be attentive, silent, must await the inner inspiration, not do anything from external reactions, you must be moved by the light that comes from above, constantly, regularly, must act only under the inspiration of that light and nothing else. Never to think, never to question, never to ask "Should I do this or that?", but to know, to see, to hear. To act with

² Sri Ramakrishna used to say that a disciple can choose one of two attitudes: the passive trust of the baby cat which lets itself be carried by its mother (this is the way of surrender, the surest) and the active attitude of the baby monkey which clings to its mother (the way of personal effort).

an inner certitude without questioning and without doubting, because the decision does not come from you, it comes from above. Well, this may come very soon or one may have to wait perhaps a long time — that depends upon one's previous preparation, upon many things. Till then you must will and will with persistence, and above all never lose patience or courage. If necessary, repeat the same thing a thousand times, knowing that perhaps the thousandth time you will realise the result.

You are not all of a single piece. Your present body is often an accident. If you have within you a conscious soul which has influenced the formation of your body, you are infinitely better prepared than someone, a soul, which falls headfirst into a body without knowing where it is going; in this latter case much hard work is needed to lift up the consciousness which has thus fallen into obscurity. The inner preparation may come from previous lives or from the present life; or you have reached a turning-point in your integral growth and are in just the right relation with the circumstances necessary for the last step to be taken. But this does not mean that you have not lived a thousand times before reaching this turning-point.

12 February 1951

“Some persons ask: ‘Why has not the Divine come yet?’ Because you are not ready. If a little drop makes you sing and dance and scream, what would happen if the whole thing came down?”

“Therefore do we say to people who have not a strong and firm and capacious basis in the body and the vital and the mind: ‘Do not pull’, meaning ‘Do not try to pull at the forces of the Divine, but wait in peace and calmness.’ For they would not be able to bear the descent. But to those who possess the necessary basis and foundation, we say, on the contrary, ‘Aspire and draw.’ For they would be able to receive and yet not be upset by the forces descending from the Divine.”

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Why does the divine force upset people?

Because it is too strong for them. It is as though you were in the midst of a big cyclone. It happens at times that the wind is so violent that you are not able to stand—you have to lie down and wait till it blows over. Now, the divine forces are a thousand times stronger than a cyclonic wind. If you do not have in you a very wide receptivity, an extremely solid basis of calmness, of equality of soul and inner peace, they come and carry you away like a hurricane and you cannot resist them. It is the same thing with light; some people get a pain in the eyes when they look at the sun and are obliged to put on dark glasses because sunlight is too strong for them. But this is merely sunlight. When you are able to look at the supramental light, it appears to you so brilliant that sunlight seems like a black stain in comparison. One must have strong eyes and a solid brain to

bear that, one must be well prepared, established in something extremely calm and vast—it is as though one had such a strong basis of tranquillity that when the storm passes, when the light comes with a great intensity, one is able to remain immobile and receive what one can without being knocked over. But there is not one being in a million who can do it. Only those who have had a foretaste of inner experience can know what this means. But even if you enter consciously into the psychic, it is dazzling; and it is within your reach because it is your own psychic being, and yet it is so different from your external consciousness that the first time you enter it consciously, it seems to you truly dazzling, something infinitely more brilliant than the most brilliant sunlight.

The psychic is what may be called “the Divine within the reach of man”.

Are there any signs which indicate that one is ready for the path, especially if one has no spiritual teacher?

Yes, the most important indication is a perfect equality of soul in all circumstances. It is an absolutely indispensable basis; something very quiet, calm, peaceful, the feeling of a great force. Not the quietness that comes from inertia but the sensation of a concentrated power which keeps you always steady, whatever happens, even in circumstances which may appear to you the most terrible in your life. That is the first sign.

A second sign: you feel completely imprisoned in your ordinary normal consciousness, as in something extremely hard, something suffocating and intolerable, as though you had to pierce a hole in a brass wall. And the torture becomes almost unbearable, it is stifling; there is an inner effort to break through and you cannot manage to break through. This also is one of the first signs. It means that your inner consciousness has reached a point where its outer mould is much too small for it—the mould of ordinary life, of ordinary activities, ordinary relations,

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all that becomes so small, so petty; you feel within you a force to break all that.

There is yet another sign: when you concentrate and have an aspiration, you feel something coming down into you, you receive an answer; you feel a light, a peace, a force coming down; and almost immediately — you need not wait or spend a very long time — nothing but an inner aspiration, a call, and the answer comes. This also means that the relation has been well established.

If there is an upsetting when the force descends, does it not mean that the vital is not ready and should it not be forced to be ready?

How can you force it? It escapes through your fingers, so to say. Your will thinks it has caught it, and it eludes you. It is difficult to control. And force it to what? To be ready?... All that you will be able to get from it is that it will become inert, that is, it will hide in a corner, not stir any longer, and let the storm pass! Because for it the contact with the divine forces is like a storm. And when it sees that the crisis is over, it will react: "Here we are! Now, it is my turn!"

If you are upset, it means that you have still much work to do upon your vital before it can be ready, it means there is a weakness somewhere. For some, the weakness is in the mind. I knew a boy in France who was a fine musician, he used to play the violin admirably. But his brain was not very big, it was just big enough to help him in his music, nothing more. He used to come to our spiritual meetings and, all of a sudden, he had the experience of the infinite in the finite; it was an absolutely true experience; in the finite individual came the experience of the infinite. But this upset the boy so much that he could make nothing at all of it! He could not even play his music any longer. The experience had to be stopped because it was too powerful for him. This is an instance where the mind was too weak.

He had the experience, truly, not the idea (ideas are generally something foreign to all men). One must have the experience before the idea; for most men think only with words—if you put two contradictory ideas together, they no longer understand, while the experience is quite possible. So the mind must be a little wide, a little supple and quiet, and instead of feeling immediately that everything you were thinking of is now escaping you, you wait very quietly for something in your head to begin to understand the content of the experience.

There are people—many—who are weak in their vital being. When they have this sensation of infinity, eternity, in their very small person, in their very little strength, it is so different from the impression they have constantly, that they understand nothing whatever. Then they fall sick or they begin to talk deliriously or to shout and dance.

But if you are absolutely sincere and look at yourself clear-sightedly, this cannot happen to you, for an experience which comes inopportunely like that is always the result of some pride or ambition or some lack of balance within, due to having neglected one part of the being for the benefit of another.

Those who think they can advance in yoga by leaving their body completely inert, their vital asleep and their mind in a kind of stupefaction (for often, what they call “silence” is just stupefaction), get completely upset, you may be sure, when an experience comes to them. They lose their head, they do extravagant things or otherwise something very unfortunate happens to them.... One must have a solid well-balanced body, a well-controlled vital and a mind organised, supple, logical; then, if you are in a state of aspiration and you receive an answer, all your being will feel enriched, enlarged, splendid, and you will be perfectly happy and you will not spill your cup because it is too full, like a clumsy fellow who does not know how to hold a full tumbler. It is like that, you see, it is as if you had a small vase there, quite small, which will remain small if you do not take care to make it bigger; then if all of a sudden

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it is filled up with something which is too strong, everything overflows!

When the consciousness feels imprisoned within its too narrow external mould, what should be done?

You must particularly not be violent, for if you are violent, you will come out of it tired, exhausted, without any result. You must concentrate all the forces of aspiration. If you are conscious of the inner flame, you should put into this flame all that you find strongest in you by way of aspiration, of a call, and hold yourself as quiet as you can, calling, with a deep reliance that the answer will come; and when you are in this state, with your aspiration and concentrated force, with your inner flame, press gently upon this kind of outer crust, without violence, but with insistence, as long as you can, without getting agitated, irritated or excited. You must be perfectly quiet, must call and push.

It will not succeed the first time. You must begin again as many times as is necessary, but suddenly, one day... you are on the other side! Then you emerge in an ocean of light.

If you fight, if you are restless, if you struggle, you will get nothing at all; and if you become irritable you will only get a headache, that is all.

Yes, it is that. To gather together all your power of aspiration, make of it something intensely concentrated, in an absolute tranquillity, to be conscious of your inner flame and throw into it all you can that it may burn ever higher and higher, and then call with your consciousness and, slowly, push. You are sure to succeed one day.

Mother reads a comment made by someone during her talk in 1929:

"In the case of some persons who turn to the Divine it happens that every material prop or everything they

are fond of is removed from their life. And if they love someone he also is taken away.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (14 April)

We enter here into a big problem.... The notion of what is good for a being and what isn't is not the same to his evolved consciousness as to the divine consciousness. What appears to you good, favourable, is not always what's best for you from a spiritual point of view. It is this which must be learnt from the beginning, that the divine perception of what will lead you fastest to the goal is absolutely different from yours, and that you cannot understand it. That is why you must say to yourself from the beginning, “It is all right. I shall accept everything and I shall understand later on.”

So often you come across persons who, before they began yoga, had a relatively easy life, and as soon as they come to yoga, all the circumstances to which they were particularly attached break away from them more or less brutally. Then they are troubled; they do not perhaps have the frankness to admit it to themselves, they perhaps take recourse to other thoughts and other words, but it comes to this: “How is it? I am good and I am not treated kindly!”

The entire human notion of justice is there. “You try to become good and what cataclysms befall you! All the things you loved are taken away from you, all the pleasures you have had are taken away from you, all the people whom you loved leave you; it is indeed not worth the trouble to be good and to have made an effort.” And if you follow your reasoning far enough, all of a sudden you come upon the canker — so, you wanted to do yoga out of self-interest, you wanted to be good out of self-interest, you thought your situation would be better and you would be given a bonbon for your wisdom! And that does not happen!... Well, this refusal is the best lesson that could ever be given to you. For as long as your aspiration hides a desire and as long as in your heart there is the spirit of bargaining with the

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Divine, things will come and give you blows till you wake up to the true consciousness within you which makes no conditions, no bargains. That's all.

Since the time I have been doing yoga I find that all my affairs are going better than before. So I conclude...

Perhaps your aspiration was truly sincere and disinterested. In such a case, things must happen like that.

If someone who has been bad and wicked, suddenly decides to change, does he immediately hear the small inner voice which warns every time one does something bad?

Everything depends upon the form the reversal, the inner conversion has taken. If the change is sudden, yes, one can immediately become conscious of the small voice, but if it is gradual, the best effects will also be gradual. It depends absolutely on each case, one cannot tell. If a kind of tearing, an illumination takes place, then yes, one has immediately the inner indication. It can even be retrospective. That is, while thinking of certain past acts, one may get a clear vision of what one was compared with what one now is. Besides, each time there is a true change in the being, each time one overcomes a fault, one has the clear vision of a whole set of things which seemed quite natural and which now pass across the screen like a dark spot; you see the origin, the causes and the effects. If you have a precise, exact memory and have for a certain length of time, say a period of ten years, made sincere efforts to transform yourself, to consecrate yourself more and more, and if you could recollect what you were before, you would say, "It is not possible, I was not like that!" And yet you were indeed like that. There is such a distance between what one was before, what seemed quite natural to you before and what seems to you natural now, that you cannot believe you are the

same person. This is the surest indication that you have truly progressed.

When can one say that one has truly entered the spiritual path?

The first sign (it is not the same for everybody) but in a chronological order, I believe, is that everything else appears to you absolutely without importance. Your entire life, all your activities, all your movements continue, if circumstances so arrange things, but they all seem to you utterly unimportant, this is no longer the meaning of your existence. I believe this is the first sign.

There may be another; for example, the feeling that everything is different, of living differently, of a light in the mind which was not there before, of a peace in the heart which was not there before. That does make a change; but the positive change usually comes later, very rarely does it come at first except in a flash at the time of conversion when one has decided to take up the spiritual life. Sometimes, it begins like a great illumination, a deep joy enters into you; but generally, afterwards this goes into the background, for there are too many imperfections still persisting in you.... It is not disgust, it is not contempt, but everything appears to you so uninteresting that it is truly not worth the trouble of attending to it. For instance, when you are in the midst of certain physical conditions, pleasant or unpleasant (the two extremes meet), you say to yourself, "It was so important to me, all that? But it has no importance at all!" You have the impression that you have truly turned over to the other side.

Some imagine that the sign of spiritual life is the capacity to sit in a corner and meditate! That is a very, very common idea. I do not want to be severe, but most people who make much of their capacity for meditation—I do not think they meditate even for one minute out of one hour. Those who meditate truly never speak about it; for them it is quite a natural thing. When

it has become a natural thing, without any glory about it, you may begin to tell yourself that you are making progress. Those who talk about it and think that this gives them a superiority over other human beings, you may be sure, are most of the time in a state of complete inertia.

It is very difficult to meditate. There are all kinds of meditations.... You may take an idea and follow it to arrive at a given result — this is an active meditation; people who want to solve a problem or to write, meditate in this way without knowing that they are meditating. Others sit down and try to concentrate on something without following an idea — simply to concentrate on a point in order to intensify one's power of concentration; and this brings about what usually happens when you concentrate upon a point: if you succeed in gathering your capacity for concentration sufficiently upon a point whether mental, vital or physical, at a given moment you pass through and enter into another consciousness. Others still try to drive out from their head all movements, ideas, reflexes, reactions and to arrive at a truly silent tranquillity. This is extremely difficult; there are people who have tried for twenty-five years and not succeeded, for it is somewhat like taking a bull by the horns.

There is another kind of meditation which consists in being as quiet as one can be but without trying to stop all thoughts, for there are thoughts which are purely mechanical and if you try to stop these you will need years, and moreover you will not be sure of the result; instead of that you gather together all your consciousness and remain as quiet and peaceful as possible, you detach yourself from external things as though they do not interest you at all, and all of a sudden, you brighten the flame of aspiration and throw into it everything that comes to you so that the flame may rise higher and higher, higher and higher; you identify yourself with it and you go up to the extreme point of your consciousness and aspiration, thinking of nothing else — simply, an aspiration which mounts, mounts, mounts, without thinking a minute of the result, of what may happen

and especially of what may not, and above all without desiring that something may come — simply, the joy of an aspiration which mounts and mounts and mounts, intensifying itself more and more in a constant concentration. And there I may assure you that what happens is the best that can happen. That is, it is the maximum of your possibilities which is realised when you do this. These possibilities may be very different according to individuals. But then all these worries about trying to be silent, going behind appearances, calling a force which answers, waiting for an answer to your questions, all that vanishes like an unreal vapour. And if you succeed in living consciously in this flame, in this column of mounting aspiration, you will see that even if you do not have an immediate result, after a time something will happen.

During the concentration that we have here¹ together, on what should we concentrate?

Can anyone tell me what this concentration is and why we have it? It is a very interesting question, it concerns everybody. Can anyone tell me the difference between this concentration and a so-called “ordinary” meditation? Why do we do it and what happens there?

We make an offering of all our daily actions.

Yes, this is the individual side. And collectively, what is this concentration for? (He is on the way, note, he has taken half the first step).

We concentrate on our weak points and aspire for their disappearance.

¹ For a long time meditations used to take place in the Ashram building. Then, as the number of disciples increased and sports gained importance, these meditations were replaced by collective “concentrations” at the Ashram Playground.

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That is also an individual aspect.

In the meditations we formerly used to have there [*at the Ashram*], when we had a morning or evening meditation, my work was to unify the consciousness of everyone and lift it as high as I could towards the Divine. Those who were able to feel the movement followed it. This was ordinary meditation with an aspiration and ascent towards the Divine. Here, at the Playground, the work is to unify all who are here, make them open and *bring down* the divine force into them. It is the opposite movement and that is why this concentration cannot replace the other, even as the other cannot replace this one. What happens here is exceptional—in the other meditation [*at the Ashram*] I gathered together the consciousness of all who were present and, with the power of aspiration, lifted it towards the Divine, that is, made each one of you progress a little. Here, on the other hand, I take you as you are; each one of you comes saying, “Here we are with our whole day’s activities, we were busy with our body, here it is, we offer to you all our movements, just as they were, just as we are.” And my work is to unify all that, make of it a homogeneous mass and, in answer to this offering (which each one can make in his own way), to open every consciousness, widen the receptivity, make a unity of this receptivity and bring down the Force. So at that moment each one of you, if you are very quiet and attentive, will surely receive something. You will not always be aware of it, but you will receive something.

In March 1964, the following question was put to the Mother:

And now that you are no longer physically present at the Playground concentrations, what happens?

I hope people have made some progress and do not need the physical presence to feel the Help and the Force.

15 February 1951

Mother reads the beginning of her talk of 21 April 1929 about dreams and visions.

Often I have dreams about railways. I often miss the train...

It is quite symbolical!

...because I have too much luggage. I run after it and at times I succeed in catching up with it and jumping into the last coach.

The train, the ship, and I suppose the aeroplane also are for those who do yoga, symbols of the way and of the Force that leads you—if you lose your time or if you have too much luggage or if you think of it too late, well, you miss the way and you must run hard to catch up.

There are lots of dreams like that which give a very precise indication of the state you are in.

When I was in Calcutta, I dreamt that someone dressed in white came to my bedside, holding the flower you have called “New Creation” [the tuberose]. I did not know the meaning of the flower then. It was only after my coming here that I came to know it. The form I saw resembled you.

Dreams are very interesting, specially if one knows how to use them.

What is the nature of a sleep without dreams?

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If one succeeds in making the mind and vital silent, and in keeping the body well asleep, one can have a very still and quiet sleep, and then, if one can manage to get out of these forms and enter the higher worlds, one may reach the true repose of Sachchidananda.

How is it that one meets and recognises in dream persons whom one is going to meet and recognise later on in ordinary life?

There are many possibilities. But most often, it is that a communication has been established either on the mental or the vital plane or even on the subtle physical plane and it is this communication which brings about the meeting later—your dream is not only a premonition but also a condition; there is an inner relation close enough to enable you to come into contact in sleep, and circumstances so arrange themselves that you meet physically afterwards. Sometimes it is only a premonition, but then the dream has a special quality—you see someone coming and he does come physically a little later.

Generally it is an already established relation; it is someone whom you meet, whom you frequent, whom you speak to, with whom you live some hours of the night. Then afterwards when you both meet you have the impression that you know each other very well. That's a fact, you already know each other, before having met physically.

Are there not false visions?

If you narrate something you have not seen, evidently that is a false vision! Also if you embellish, rearrange, change your vision when you report it, this too becomes a false vision. But if you tell in all simplicity what you have seen, what can there be false about it? Your interpretation may be false—you may say, "That means this" and you make a big blunder, but what you

have seen, you have seen, and what you have not seen, you have not seen! This is something which always astounds me!... Have you seen it? If so, then you have! The explanation of what you have seen is another matter, but if you have seen something, you have seen it!

This question generally comes from those who have the habit of rearranging a little what they see. They see a tiny thing, perhaps, in a flash, and then willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously they arrange things, they add a little bit, add to it another, they give a little explanation, make the thing coherent and when it has become something that can stand on its own legs, they say, "I had this vision", but it is not at all what they saw.... This is a kind of mental insincerity. It is spontaneous—when the mind sees one thing here, another thing there, yet a third elsewhere, this is very unpleasant for it. It fills up the holes, it says, "This leads to that", "That is the cause of this", and so on, and the mind is very happy because this is logical. What the mind adds in between the points of the vision may happen, by chance, to be true, but it may also be false.

Ask yourself rather whether you have a mind which keeps quiet, which is wholly sincere and objective, which says exactly what it has seen or whether you have one of those minds bubbling with activity which, as soon as it has seen something, adds to it its grain of salt, automatically, and makes out of it a big story; and so you are quite convinced that you have seen all that, but in fact you have not seen it at all. It is in this that one can say that visions are not sincere. But that is not the fault of the vision! What you have seen, you have seen; it is the fault of the interpretation or simply of the narration which was embellished. I have had admirable examples!—of people who had seen truly revealing things, but who understood nothing about them. On the spur of the moment they recounted spontaneously what they had seen—in half an hour the story had become a little different, all the "holes" were filled up and finally the story stood well on its legs! The story was idiotic, it made

no sense, whilst the few points they had seen were magnificent revelations.

(*Silence*)

The capacity for visions, when it is sincere and spontaneous, can put you in touch with events which you are not capable of knowing in your outer consciousness.... There is a very interesting fact, it is that somewhere in the terrestrial mind, somewhere in the terrestrial vital, somewhere in the subtle physical, one can find an exact, perfect, automatic recording of everything that happens. It is the most formidable memory one could imagine, which misses nothing, forgets nothing, records all. And if you are able to enter into it, you can go backward, you can go forward, and in all directions, and you will have the “memory” of all things—not only of things of the past, but of things to come. For everything is recorded there.

In the mental world, for instance, there is a domain of the physical mind which is related to physical things and keeps the memory of physical happenings upon earth. It is as though you were entering into innumerable vaults, one following another indefinitely, and these vaults are filled with small pigeon-holes, one above another, one above another, with tiny doors. Then if you want to know something and if you are conscious, you look, and you see something like a small point—a shining point; you find that this is what you wish to know and you have only to concentrate there and it opens; and when it opens, there is a sort of an unrolling of something like extremely subtle manuscripts, but if your concentration is sufficiently strong you begin to read as though from a book. And you have the whole story in all its details. There are thousands of these little holes, you know; when you go for a walk there, it is as though you were walking in infinity. And in this way you can find the exact facts about whatever you want to know. But I must tell you that what you find is never what has been reported in history

— histories are always planned out; I have never come across a single “historical” fact which is like history. This is not to discourage you from learning history, but things are like that. Events have been quite different from the way in which they have been reported, and for a very simple reason: the human brain is not capable of recording things with exactitude; history is built upon memories and memories are always vague. If you take, for example, written memories, he who writes chooses the events which have interested him, what he has seen, noticed or known, and that is always only a very small portion of the whole. When the historian narrates, the same thing happens as with dreams where you take one point, then another, then another, and at last you can have an almost exact vision of what has taken place and with a little imagination you fill up the gaps; but historians relate a continuous story; between the events or moments there are gaps which they fill up as best they can or rather as they wish, according to their mental, vital and other preferences. And that comprises the history you are made to learn. The same story, narrated in one language and in another, in one country or in another, you cannot imagine how comic it is! This is particularly true if one of the countries is interested because of its vanity, its prestige. And finally the two pictures presented to you are so different that you could believe that two different things were being spoken about. It is unbelievable. But I have noticed that even for altogether external, concrete facts where there is no question of evaluation, it is still the same thing. No human brain is capable of understanding a thing in its totality; even the most scholarly, the most learned, even the most sincere person does not see a subject—and especially many subjects—totally. He will say what he knows, what he understands, and all that he does not know, all that he does not understand is not there, and this absolutely changes everything.

But if you can acquire this capability of entering into the terrestrial memory, I assure you it is worth the trouble. It is

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quite different from Yoga; it is not necessary to have a spiritual life for that, you must have a special ability.

For everything—I would repeat it to you eternally if I had the time—for everything, one must be absolutely sincere. If you are not sincere, you will begin by deceiving yourself and all your experiences will be worth nothing at all. But if you are sincere and by discipline (for it is not easy) you succeed in entering this mental memory of the world, you will make discoveries which are really worth the trouble.

17 February 1951

Mother begins with a passage about “false visions” (*Questions and Answers 1929, 21 April*).

Is a vision false if the being who appears in the vision pretends to be what it is not?

I don’t think it is this that people mean when they speak of “false visions”. They say “false visions” when they have seen something which they believe does not exist; and the reply I always give them is, “Had you already thought of what you saw? Had you made an effort to see it? Was it in your imagination or your wish? If so, it must be false.” What you are now asking is something else: these spirits who pretend to be what they are not in reality, if you believe them, it does not mean that your vision is false, but that the interpretation of your vision is false, that you do not have the necessary discernment to perceive the deception. I had with me for a long time people who said they had seen me (seen me with quite absurd consequences; all sorts of disastrous things happened to them); it was certain forces trying to make them believe it was I. I gave them a very simple means of putting an end to this comedy.

There is also something else: I am called and I answer; but what people see afterwards, the result, is almost always the product of their own mental formation. They want me to do a certain thing and that is what happens. And I verify this, you see, when they come and tell me, “Tonight you came”; as a matter of fact, they had called me and I had gone there, but I compare what really happened with what they saw, and very often there is a very big difference, which comes precisely from the desire they have mixed up with their perception. Then I could say, “Your

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vision is partly false; the fact that I came is true, but what you made me do, it is you who made me do it!”

“What is required of you is not a passive surrender, in which you become like a block, but to put your will at the disposal of the divine Will.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (21 April)

How can one make an offering of one's will?... Some people, when they offer their will, stop willing! This is more convenient, but evidently this is not the right way.

How to offer one's will to the Divine when one does not know what the divine Will is? This is a very interesting problem.

Some men think that all that comes to them from outside is the divine Will, and they accept it as such.

Yes, unfortunately. But all that they do is to accept the collective will or that of the strongest.

Should not one offer all one's willed actions to the Divine? That is, first do the willed actions and then offer them?

Perhaps you could first silence your will and wait for the inner voice before acting! That would be wiser.

You see, we have already found many ways of offering our will to the Divine: first, not to will any longer! Second, do what everybody wants except oneself! Third, want no matter what and do no matter what, then, afterwards, offer to the Divine what one has done!

But one can also formulate to oneself one's will and try to pass it before the screen of one's higher ideal, and see what it looks like in front of this ideal, whether it cuts a fine figure or not. If it vacillates, you may be sure there is something there to

check up. If, on the other hand, it passes very quietly and without protest, you may risk doing what you wanted and see the result. But here too we are before a very difficult problem.... Those who wish to remain in an inner peace say that everything that happens is the will of God—this is very convenient for being quiet, it is the best way, there is no better; if there is a better way, it is much more difficult. So, if your will is contradicted, you say it is the will of God; you are quiet, you have done what you could and the result is different from what you expected, and you are in peace. (Note that this is not very easy; it is quite good already, but this is not all.) But it may also be quite possible that your will was contradicted by circumstances and yet it was right. Then the solution is much more difficult. First, how to know that it was right?... If you are quite impartial, quiet, peaceful, and as little egoistic as possible, if you look straight in the face at what has happened and see a sort of contradiction, the impression that a light has gone out and you are in the presence of a falsehood, you remain quite calm, but you see and understand that your will has been contradicted for some unknown reason, though in itself it was not false, that what you had seen was the truth but it did not manifest itself for some reason or other. So you must start on the adventure of discovering the reason why your truth did not manifest itself. This is a problem a little more difficult... but if you expand your vision sufficiently, both in height and wideness, you can immediately see the consequences your will would have had if it had been realised, and the consequences of what would have happened; and if you fling your view far enough, you will be able to see that your will, however true it was, was a partial truth—it was not a collective, general truth, and still less a universal one—and, consequently, if this truth had been realised at that moment, it would have dislocated a certain *ensemble* and many things which form a part of the divine Work (for everything, in fact, is a part of the divine Work, the entire creation, the entire universe): one part of the whole would have been left behind.

People always ask, “But if the Divine is all-powerful, why is it that things have not yet changed?” This is the reason why.

And mark that your idea of what ought to be is so infinitely far off from what will be, that, by this very fact, even if you try to see in the most complete way possible, you will leave behind such a large portion of the universe that it will be almost a linear realisation, and in any case so small, so narrow, that the greater part of the universe will remain unchanged. And even if you have a very vast view of the whole, even if you can conceive of something more total and you go ahead on the path which is ready—for it is with paths as it is with beings, some are ready—without having the patience to wait for others, that is, if you wish to realise something very close to the true Truth in comparison with the present state of the world, what will happen?—the dislocation of a certain unity, a rupture not only of harmony but of equilibrium, for there will be an entire part of the creation which will not be able to follow. And instead of a complete realisation of the Divine, you will have a small localised realisation, infinitesimal, and nothing will be done of what finally ought to be done.

Consequently, you should not be impatient, should not be disappointed, depressed, discouraged if the truth you have seen is not immediately realised. Naturally, it is not a question of being down-hearted or grieved or in despair if you have made a mistake, for every mistake can be corrected; from the moment you have found it is a mistake, there is an opportunity to work within you, to make progress and be very happy! But the situation is much more serious and more difficult to overcome when you have seen something true, absolutely, essentially true, and the state of the universe is such that this truth is not yet ripe for realisation. I do not say this happens to many people, but perhaps it may happen to you, and it is then you have to have a great patience, a great understanding, and say to yourself, “It was true, but it was not completely true”, that is, it was not a truth in harmony with all the other truths and, above all, not

in keeping with the present possibilities; so we tried to realise it too quickly, and because we tried to be too quick it was belied. But do not say it was false because it was belied; say it was premature, that is all you can say — what you saw was true, but it was premature, and you must, with much patience and perseverance, keep your little truth intact for the moment when it will be possible to realise it.

The final victory is for the most patient.

“You say, ‘I give my will to the Divine.... Let the divine Will work it out for me.’ Your will must continue to act steadily, not in the way of choosing a particular action or demanding a particular object, but as an ardent aspiration concentrated upon the end to be achieved.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (21 April)

And it is there we have the solution of the problem. You can at every minute make the gift of your will in an aspiration — and an aspiration which formulates itself very simply, not just “Lord, Thy will be done”, but “Grant that I may do as well as I can the best thing to do.”

You may not know at every moment what is the best thing to do or how to do it, but you can place your will at the disposal of the Divine to do the best possible, the best thing possible. You will see it will have marvellous results. Do this with consciousness, sincerity and perseverance, and you will find yourself getting along with gigantic strides. It is like that, isn’t it? One must do things with all the ardour of one’s soul, with all the strength of one’s will; do at every moment the best possible, the best thing possible. What others do is not your concern — this is something I shall never be able to repeat to you often enough.

Never say, “So-and-so does not do this”, “So-and-so does something else”, “That one does what he should not do” — all this is not your concern. You have been put upon earth, in a physical body, with a definite aim, which is to make this

body as conscious as possible, make it the most perfect and most conscious instrument of the Divine. He has given you a certain amount of substance and of matter in all the domains—mental, vital and physical—in proportion to what He expects from you, and all the circumstances around you are also in proportion to what He expects of you, and those who tell you, “My life is terrible, I lead the most miserable life in the world”, are donkeys! Everyone has a life appropriate to his total development, everyone has experiences which help him in his total development, and everyone has difficulties which help him in his total realisation.

If you look at yourself carefully, you will see that one always carries in oneself the opposite of the virtue one has to realise (I use “virtue” in its widest and highest sense). You have a special aim, a special mission, a special realisation which is your very own, each one individually, and you carry in yourself all the obstacles necessary to make your realisation perfect. Always you will see that within you the shadow and the light are equal: you have an ability, you have also the negation of this ability. But if you discover a very black hole, a thick shadow, be sure there is somewhere in you a great light. It is up to you to know how to use the one to realise the other.

This is a fact very little spoken about, but one of capital importance. And if you observe carefully you will see that it is always thus with everyone. This leads us to statements which are paradoxical but absolutely true; for instance, that the greatest thief can be the most honest man (this is not to encourage you to steal, of course!) and the greatest liar can be the most truthful person. So, do not despair if you find in yourself the greatest weakness, for perhaps it is the sign of the greatest divine strength. Do not say, “I am like that, I can’t be otherwise.” It is not true. You are “like that” because, precisely, you ought to be the opposite. And all your difficulties are there just so that you may learn to transform them into the truth they are hiding.

Once you have understood this, many worries come to an

end and you are very happy, very happy. If one finds one has very black holes, one says, "This shows I can rise very high", if the abyss is very deep, "I can climb very high." It is the same from the universal point of view; to use the Hindu terminology so familiar to you, it is the greatest Asuras who are the greatest beings of Light. And the day these Asuras are converted, they will be the supreme beings of the creation. This is not to encourage you to be asuric, you know, but it is like that — this will widen your minds a little and help you to free yourself from those ideas of opposing good and evil, for if you abide in that category, there is no hope.

If the world was not essentially the opposite of what it has become, there would be no hope. For the hole is so black and so deep, and the unconsciousness so complete, that if this were not the sign of the total consciousness, well, there would be nothing more to do but pack up one's kit and go away. Men like Shankara, who did not see much further than the end of their nose, said that the world was not worth the trouble of living in, for it was impossible, that it was better to treat it as an illusion and go away, there was nothing to be done with it. I tell you, on the contrary, that it is because the world is very bad, very dark, very ugly, very unconscious, full of misery and suffering, that it can become the supreme Beauty, the supreme Light, the supreme Consciousness and supreme Felicity.

"If you are vigilant, if your attention is alert, you will certainly receive... an inspiration of what is to be done and that you must forthwith proceed to do."

Questions and Answers 1929 (21 April)

When I told you just a while ago that you must aspire with a great ardour to do the best possible, at every moment the best thing possible, you could have asked me, "That is all very well. But how to know?" Well, it is not necessary to know! If you take this attitude with sincerity, you will know at each moment what

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you have to do, and it is this which is so wonderful! According to your sincerity, the inspiration is more and more precise, more and more exact.

“Only you must remember that to surrender is to accept whatever is the result of your action, though the result may be quite different from what you expect. On the other hand, if your surrender is passive, you will do nothing and try nothing; you will simply go to sleep and wait for a miracle.”

“Now to know whether your will or desire is in agreement with the divine Will or not, you must look and see whether you have an answer or have no answer, whether you feel supported or contradicted, not by the mind or the vital or the body, but by that something which is always there deep in the inner being, in your heart.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (21 April)

It is always the same thing, this is our screen before which we must pass everything to know whether one may accept it or whether one is told not to.

“The number of hours spent in meditation is no proof of spiritual progress. It is a proof of your progress when you no longer have to make an effort to meditate.”

Ibid.

That is, instead of being in a state of tension, instead of making a tremendous effort to silence the inner machine and be able to concentrate your thought upon what you want, when you do it quite simply, naturally, without effort, automatically, and you decide to meditate for some reason or other, what you want to see, learn or know remains in your consciousness and all the rest disappears as by a miracle; everything falls quiet in

you, all your being becomes silent, your nerves are altogether soothed, your consciousness is wholly concentrated — naturally, spontaneously — and you enter with an intense delight into a yet more intense contemplation.

This is the sign that you have succeeded; otherwise it is not the thing.

"Then you have rather to make an effort to stop meditating: it becomes difficult to stop meditation, difficult to stop thinking of the Divine, difficult to come down to the ordinary consciousness."

Ibid.

How I wish this would become true for everybody!

You may be engaged in the most active action, for example, in playing basketball, which needs a great deal of movement, and yet not lose the attitude of inner meditation and concentration upon the Divine. And when you get that, you will see that all you do changes its quality; not only will you do it better, but you will do it with an altogether unexpected strength, and at the same time keep your consciousness so high and so pure that nothing will be able to touch you any longer. And note that this can go so far that even if an accident occurs, it will not hurt you. Naturally, this is a peak, but it is a peak to which one can aspire.

Do not fall into the very common error of believing that you must sit in an absolutely quiet corner where nobody passes by, where you are in a classical position and altogether immobile, in order to be able to meditate — it is not true. What is needed is to succeed in meditating under all circumstances, and I call "meditating" not emptying your head but concentrating yourself in a contemplation of the Divine; and if you keep this contemplation within you, all that you do will change its quality — not its appearance, for apparently it will be the same thing, but its quality. And life will change its quality, and you, you will feel a little different from what you were, with a peace, a

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certitude, an inner calm, an unchanging force, something which never gives way.

In that state it will be difficult to do you harm — the forces always try, this world is so full of adverse forces which seek to upset everything... but they succeed in a very small measure, only in the measure necessary to force you to make a new progress.

Each time you receive a blow from life, tell yourself immediately, "Ah, I have to make a progress"; then the blow becomes a blessing. Instead of tucking your head between your shoulders, you lift it up with joy and you say, "What is it I have to learn? I want to know. What is it I have to change? I want to know." This is what you should do.

*The concentration we have here and the meditation we used to have in the past, are they the same?*¹

No, I told you this the other day, the concentration we have now is the opposite of meditation. In the common meditation we used to have, I tried to unify the consciousness of all who were present and to lift it in an aspiration towards higher regions; it was a movement of ascent, of aspiration — whereas what we do here, in concentration, is a movement of descent. Instead of an aspiration which rises up, what is required is a receptivity which opens so that the Force may enter into you. There are many ways of doing this; each one according to his particular nature should find out the best method. What is asked here is a receptive offering, not of the body or the mind or the vital, of a piece of your being, but of your entire being. No other thing is asked of you, only to *open* yourself; the rest of the work I undertake.

In the meditation there¹ I wanted each one to kindle in himself a flame of aspiration and to rise up as high as possible.

¹ The period of "meditation" in the Ashram was followed by a period of "concentration" at the Playground.

Naturally, both are necessary; but the morning meditation, all who had a goodwill could join it at any stage of their development, while here the rule is that only those who really want the perfection of their physical body can come, not those who want to escape from life, escape from themselves, escape from their body to enter into the heights. That is why in the beginning the selection was very strict—it is widening little by little, with profit, I hope. We wanted only those who had truly taken it into their head that they wished to perfect their physical body, who understood that their body had its own value and who sought to perfect it, who wanted to try to make it a receptacle of a higher truth, not an old rag one throws aside saying, "Do not bother me!" On the contrary, to take it up and make of it the best possible instrument, to make it grow, to perfect it as much as it will lend itself to the process.

Isn't the aspiration, the contemplation of which you speak, inconsistent with outer activity?

No, if there is a contradiction, it is that the concentration is not done in the right way. Indeed the world is in this state of falsehood in which one cannot concentrate within oneself on the divine Presence without losing contact with the external being. I do not say that it is very easy, I have given you this as a somewhat far ideal, but it is quite possible and it has been done, I may assure you, and it takes away nothing from the capacity of not breaking one's neck while running!

19 February 1951

To be able to enter the “earth-memory” consciously, a discipline is needed.¹ What discipline?

A discipline much more difficult than the discipline of yoga! It is an occult discipline.

First of all, one must learn to go out of one’s body consciously and to enter into another more subtle body; to use one’s will to go where one wants to go, never to fear and sometimes to face unexpected and even terrible things; to remain calm, to develop the mind’s visual sense, to accustom one’s mind to be altogether peaceful and quiet.... You know, the list is long and I could continue like this for hours!

Who among you has had the experience of going out of the body — going out and knowing about it? I do not even speak of doing it at will, for that is another stage.

Once I went out of my body but got back into it immediately!

You did not take the opportunity of going for a little walk, did you? Well, you are not inquisitive!

How can one know that one has gone out of the body?

You see it immobile on your bed. There are other means of knowing also.

I went out of my body under the effect of chloroform. I saw my body on the table and I witnessed the operation.

¹ See the talk of 15 February 1951.

So too I knew quite a remarkable clairvoyant. One day she had to undergo an operation and she was chloroformed; she went out of her body. Suddenly she began to see what was going on in the minds of the people who were there. She had the habit of talking, even while asleep, and she began to speak out quite aloud: she said that so-and-so had worries, that another had a problem to solve, and that its solution was such and such a thing.

This was an exceptional case — that happens only to gifted persons and there are not many of these. But the number of persons who remain conscious under chloroform is greater than one thinks; but generally, when one wakes up from chloroform one feels pretty uneasy and remembers but vaguely his experiences outside the body. Is there anyone here who has fainted suddenly, as if by accident? You see your body, don't you? And you ask yourself, "But what is it doing there in that ridiculous position?" And you rush back into it! That happened to me once in Paris. I had been treated to a good dinner, and then I went to a conference hall, I believe. There were many people, it was very hot, I was standing there with the good dinner in my stomach, and suddenly I felt ill at ease. I told the person who was with me, "I must go out immediately." Once outside (it was in Trocadero Square) I fainted away completely. I saw my body there, stretched out, and I found it so ridiculous that I rushed into it and I gave it a good scolding, saying, "You must not play such tricks with me!"

Many people faint like this and see themselves. There is one condition for this: the organ of sight in the subtle physical body or in the most material vital must be developed.

I must tell you that this kind of capacity may come spontaneously, without effort — one may be a born clairvoyant. They are not necessarily very intelligent people, their vital consciousness may be mediocre, but they are born clairvoyant. It is not a sign of a great development — it comes from something else, from a capacity of the parents, of past lives, etc. But if you are not born clairvoyant, and if you do not carry in you the other

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extreme, I mean a psychic being wholly conscious and fully developed which leads its own independent life in the body, and you want to learn to see and have visions, then it is a very long, very slow discipline and there are very few people who have the necessary patience and endurance to go to the end of the training.

It is interesting but it is not essential, one can do without it. It is the same as with dreams. But if you can develop this capacity, it can make your life more rich, it can make your consciousness progress more quickly.

*You say there are two categories of people: those who are asked to meditate and those who are not asked. How to know to which category one belongs?*²

You are told.

So, can we ask you?

Certainly, I am here for that!

At times when one goes out of the body, the body follows the part which goes out.

You are speaking of a somnambulist? But that is quite another thing. This means that the part which goes out (whether a part of the mind or a part of the vital) is so strongly attached to the body, or rather that the body is so attached to this part, that when this part decides to do something the body follows it automatically.

² “A discipline in itself is not what we are seeking. What we are seeking is to be concentrated on the Divine in all that we do, at all times, in all our acts and in every movement. There are some here who have been told to meditate; but also there are others who have not been asked to do any meditation at all. But it must not be thought that they are not progressing. They too follow a discipline, but it is of another nature. To work, to act with devotion and an inner consecration is also a spiritual discipline.”

In your inner being you decide to do a certain thing and your body is so closely tied to your inner being that without thinking of it, without wanting to do so, without making any effort, it follows and does the same thing. Note that in this matter, the physical body has capacities it would not have in the ordinary waking condition. For instance, it is well known that one can walk in dangerous places where one would find it rather difficult to walk in the waking state. The body follows the consciousness of the inner being and its own consciousness is asleep — for the body has a consciousness. All the parts of the being, including the most material, have an independent consciousness. Hence when you go to sleep dead tired, when your physical body needs rest absolutely, your physical consciousness sleeps, while the consciousness of your subtle physical body or your vital or of your mind does not sleep, it continues its activity; but your physical consciousness is separated from the body, it is asleep in a state of unconsciousness, and then the part which does not sleep, which is active, uses the body without the physical consciousness as intermediary and makes it do things directly. That is how one becomes a somnambulist. According to my experience, the waking consciousness goes to sleep for some reason or other (usually due to fatigue), but the inner being is awake, and the body is so tied to it that it follows it automatically. That is why you do fantastic things, because you do not see them physically, you see them in a different way.

It is said that somnambulism is due to serious preoccupations and cares. Is this true? Tartini composed a sonata in this state, and when he got up in the morning, he wrote down the whole thing.

Somnambulism is not always due to preoccupations and cares! Yes, there are people who write wonderful things when in a state of somnambulism. But Tartini was not a somnambulist — it was in the dream-state that he wrote sonatas.

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The other state is always a little dangerous, always. Unexpected things can happen, an accident to the vital, for instance.

How can one be cured of somnambulism?

Quite simply, by putting a will upon the body before going to sleep. One becomes a somnambulist because the mind is not developed enough to break the inner ties. For the mind always separates the external being from the deeper consciousness. Little children are quite tied up. I knew children who were quite sincere but could not distinguish whether a thing was going on in their imagination or in reality. For them the inner life was as real as the external life. They were not telling stories, they were not liars; simply the inner life was as real as the external life. There are children who go night after night to the same spot in order to continue the dream they have begun — they are experts in the art of going out of their bodies.

*Is it good to leave the body asleep and go out rambling?
Can one go back into the body at any moment one likes?*

It is dangerous if you sleep surrounded by people who may come and shake you up, believing that something has happened to you. But if you are alone and sleep quietly, there is no danger.

One can get back into the body at any time and generally it is much more difficult to remain outside than to get back — as soon as the least thing happens, one rushes back quickly into the body.

If one goes out of the body leaving it on the bed, can someone else enter it?

That can happen but it is extremely rare, once in a hundred thousand cases.

“Someone” cannot enter — a human being cannot enter the body of another unless he has quite an exceptional and unique occult knowledge and in that case he will not do it.

But if a human being does not enter, at times there are beings of the vital world who do not have a body and want to have one for the fun of the experience, and when they see that someone has gone out of the body (but he must go out very materially) and is not sufficiently protected, they can rush in to take his place. But it is such a rare thing that if you had not put the question I would not have spoken about it. Still it is not an impossibility.

People who have nightmares of this kind should always protect themselves occultly before going out of the body — it can be done in many ways. The simplest way, one which needs no special knowledge is to call the Guru or, if one knows somebody who has the knowledge, to call him in thought or spirit; or to protect oneself by making a kind of wall of protection around oneself (one can do many things, can’t one?); this can prevent such beings from entering.

If you have a disposition for exteriorisation and if you follow a yoga, you are always asked to protect your sleep: by some contemplation, a mental movement, any movement — there are many ways of protecting oneself. But I think there is no such danger for you; perhaps not for everybody, but still one would have to be terribly ambitious, terribly insincere for such a thing to happen; one would have to be in relation with truly wicked entities, for, a being who lives in orderliness and truth will never rush into the body of another, that is an act of disorder and it is not done.

Is it the psychic being which goes out or some other part of the being?

If it is the psychic being which goes out, one would not be aware of it, the more so as most of the time it is not within you!

Very few people carry their psychic being within them because the dwelling-place is not ready. What goes out is sometimes the subtle physical, this is when one sees one's body stretched out—for the physical vision to remain conscious, it must be a very material part of the being which goes out; one must go out very materially in the subtle physical body or in the most material vital. But usually it is the vital which goes out and still more often the mental being; but when it is the mind which goes out one is not aware of it at all, for the mind is like the psychic, it is very rarely within you. If you think of something or somebody, one part of your mind is immediately there—the mind is a vagabond, it roves, it comes and goes, it enters and goes out. There are very few people who have organised their mind sufficiently to keep it within them, close-packed, and prevent it from gadding about.

At times I seem to go out of my body and see it dead.

But that is a mere dream; probably you did not go out of your body at all. There are people who dream they are dead. But that is of no importance.

When one goes out of the body, one must try to rush towards you—I think everybody does that, don't they?

Not one in a hundred!

If you did that, very interesting things would happen to you. I knew someone in France who used to come to me every evening in order that I might show him some unknown region and take him for a ramble in the vital or mental world, and actually I used to take him there. At times there were others also, at times this person was alone. I showed him how to go out of the body, how to get back into it, how to keep the consciousness, etc., I showed him many places telling him "There you must take this

precaution, here you must do such and such a thing." And this continued for a long time.

I do not mean that no one among you comes to me in the night, but there are very few who do it consciously. Generally (you will tell me if I am wrong, but that is my impression), when you go to sleep and have decided to remember me before going to sleep, it is rather a call than a will to "rush" to me, as you say. You are there on your bed, you want to rest, to have a good sleep, remain in a good consciousness; then you call me rather than have the idea of going out of the body and coming to see me.

22 February 1951

“Yoga means union with the Divine, and the union is effected through offering—it is founded on the offering of yourself to the Divine.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (28 April)

What is the difference between surrender and offering?

The two words are almost synonymous: “I make the offering of myself and I surrender myself”, but in the gesture of offering there is something more active than in the gesture of surrender. Unfortunately, *soumission*, in French, is not the true word; in English we use “surrender”; between the words “surrender” and “offering” there is hardly any difference. But the French word *soumission* gives the impression of something more passive: you accept, while offering is a giving—a voluntary giving.

What is the exact meaning of the word “consecration?”

“Consecration” generally has a more mystical sense but this is not absolute. A total consecration signifies a total giving of one’s self; hence it is the equivalent of the word “surrender”, not of the word *soumission* which always gives the impression that one “accepts” passively. You feel a flame in the word “consecration”, a flame even greater than in the word “offering”. To consecrate oneself is “to give oneself to an action”; hence, in the yogic sense, it is to give oneself to some divine work with the idea of accomplishing the divine work.

“When the resolution has been taken, when you have decided that the whole of your life shall be given to the Divine, you have still at every moment to remember it

and carry it out in all the details of your existence. You must feel at every step that you belong to the Divine; you must have the constant experience that, in whatever you think or do, it is always the Divine Consciousness that is acting through you. You have no longer anything that you can call your own; you feel everything as coming from the Divine, and you have to offer it back to its source. When you can realise that, then even the smallest thing to which you do not usually pay much attention or care, ceases to be trivial and insignificant; it becomes full of meaning and it opens up a vast horizon beyond.”

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Because the least detail of life and action, each movement of thought, even of sensation, of feeling, which is normally of little importance, becomes different the moment you look at it asking yourself, “Did I think this as an offering to the Divine, did I feel this as an offering to the Divine?...” If you recall this every moment of your life, the attitude becomes quite different from what it was before. It becomes very wide; it is a chain of innumerable little things each having its own place, whilst formerly you used to let them go by without being aware of them. That widens the field of consciousness. If you take a half-hour of your life and think of it, putting to yourself this question: “Is it a consecration to the Divine?” you will see that the small things become a big thing and you will have the impression that life becomes rich and luminous.

Identification is the goal of Yoga. Can one say that surrender is the first step and offering the second?

No, some begin with an offering and end with surrender. It depends upon the character of each one. You may perhaps begin by having a feeling of inferiority — you are a little crushed by the grandeur of the Divine, and then you feel a little freer and

give with joy what you are. This is not always so. Many begin by self-giving; for them the easiest movement is to give themselves. In the beginning the giving is a little indefinite, then one has to make an effort at times to surrender in detail; you can give yourself with much enthusiasm, but when at every step you have to submit to the higher Will, the thing becomes more difficult.

Does not offering imply surrender?

Not at all. You can give for the joy of giving, without any idea of surrender. In a movement of enthusiasm, when you have glimpsed something infinitely higher than yourself, you can give yourself in an *élan*, but when it is a question of living that every minute, of surrendering oneself every minute to the higher Will and when every minute requires this surrender, it is more difficult. But if by “offering” you mean the integral offering of all your movements, all your activities, that is equivalent to surrender, without implying it necessarily. But then it is no longer a movement made in enthusiasm, it is something which has to be realised in detail. One may say that any movement made in ardour and enthusiasm is relatively easy (that depends upon the intensity of the movement in you), but when it is a question of realising one’s aspiration every minute of one’s life and in all its details, the enthusiasm recedes a little and one feels the difficulty.

Is there an experience which proves that one is living in the presence of the Divine?

Once one begins to live in the presence of the Divine, one does not question any longer. It carries its own certitude — one feels, one knows, and it becomes impossible to question. One lives in the presence of the Divine and it is for you an absolute fact. Till then you ask, because you do not have the experience, but once you have the experience, it has such an authority that it is indisputable. One who says, “I think I live in the presence of the

Divine but I am not sure”, has not had the true experience, for as soon as one has the inner shock of this experience, no more questioning is possible. It is like those who ask, “What is the divine Will?” As long as you have not glimpsed this Will, you cannot know. One may have an idea of it through deduction, inference, etc., but once you have felt the precise contact with the divine Will, this too is not disputable any longer — you know.

I add, so that there may not be any misunderstanding: all experience has its worth only in the measure of the sincerity of the one who has it. Some are not sincere and fabricate wonderful experiences, and they imagine they have them. I put all that aside, it is not interesting. But for sincere people who have a sincere experience, once you have the experience of the divine presence, the whole world may tell you it is not true, and you will not budge.

If you are not sincere, you may have wonderful experiences, but these have no value either for you or for others. You should distrust your thought a good deal, for the mind is a wonderful constructor and it can give you wonderful experiences solely by its work of formation; but these experiences have no value. It is hence preferable not to know beforehand what is going to happen. For even with a great will to be sincere, the mind fabricates so much and so well that it can present to you a wonderful picture or even play for you a splendid comedy without your being aware of it, by its sheer power of formation, and it is very difficult to find out. Hence one essential condition for having true experiences: leave this machine in quietness; the less it moves, the better it is, and beware of everything it imagines for you.

What is the difference between aspiration and a demand?

When you have experienced both, you can easily make the distinction. In aspiration there is what I might call an unselfish flame which is not present in desire. Your aspiration is not a

turning back upon self — desire is always a turning back upon oneself. From the purely psychological point of view, aspiration is a self-giving, always, while desire is always something which one draws to oneself; aspiration is something which gives itself, not necessarily in the form of thought but in the movement, in the vibration, in the vital impulse.

True aspiration does not come from the head; even when it is formulated by a thought, it springs up like a flame from the heart. I do not know if you have read the articles Sri Aurobindo has written on the Vedas. He explains somewhere that these hymns were not written with the mind; they were not, as one thinks, prayers, but the expression of an aspiration which was an impulse, like a flame coming from the heart (though it is not the “heart” but the psychological centre of the being, to use the exact words). They were not “thought out”, words were not set to experiences, the experience came wholly formulated with the precise, exact, inevitable words — they could not be changed. This is the very nature of aspiration: you do not seek to formulate it, it springs up from you like a ready flame. And if there are words (sometimes there aren’t any), they cannot be changed: you cannot replace one word by another, every word is just the right one. When the aspiration is formulated, this is done categorically, absolutely, without any possibility of change. And it is always something that springs up and gives itself, whereas the very nature of desire is to pull things to oneself.

The essential difference between love in aspiration and love in desire is that love in aspiration gives itself entirely and asks nothing in return — it does not claim anything; whereas love in desire gives itself as little as possible, asks as much as possible, it pulls things to itself and always makes demands.

Aspiration always gives joy, doesn’t it?

Rather a feeling of plenitude — “joy” is a misleading word; a feeling of plenitude, of force, of an inner flame which fills you.

Aspiration can give you joy, but a very special joy, which has no excitement in it.

Are the soul and the psychic being one and the same thing?

That depends on the definition you give to the words. In most religions, and perhaps in most philosophies also, it is the vital being which is called “soul”, for it is said that “the soul leaves the body”, while it is the vital being which leaves the body. One speaks of “saving the soul”, “wicked souls”, “redeeming the soul”... but all that applies to the vital being, for the psychic being has no need to be saved! It does not share the faults of the external person, it is free from all reaction.

When one works and wants to do one's best, one needs much time. But generally we don't have much time, we are in a hurry. How to do one's best when one is in a hurry?

It is a very interesting subject and I wanted to speak to you about it in detail, one day. Generally when men are in a hurry, they do not do completely what they have to do or they do badly what they do. Well, there is a third way, it is to intensify one's concentration. If you do that you can gain half the time, even from a very short time. Take a very ordinary example: to have your bath and to dress; the time needed varies with people, doesn't it? But let us say, half an hour is required for doing everything without losing time and without hurrying. Then, if you are in a hurry, one of two things happens: you don't wash so well or you dress badly! But there is another way — to concentrate one's attention and one's energy, think only of what one is doing and not of anything else, not to make a movement too much, to make the exact movement in the most exact way, and (it is an experience lived, I can speak of it with certitude) you can

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do in fifteen minutes what you were formerly doing in half an hour, and do it as well, at times even better, without forgetting anything, without leaving out anything, simply by the intensity of the concentration.

And this is the best answer to all those who say, “Oh, if one wants to do things well, one must have time.” This is not true. For all that you do — study, play, work — there is only one solution: to increase one’s power of concentration. And when you acquire this concentration, it is no longer tiring. Naturally, in the beginning, it creates a tension, but when you have grown used to it, the tension diminishes, and a moment comes when what fatigues you is to be not thus concentrated, to disperse yourself, allow yourself to be swallowed by all kinds of things, and not to concentrate on what you do. One can succeed in doing things even better and more quickly by the power of concentration. And in this way you can make use of work as a means of growth; otherwise you have this vague idea that work must be done “disinterestedly”, but there is a great danger there, for one is very quick to confuse disinterestedness with indifference.

24 February 1951

The other day I said that most of the time people do not have their psychic being within them. I would like to explain this in greater detail.... You must remember that the inner beings are not in the third dimension. If you open up your body you will find only the viscera of the body which are in the third dimension. The inner beings are in another dimension, and when I say that some men do not have their psychic being within them, I do not mean that it is not at the centre of their being, but that their outer consciousness is so small, so limited, so obscure that it is not able to keep a contact, not only conscious but intimate, with the psychic being which extends beyond it in every way; it is so much higher and deeper than the other outer consciousness that there is no relation either of quality or of nature between them. Religions say that you have a divine spark in you—it is well they call it a “spark”, for it is so small indeed that it can be placed anywhere in the body without difficulty. But this does not mean that it is in the body: it is within the consciousness in another dimension, and there are beings who have a contact with it, others who haven’t. But if you come to the divine Presence in the atom, the image is easier to understand, for there you touch so infinitesimal a domain that you are on the border-line where you can no longer distinguish between two, three, four or five dimensions. If you study modern physics you will understand what I mean. The movements constituting an atom are, in the matter of size, so imperceptible that they cannot be understood with our three-dimensional understanding, the more so as they follow laws which elude completely this three-dimensional idea. So if you take refuge there, you may say that the divine spark is at the centre of each atom and you won’t be far from the truth; but I was not speaking of the divine spark, I was speaking of the being,

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the psychic consciousness, which is another thing. The psychic being is an entity which has a form; it is organised around a central consciousness and, having a form it has a dimension, but a dimension of another kind than the third dimension of the outer consciousness.

It is often said that children enter into possession of their psychic being when they are about seven. What does this mean exactly?

This is not correct. There are people whose psychic being watches over their formation before their birth, even before they are in the womb of their mother. There are children whose psychic being comes into contact with them at the very moment they utter their first cry. There are also people whose psychic being comes a few hours after their birth, or some days after, or some weeks, some months, some years after or... never!

You told me once that one must not ask a child to make a mental effort before the age of seven.

That is quite different. There it is a question only of the formation of the physical brain which develops slowly, little by little. If you ask of a brain in formation an effort beyond its capacity, you tire it, you overwork it or you make it ill.

You say that the psychic being is the same thing as the divine spark...

No, I never said that — it would be foolish! The psychic being is organised *around* the divine spark. The divine spark is one, universal, the same everywhere and in everything, one and infinite, of the same kind in all. You cannot say that it is a being — it is *the being*, if you like, but not *a* being. Naturally, if you go back to the origin, you may say that there is only one soul, for the

origin of all souls is the same, as the origin of the whole universe is the same, as the origin of the entire creation is the same. But the psychic being is an individual, personal being with its own experience, its own development, its own growth, its own organisation; only, this organisation is the product of the action of a central divine spark.

But the day an external being (physical, mental, vital) enters into direct and constant contact with the psychic being, one may say in the same way that the *physical* being of this person is organised by the central divine consciousness. The moment you put yourself in contact with it, submit yourself to it, you are organised by it, by the central divine consciousness; one may say that the body is organised by it, but it is a *body*, not a soul. The fact of being organised by this divine spark does not make it a soul.

Is there a psychic being in the atom?

No, it is not yet there. It can be said that there is a possibility of psychic consciousness in Matter — the diffusion of the divine Consciousness had only one object: to make possible an organisation which would be under the direct influence of the Divine. That is why it passes over all the worlds of disorder.¹ It may hence be said that the Origin of the soul is also in the atom, in all the elements constituting the atom, but it is only the Origin.... I must tell you that when it is fully formed, the psychic being has a distinct form which corresponds to our physical form. It is not altogether similar, but it has a definite form. Every psychic being is different from another — they are not all cut out, modelled

¹ At the time of the publication of this talk, Mother added the following note for the sake of precision: "Some parts of the vital are worlds of disorder and the beings inhabiting the vital have no psychic being. The psychic being exists only upon earth, in the physical world. That is why I said in brief that the divine spark, which organises the psychic, passed over the worlds of disorder and manifested itself directly in the physical world to create there this possibility of organisation around the divine spark."

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to one pattern. They are different, each has an individuality, a personality.

Mother reads a question asked during her talk in 1929:

“Do many remember that they have passed over [to the other side] and are back again?”

Questions and Answers 1929 (28 April)

I was seriously ill, unconscious for two hours, and I had the impression that I had gone over to the other side, that I was in a different world. When I came back to myself, I had the impression of having made a long journey in a world quite different from the one where I normally lived.

It was a partial exteriorisation; it was not a total exteriorisation which indeed causes death. If one goes out entirely, that is, if there is a complete separation from the body and one is really dead, and then one comes back, that causes such an intense suffering that one cannot forget it. It is said that babies cry when they come into the world because the first contact with air makes them cry, but I think it is something else. The re-entry into the body causes a kind of friction, for what goes out has to be something very material if it is to bring about death, something even more material than the subtle physical, and this friction is extremely painful. Otherwise one may be externally unconscious, but one is not dead for all that. It is only when something extremely material goes out of the body and all ties are broken that there is truly “death”. And that is why (I believe we are beginning to discover it) people do not die till six or seven days after their death. That is, they are not “dead” as long as the body remains intact, but only when a part of the body begins to decompose. Hence during this period, someone who has the necessary knowledge, power and capacity may “raise”

a person in such a state. I believe this explains most of the cases of “miraculous” resurrection.

A person was dead. The doctors massaged the heart and after some time the person revived.

Yes, in that sphere they are beginning to work “miracles”!

“When you reach a certain state of consciousness, you remember [passing over to the other side]. It is not so difficult to touch this state partially for a short time; in deep meditation, in a dream or a vision one may have the feeling or the impression that he has lived this life before, had this realisation, known these truths. But this is not a full realisation; to come to that, one must have attained to a permanent consciousness within us which is everlasting and holds together all our existences in past or present or future time.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (28 April)

You must always distrust people who go rambling in some kind of mental or vital domain, and then tell you stories imagining that they remember their past lives. You know the classical example of that well-known lady who narrated her lives from the time she had been a monkey! I may assure you that it is pure imagination, for it is impossible to remember like that.

This is what happens. Let us take a divine spark which, through attraction, through affinity and selection, gathers around it a beginning of psychic consciousness (this work is already very perceptible in animals—don’t think you are exceptional beings, that you alone have a psychic being and the rest of creation hasn’t. It begins in the mineral, it is a little more developed in the plant, and in the animal there is a first glimmer of the psychic presence). Then there comes a moment when this psychic being is sufficiently developed to have an independent

consciousness and a personal will. And then after innumerable lives more or less individualised, it becomes conscious of itself, of its movements and of the environment it has chosen for its growth. Arriving at a certain state of perception, it decides—generally at the last minute of the life it has just finished upon earth—the conditions in which its next life will be passed. Here I must tell you a very important thing: the psychic being can progress and form itself only in the physical life and upon earth. As soon as it leaves a body, it enters into a rest which lasts for a more or less long time according to its own choice and its degree of development—a rest for assimilation, for a passive progress so to say, a rest for passive growth which will allow this same psychic being to pass on to new experiences and make a more active progress. But after having finished one life (which usually ends only when it has done what it wanted to do), it will have chosen the environment where it will be born, the approximate place where it will be born, the conditions and the kind of life in which it will be born, and a very precise programme of the experiences through which it will have to pass to be able to make the progress it wants to make.

I am going to give you quite a concrete example. Let us take a psychic being that has decided, for some reason or other, to enter the body of a being destined to become king, because there is a whole series of experiences it can have only under those conditions. After having passed through these experiences of a king, it finds that there is a whole domain in which it cannot make a progress due to these very conditions of life where it is. So when it has finished its term upon earth and decides to go away, it decides that in its next life it will take birth in an ordinary environment and in ordinary conditions, neither high nor low, but such that the body which it will take up will be free to do what it likes. For I do not tell you anything new when I say that the life of a king is the life of a slave; a king is obliged to submit to a whole protocol and to all kinds of ceremonies to keep his prestige (it is perhaps

very pleasant for vain people, but for a psychic being it is not pleasant, for this deprives it of the possibility of a large number of experiences). So having taken this decision, it carries in itself all the memories which a royal life can give it and it takes rest for the period it considers necessary. (Here, I must say that I am speaking of a psychic being exclusively occupied with itself, not one consecrated to a work, because in that case it is the work which decides the future lives and their conditions; I am speaking of a psychic being at work completing its development.) Hence it decides that at a certain moment it will take a body. Having already had a number of experiences, it knows that in a certain country, a certain part of the consciousness has developed; in another, another part, and so on; so it chooses the place which offers it easy possibilities of development: the country, the conditions of living, the approximate nature of the parents, and also the condition of the body itself, its physical structure and the qualities it needs for its experiences. It takes rest, then at the required moment, wakes up and projects its consciousness upon earth centralising it in the chosen domain and the chosen conditions—or almost so; there is a small margin you know, for in the psychic consciousness one is too far away from the material physical consciousness to be able to see with a clear vision; it is an approximation. It does not make a mistake about the country or the environment and it sees quite clearly the inner vibrations of the people chosen, but there may happen to be a slight indecision. But if, just at this moment, there is a couple upon earth or rather a woman who has a psychic aspiration herself and, for some reason or other, without knowing why or how, would like to have an exceptional child, answering certain exceptional conditions; if at this moment there is this aspiration upon earth, it creates a vibration, a psychic light which the psychic being sees immediately and, without hesitation it rushes towards it. Then, from that moment (which is the moment of conception), it watches over the formation of the child, so that this formation may be

as favourable as possible to the plan it has; consequently its influence is there over the child even before it appears in the physical world.

If all goes well, if there is no accident (accidents can always happen), if all goes well at the moment the child is about to be born, the psychic force (perhaps not in its totality, but a part of the psychic consciousness) rushes into the being and from its very first cry gives it a push towards the experiences it wants the child to acquire. The result is that even if the parents are not conscious, even if the child in its external consciousness is not quite conscious (a little child does not have the necessary brain for that, it forms slowly, little by little), in spite of that, it will be possible for the psychic influence to direct all the events, all the circumstances of the life of this child till the moment it becomes capable of coming into conscious contact with its psychic being (physically it is generally between the age of four and seven, sometimes sooner, sometimes almost immediately, but in such a case we deal with children who are not "children", who have "supernatural" qualities, as they say—they are not "supernatural", but simply the expression of the presence of the psychic being). But there are people who have not had the chance or rather the good fortune if one may call it that, of meeting someone, physically, who could instruct them. And yet they have the feeling that every step of their existence, every circumstance of their life is arranged by someone conscious, so that they may make the maximum progress. When they need a certain circumstance, it comes; when they need to meet certain people, they come; when they need to read certain books, they find them within their reach. Everything is arranged like that, as if someone was watching over them so that their life may have the maximum possibilities of development. These people may very well say: "But what is a psychic being?", for no one has ever used these words in speaking to them or they have not found anybody who could explain to them all that; but for them often just one meeting is sufficient, just one look, in order

to wake up; one word suffices to make them remember: "But I knew all that!"

This is exactly what happens to a psychic being which has reached the last stage of its development. After that, it will no longer be bound by the necessity of coming upon earth, it will have completed its development and will be able to choose freely either to consecrate itself to the divine Work or go elsewhere, that is, in the higher worlds. But generally, having come to this stage, it remembers all that has happened to it and understands the great necessity of coming to the help of those who are yet struggling in the midst of difficulties. These psychic beings give their whole existence to the divine Work — this is not absolute, inevitable, they choose freely, but ninety times out of a hundred this is what they do.

But in ordinary lives — and by that I mean the life of a certain *élite* of sufficiently well-developed people — the contact between the external being and the psychic is quite intermittent; it is the result of certain experiences or certain inner needs. At that moment the psychic being is "in front", as Sri Aurobindo says, that is, it comes to the surface of the consciousness, it is in direct contact with material circumstances, with forms and words and sounds, etc., for a very short time; so it records all that like a photograph or a cinema, but it is just a minute, a few moments in a lifetime. These moments may repeat themselves several times, but they do not last; and it is this the psychic being remembers; and when you have real psychic memories, sincere, spontaneous, not fabricated by the mind or the vital, that is, purely psychic, exact, your memory is *intermittent*. And it is often very difficult to locate your past lives, to say: "I was this or that." It is only when the psychic experience has taken place at a very important moment of your life and a whole set of circumstances gives you, so to say, the key to the story (dresses, spoken words, customs or an environment giving you the key) that you can say: "Oh! That life, I have lived it." But if someone comes and narrates to you all his previous lives from the monkey

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onwards, with a mass of details, you may be sure that he is a humbug!

You spoke of the “chance” of a psychic being meeting what will be its physical being.

No, I said “accident”; an accident is not a chance.

In life there is always a conflict between opposing forces, and the result of this conflict is not always foreseen except when one is conscious in the highest consciousness. One cannot foresee the result of a conflict with a consciousness which does not go beyond the human consciousness, so one calls it an “accident”. It is not chance, it is not even an accident without reason, but an accident caused by reasons which one is not in a condition to foresee.

In a dream, I thought I saw pictures of a former ascetic life.

There is such a strong suggestion here [in India] that to live the spiritual life, one must take up the life of a sannyasin, that this perhaps is the cause of your pictures. In any case, if it was really a previous life, it was not the last one. You have surely had intermediary lives, for rarely is a being born in the same country several times consecutively — it would not be very profitable. If it had been the ascetic life of the time of the first Christians, for instance, you would have noticed certain details: the different colour of your skin, a dress, etc., whereas you probably saw the usual pictures of Indian life.... Everything is possible, of course. The universe is constituted in such a way that all the possibilities can be realised there: but, as I said, it is rare for one to be born several times in the same country unless it be to accomplish a special work, with a special end in view; and then it is very rare for one not to know it, for this means that the psychic being is fully formed and has itself chosen to come back to the same

country to do a special work or to continue what it had already begun.

Many have had a previous ascetic life, for the collective suggestion is very strong here. It is very rare for a person not to think that to perfect oneself and to live a spiritual life one must leave the world.

There are also symbolic and premonitory dreams, but very rarely do dreams consist of true memories of past lives, because for that one must dream in one's psychic consciousness and there are not many who are capable of this. One dreams in the mental or vital consciousness but rarely does one dream in the psychic consciousness. That can happen, but it is rare.

At times, there are dreams which one takes for memories, but they are only symbols: what one sees comes from a mental formation which is objectified on an inner screen and which enacts a scene, so to say, in which you are an actor.

Here in India frequently children are born in a village and they give, while very young, precise information about the village where they have lived before, about their parents, etc. Is this true?

Yes, but generally these are children who have died as children or very young and whose previous life had not fully run out. This can happen.

In what does a psychic being's progress consist?

Individualisation, the capacity to take up all experiences and organise them around the divine centre.

The aim of the psychic being is to form an individual being, individualised, "personalised" around the divine centre. Normally, all the experiences of the external life (unless one does yoga and becomes conscious) pass without organising the inner

being, while the psychic being organises these experiences serially. It wants to realise a particular attitude towards the Divine. Hence it looks for all favourable experiences in order to have the complete series of opportunities, so to say, which will allow it to realise this attitude towards the Divine. Take someone, for example, who wants to have the experience of nobility — a nobility which makes it impossible for you to act like an ordinary person, which infuses into you a bravery, a courage which may almost be taken for rashness because the attitude, the experience demands that you face danger without showing the least fear. I was telling you a while ago that I would explain to you what one could acquire by entering into the body of a king. A king is an ordinary man, isn't he, like all others; he does not have a special consciousness, but through the necessities of his life, because he is a kind of symbol to his people, there are things he is obliged to do which he could never do if he were an ordinary man. I know this by experience, but I saw this also while looking at photographs which represented a king in actual circumstances: something had happened, which might have been an attempt on his life, but was averted. The photographs showed the king inspecting a regiment; all of a sudden someone had rushed forward, perhaps with a bad intention, perhaps not, for nothing had happened; in any case, the king had remained completely impassive, absolutely calm, the same smile on his lips, without moving the least from the place where he was; and he was quite within sight, an easy target for one who wanted to rush forward and hurt him. For all I know, this king was not a hero, but because he was a king, he could not take to flight! That would have been ignoble. So he remained calm, without stirring, without showing any outward fear. This is an example of what one can learn in the life of a king.

There is also a true story about Queen Elizabeth. She had come to the last days of her life and was extremely ill. But there was trouble in the country and, about questions of taxation, a group of people (merchants, I believe) had formed a delegation

to present a petition to her in the name of a party of the people. She lay very ill in her room, so ill that she could hardly stand. But she got up and dressed to receive them. The lady who was attending upon her cried out, "But it is impossible, you will die of this!" The queen answered quietly, "We shall die afterwards".... This is an example from a whole series of experiences one can have in the life of a king, and it is this which justifies the choice of the psychic being when it takes up this kind of life.

It is memories of this kind which prove the authenticity of the experience; for what generally happens when people tell you about their past lives is this: in these lives there is always a progress, naturally; so they become more and more splendid people in more and more marvellous circumstances! It is wrong, things never happen like that. The psychic being follows a certain line of existence which develops certain qualities, certain powers, etc., but the psychic being always sees what it lacks and it can choose the opposite line in a future life, a negation, so to say, of this experience in order to have complementary experiences.

26 February 1951

Mother reads a question asked during her talk in 1929:

“In the initial stages of Yoga, is it well for the Sadhaka to read ordinary books?”

Questions and Answers 1929 (28 April)

It is a question I have been asked many times. If someone can tell me the effect on him of the reading of ordinary books, it will interest me very much.

Ordinary books tire me.

It is a good sign.

They give rest to the mind and have no effect on me.

No! The subconscious records everything, and if you have the impression that an ordinary book leaves no effect, it means that you are not conscious of what goes on within you. Each time you read a book in which the consciousness is very low, it strengthens your subconscious and inconscient—it prevents your consciousness from rising upward. It is as if you threw buckets of dirty water on the efforts you had made to purify your subconscious.

It is inevitable, but there are people who are not even aware that their consciousness has fallen very low.

There is a state in which a simple conversation which obliges you to remain on the level of ordinary life gives you a headache, turns your stomach and, if it continues, may give you a fever. I am speaking of course about the gossip-type of conversations. I believe that apart from a few exceptions, everybody

indulges in this exercise and talks of things about which he should keep silent or chatters about other things. It becomes so natural that you are not troubled by it. But if you continue in this way, you hinder your consciousness completely from rising up; you bind yourself with iron chains to the ordinary consciousness and the work in the subconscious is not done or has not even begun. Those who want to rise up have already enough difficulties without looking for encouragements outside.

Naturally, the effort to keep the consciousness at a high level is tiring in the beginning, like the exercises you do to develop your muscles. But you do not give up gymnastics because of that! So mentally also you must do the same thing. You must not allow your mind to stoop low: gossiping degrades you and, if you want to do Yoga, you must abstain from it, that's all.

"You can read sacred books and yet be far away from the Divine; and you can read the most stupid productions and be in touch with the Divine.... There is a way of consciousness in union with the Divine in which you can enjoy all you read, as you can all you observe.... For there is nothing in the world which has not its ultimate truth and support in the Divine. And if you are not stopped by the appearance, physical or moral or aesthetic... you can reach beauty and delight even through what affects the ordinary sense only as something ugly, poor, painful or discordant."

Ibid.

The state of consciousness of which I speak here is very difficult to attain; it is a discipline which needs years and it is a realisation which is not within everybody's reach. There is, however, an intermediate state through which one has to pass: a state in which one cuts the connection between oneself and all that one does not want to hear or see.

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“Obviously, what has happened had to happen; it would not have been, if it had not been intended. Even the mistakes that we have committed and the adversities that fell upon us had to be, because there was some necessity in them, some utility for our lives. But in truth these things cannot be explained mentally and should not be. For all that happened was necessary, not for any mental reason, but to lead us to something beyond what the mind imagines. But is there any need to explain after all? The whole universe explains everything at every moment and a particular thing happens because the whole universe is what it is.”

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The whole universe explains each thing at each moment. That is very important.

If one wants to learn a language, is it not necessary to read ordinary books like those of Alexandre Dumas, for instance?

Yes, if one reads to study the language, to understand how an author expresses himself, it is quite all right. But this should not be made an excuse for reading anything whatever.

Haven’t imaginary stories any value?

That depends on the quality of the imagination. If you say that it is a good thing to develop one’s imagination, this is true, only you must take care not to develop an untruthful imagination.

Do not imaginary stories put you in contact with life, with truth?

Not always! And what does “contact with truth” mean? — there is a truth in a grain of sand. That means nothing.

Don't you think there are enough ugly things in the world without one's giving a picture of them in books? This is something which always used to surprise me, even when I was a child—life is so ugly, so full of mean, miserable, even at times repulsive things, what is the use of imagining yet worse things than are already there? If you imagined something more beautiful, a more beautiful life, that would be worth the trouble. People who take pleasure in writing ugly things show a great poverty of mind—it is always a sign of a poverty of mind. It is infinitely more difficult to tell a story beautiful from beginning to end than to write a story ending with a sensational event or a catastrophe. Many authors, if they had to write a story which ends happily, beautifully, would not be able to do it—they do not have enough imagination for that. Very few stories have an uplifting ending, almost all end in a failure—for a very simple reason, it is much more easy to fall than to rise. It is much more difficult to end one's story on a note of greatness and splendour, to make one's hero a genius seeking to transcend himself, because for that one must be a genius oneself, and this is not given to everybody.

When one reads ordinary books, one has the impression of entering into the mind of the author and that is not always pleasant. I have also noticed that when one talks about business or work with an outsider, the conversation can be good and interesting, but as soon as one talks with the same person about his private life, the conversation immediately becomes painful.

Yes, because work, especially if it is technical work, is the expression of the best in the man, while in his private life he comes down to a lower level, with very few exceptions. So many remarkable scholars, writers, artists who produce remarkable things, once they enter their homes, become detestable husbands, unpleasant fathers, intolerable people for those who are

around them. And I am speaking of an élite, those who make special studies, discoveries, who run big institutions: outside, they are uncommon people, men of great abilities; back home they become commonplace and often unbearable — they have a nice time, they take rest, relax themselves. And if they begin to amuse themselves, that's the end of it all! I knew people of great intelligence, admirable artists who, as soon as they began to "relax", became utterly foolish! They did the most vulgar things, behaved like ill-bred children — they were relaxing. Everything comes from this "need" of relaxation; and what does that mean for most men? It means, always, coming down to a lower level. They do not know that for a true relaxation one must rise one degree higher, one must rise above oneself. If one goes down, it adds to one's fatigue and brings a kind of stupor. Besides, each time one comes down, one increases the load of the subconscious — this huge subconscious load which one must clean and clean if one wants to mount, and which is like fetters on the feet. But it is difficult to teach that, for one must know it oneself before one can teach it to others.

This is never told to children, they are allowed to commit all the stupidities in the world under the pretext that they need relaxation.

It is not by sinking below oneself that one removes fatigue. One must climb the ladder and there one has true rest, because one has the inner peace, the light, the universal energy. And little by little one puts oneself in touch with the truth which is the very reason of one's existence.

If you contact that definitively, it removes completely all fatigue.

When one recognises one's faults, one can't commit them again, can one?

If one is sincere, no. If you repeat the same errors several times, you may be sure you are not sincere somewhere. When one

recognises one's mistake and yet repeats it, it means that only a superficial part of the consciousness has recognised it and the rest is perfectly satisfied with it and generally justifies it. You may tell yourself without the risk of making a mistake: "If I repeat the same fault, I am not sincere." So try to be sincere.

When one speaks to others, one rarely comes to an agreement, for people do not see things in the same way. Or if I see the other's point of view, I cannot accept it.

That means you are not plastic. You may be sure that if you find a person boring, he will also find you boring. You will never arrive at anything if you do not take the attitude of putting yourself in the place of the other, this is indispensable. When someone tells you something you do not understand, you must not say, "He knows nothing", but you must try to understand. If you want to be quite sincere, even when a child comes and tells you something you do not understand, you must not say, "This child is stupid", but "It is I who am stupid, because I do not understand!"

There are a hundred ways of looking at a problem. If you want to find the solution, you must take up all the elements one after another, rise above them and see how they harmonise.

There is a state of consciousness which may be called "gnostic", in which you are able to see *at the same time* all the theories, all the beliefs, all the ideas men have expressed in their highest consciousness — the most contradictory notions, like the Buddhistic, the Vedantic, the Christian theories, all the philosophical theories, all the expressions of the human mind when it has managed to catch a little corner of the Truth — and in that state, not only do you put each thing in its place, but everything appears to you marvellously true and quite indispensable in order to be able to understand anything at all about anything whatsoever. There is a state of consciousness... Oh, I was going to tell you things you cannot yet understand. I shall give you a simpler example.

Anatole France said in one of his books: "So long as men did not try to make the world progress, all went well and everybody was satisfied — no worry about perfecting oneself or perfecting the world, consequently all went well. Therefore the worst thing is to want to make others progress; let them do what they like and don't bother about anything, that will be much more wise." On the contrary, others tell you: "There is a Truth to be attained; the world is in a state of ignorance and one must at all costs, in spite of the difficulty of the way, enlighten man's consciousness and pull him out of his ignorance." But I tell you that there is a state of consciousness in which both the ways of seeing are absolutely equally true. Naturally, if you take only two aspects, it is difficult to see clearly; one must be able to see all the aspects of the truth glimpsed by the human intelligence and... something more. And then, in that state, nothing is absolutely false, nothing is absolutely bad. In that state one is free from all problems, all difficulties, all battles and everything appears to you wonderfully harmonious.

But if you try to imitate this condition mentally — do you understand? To make a mental imitation of it — you may be sure of doing stupid things; you will be one of those who have a chaos in their head and can say the most contradictory things without even being aware of it.

In that condition there is no contradiction — it is a totality and a totality in which one has the full knowledge of all the truths expressed (which are not sufficient to express the total Truth), in which one knows the respective places of all things, why and of what the universe is formed. Only — I hasten to tell you this — it is not by a personal effort that one reaches this condition; it is not because one tries to obtain it that one obtains it. You *become* that, spontaneously. It is, if you like, the crowning of an absolute mental sincerity, when you no longer have any partiality, any preference, any attachment to an idea, when you do not even try any longer to know the truth.

You are simply open in the Light, that's all.

I am telling you this, this evening, because what is done, what has been realised by one can be realised by others. It is enough that one body has been able to realise that, one human body, to have the assurance that it *can* be done. You may consider it still very far off, but you can say, "Yes, the gnostic life is certain, because it has begun to be realised."

1 March 1951

“There is a plane of divine consciousness in which all is known absolutely, and the whole plan of things foreseen and predetermined. That way of seeing lives in the highest reaches of the Supramental; it is the Supreme’s own vision. But when we do not possess that consciousness, it is useless to speak in terms that hold good only in that region and are not our present effective way of seeing things. For at a lower level of consciousness nothing is realised or fixed beforehand; all is in the process of making. Here there are no settled facts, there is only the play of possibilities; out of the clash of possibilities is realised the thing that has to happen. On this plane we can choose and select; we can refuse one possibility and accept another; we can follow one path, turn away from another. And that we can do, even though what is actually happening may have been foreseen and predetermined in a higher plane.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (28 April)

The word “predetermined” does not correspond to the reality; the word “pre-existent” would be more correct. The consciousness of an unfolding has a reality, it is not only an appearance.

Imagine the world as a single whole and, in a certain sense, finite, limited but containing potentially innumerable possibilities of which the combinations are so numerous that they are equivalent to an infinite (you must be careful with words, however; I am very much cramped by words, they do not express exactly what I mean). So, the universe is objectified by the Divine Consciousness, by the Supreme, according to certain determined laws of which we shall speak later. The universe is a single whole, in the sense that it is the Divine—it does not contain

the whole of the Divine, but it is as though the Divine deployed Himself so as to objectify Himself; that is the *raison d'être* of the manifestation of the universe. It is as if the divine Consciousness wandered into all divine possibilities following a path it had chosen. Imagine then a multitude of possibles of which all the possible combinations are equivalent to an infinite. The divine Consciousness is essentially free — It wanders therein and objectifies Itself. The path traversed is free in the midst of an infinite multiplicity which is at the same time pre-existent and absolutely undetermined according to the action of the free divine Will. It may be conceived that this Will, being free, is able to change the course of the deployment, change the path and, although everything is pre-existent and consequently inevitable, the road, the path is free and absolutely unexpected. These changes of the route, if one may say so, can therefore change the relations between things and circumstances, and consequently the determinism is changed. This change of the circuit is called "the effect of the Grace"; well, through the aid of the Grace, if the Grace decides it, things can change, the course can be different. Things can change their places and instead of following a certain circuit follow another. A circumstance which, according to a particular determinism, should occur at a certain place ahead, for instance, would instead occur behind, and so on. The relations between things consequently change.¹

At what moment does Time begin? The Consciousness that chooses—is it in Time as soon as the unrolling begins?

¹ Returning to the definition of the word "pre-existent", Mother added the following commentary at the time of the publication of this talk: "Sat, that is, absolute Existence, is not in the Manifestation; it exists without being manifested; it is the non-manifest state of existence. There is Tat which is the state of non-existence and Sat which is the state of existence; and Tat naturally is not manifested, but Sat also is not manifested: it is only when Chit-Tapas comes, the Consciousness-Energy, the Consciousness which realises, that Sat manifests itself."

No, Time is a succession; you must be able to conceive that the Supreme Consciousness, before objectifying itself, becomes aware of Itself in Itself. There is a global, total and simultaneous perception and there, there is no Time. Likewise one cannot speak of "Space", for the same reason, because all is simultaneous. It is something more; it corresponds to a state of consciousness subjective rather than objective, for the aim, the motive of creation is objectivisation; but there is a first step in this objectivisation in which there is a plenary consciousness, total and simultaneous, beyond Time and Space, of what will constitute the content of this universe; and there, the universe is pre-existent, but not manifested, and Time begins with objectivisation.

Can it be said that Time begins with the supramental plane?

It is not the same kind of Time. There is only a beginning of Time and a beginning of form. Time there is of a very different quality. There is a global, static consciousness before arriving at the supramental level, in which everything appears simultaneously — Time is the result of the fact that there is a succession in the organisation of the whole. While the totality you perceive all at once, on the supramental level, is not a static totality — the static totality gives place to another totality which gives the impression of Time. These are inner relations within the Supermind, in the sense that one is not aware of something which happens outside oneself; one is conscious only of something within oneself, internal, but the internal relations vary, and this gives a first impression of Time.

In this state of consciousness one does not have the impression of things being born, passing, disappearing, does one?

Oh, no! Nothing of the kind.

"The Supreme Consciousness knows everything beforehand, because everything is realised there in her eternity. But for the sake of her play and in order to carry out actually on the physical plane what is foreordained in her own supreme self, she moves here upon earth as if she did not know the whole story; she works as if it was a new and untried thread that she was weaving."

Questions and Answers 1929 (28 April)

If you undertake a work and are told beforehand that all will be useless and you will not be able to do what you want, would you do it? No, surely not! Well, it is something like that which happens. Ninety times out of a hundred, what you do does not give the expected result. Not one person in a million would do his work if he were told: "Do this, but the result will not be at all what you want." But in the play of forces many must work for the aggregate of forces, for the totality of forces, although individually this work has no personal utility for the one who does it. So, if the individual had the knowledge that the part he plays in the whole is infinitesimal, he would not play it. But the moment you go above that, when you do things, not with a fixed end in view, but because you know within yourself that this is the thing to be done, whatever the result, then with this kind of detachment you know and see in the higher Consciousness that all action is done exclusively because it has to be done whatever may be the result; and generally you are sufficiently clear-sighted to know, at least vaguely, what will be the result of this action. For knowing it will not change in the least your way of doing it.

Instead of an explanation which goes from below upward, it would be wiser to look for an explanation which comes from above downward and rather to conceive that little by little the

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Consciousness comes down and as it comes down is obscured, and one no longer understands by what mechanism things are done — that is what is called a state of ignorance.

“In a picture you need a definite scheme of composition and colour; you have to set a limit, to put the whole thing within a fixed framework; but the limit is illusory, the frame is a mere convention. There is a constant continuation of the picture that stretches beyond any particular frame, and each continuation can be drawn in the same conditions in an unending series of frames. Our aim is this or that, we say, but we know that it is only the beginning of another aim beyond it, and that in its turn leads to yet another....”

Questions and Answers 1929 (28 April)

If I were told that things are going to stop at a certain point, I would find it very boring, so boring that I would not stir!

The only thing which consoles me is that everything continues always, infinitely, that there is always something new to be done.

Whatever be the goal attained, it is only a beginning.

What is the difference between “spiritual” and “psychic”?

It is not the same thing. The psychic is the being organised by the divine Presence and it belongs to the earth — I am not speaking of the universe, only of the earth; it is only upon earth that you will find the psychic being. The rest of the universe is formed in quite a different way.

The universe contains all the domains higher than the physical: there is a global physical comprising the mental, the vital, etc., and all the domains above the mental are domains of a spiritual order, domains which are, for us, domains of the spirit,

and it is this “spirit” which little by little, progressively, materialises itself to arrive at Matter as we conceive it. The beings of the Overmind, for instance, and all the beings of the higher regions have no psychic being — the “angels” have no psychic being. It is only upon earth that the psychic life begins, and it is just the process by which the Divine has awakened material life to the necessity of rejoining its divine origin. Without the psychic, Matter would never have awakened from its inconsciousness, it would never have aspired for the life of its origin, the spiritual life. Therefore, the psychic being in the human being is the manifestation of spiritual aspiration; but there is a spiritual life independent of the psychic.

Is there a correspondence between the psychic world and the earth?

But I have already told you that it is only upon earth that the psychic being gets its experiences to individualise itself. Hence there is an almost absolute interdependence between the psychic world and the earth.

What is the most effective means of awakening the psychic being?

But it is wide awake! And not only is it awake, but it acts, only you are not aware of it. It appears to you asleep because you don’t perceive it!

Fundamentally, without this kind of inner will of the psychic being, I believe human beings would be quite dismal, dull, they would have an altogether animal life. Every gleam of aspiration is always the expression of a psychic influence. Without the presence of the psychic, without the psychic influence, there would never be any sense of progress or any will for progress.

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Would there be a sense of beauty?

Yes. Perhaps not the highest sense of beauty, but in the vital one finds a complete sense of beauty and harmony. The beauty which is fundamental, profound, universal, constant belongs only to the psychic, but the sense of the beauty of form, of appearance, of colour, the educated, refined vital fully possesses.

And not love?

That depends on what you mean by “love”! There would not be divine love there, naturally, but all passions, attractions, desires exist in the vital. Only, the quality of these movements has been completely changed due to the descent and diffusion of the divine Consciousness in Matter. It has awakened the possibility of true love; otherwise, all those things which are taken for love, all passions and attractions and desires—the need of devouring—all that exists very well in the vital. The first form of love in Matter is the need of devouring: one wants to possess, assimilate; and the best way of doing it is to swallow and to digest! It can be said that the cat is full of love for its kittens when it eats them and the tiger full of love for the lamb it devours!

Is there a sense of beauty in flowers?

As soon as there is organic life, the vital element comes in, and it is this vital element which gives to flowers the sense of beauty. It is not perhaps individualised in the sense we understand it, but it is a sense of the species and the species always tries to realise it. I have noticed a first rudiment of the psychic presence and vibration in vegetable life, and truly this blossoming one calls a flower is the first manifestation of the psychic presence. The psychic is individualised only in man, but it was there before him; but it is not the same kind of individualisation as in man, it is more fluid: it manifests as force, as consciousness rather than

as individuality. Take the rose, for example; its great perfection of form, colour, scent expresses an aspiration and a psychic giving. Look at a rose opening in the morning at the first touch of the sun, it is a magnificent self-giving in aspiration.

Each flower has its special significance, hasn't it?

Not as we understand it mentally. There is a mental projection when one gives a precise meaning to a flower. It may answer, vibrate to the touch of this projection, accept the meaning, but a flower has no equivalent of the mental consciousness. In the vegetable kingdom there is a beginning of the psychic, but there is no beginning of the mental consciousness. In animals it is different; mental life begins to form and for them things have a meaning. But in flowers it is rather like the movement of a little baby—it is neither a sensation nor a feeling, but something of both; it is a spontaneous movement, a very special vibration. So, if one is in contact with it, if one feels it, one gets an impression which may be translated by a thought. That is how I have given a meaning to flowers and plants—there is a kind of identification with the vibration, a perception of the quality it represents and, little by little, through a kind of approximation (sometimes this comes suddenly, occasionally it takes time), there is a coming together of these vibrations (which are of a vital-emotional order) and the vibration of the mental thought, and if there is a sufficient harmony, one has a direct perception of what the plant may signify.

In some countries (particularly here) certain plants are used as the media for worship, offering, devotion. Certain plants are given on special occasions. And I have often seen that this identification was quite in keeping with the nature of the plant, because spontaneously, without knowing anything, I happened to give the same meaning as that given in religious ceremonies. The vibration was really there in the flower itself.... Did it come from the use that had been made of it or did it come from very

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far, from somewhere deep down, from a beginning of the psychic life? It would be difficult to say.

Can it happen that the psychic being does not fall at the place where it wanted to take birth?

If a psychic being sees from its psychic world a light on the earth, it may rush down there without knowing exactly where it is. Everything is possible. But if the psychic being is very conscious, sufficiently conscious, it will seek the light of aspiration in a precise place, because of the culture, the education it will find there. This happens much more frequently than one believes, especially in somewhat educated circles. An intelligent woman with some artistic or philosophical culture, a beginning of conscious individuality, may aspire that the child she is going to have may be the best possible according to her idea or according to what she has read. Hence it is not so very complicated to find a place. The number of psychic beings born constantly being considerable, if each time exceptional conditions have to be found it would be difficult. Surely, there are instances where the psychic being seems to have fallen headlong and been stunned, but this is bad luck; in such a case it generally requires a long time to wake up. It is bad luck in the sense that it probably lacked a certain power of discrimination, or perhaps it had to face certain forces which thwarted its decision and won a partial victory over it. There are a thousand possibilities, you know. One cannot say that everything goes according to the same plan — every psychic being is different.

3 March 1951

"There is even a necessity for the existence of the hostile forces. They make your determination stronger, your aspiration clearer.

"It is true, however, that they exist because you gave them reason to exist. So long as there is something in you which answers to them, their intervention is perfectly legitimate. If nothing in you responded, if they had no hold upon any part of your nature, they would retire and leave you."

Questions and Answers 1929 (5 May)

The best way of facing hostile forces is always to aspire, always to remember the Divine. And never to fear.

Mother reads a question asked during the talk in 1929:

"Do the hostile forces generally come from outside or inside?"

Ibid.

They come from outside the consciousness or the being.

Where does the being stop?... What is the difference between outside and inside, if the consciousness is everywhere!

Seekers are always told, "If you want to get rid of something, say that it is outside." This is only an impression, but it is easier to get rid of a difficulty if you have the impression that it is outside you. However, I have just told you the opposite, that if nothing "in you" answers to the hostile forces, they will never attack you. Therefore, what is inside is also outside and what is outside is also inside! The secret lies in knowing how to place it just where it is most convenient for the immediate action.

If you have a serious difficulty in your character, for example, the habit of losing your temper, and you decide: "I must not get angry again", it is very difficult, but if on the other hand, you tell yourself: "Anger is something which circulates through the whole world, it is not in me, it belongs to everybody; it wanders about here and there and if I close my door, it will not enter", it is much more easy. If you think: "It is my character, I am born like that", it becomes almost impossible. It is true there is something in your character which answers to this force of anger. All movements, all vibrations are general — they enter, they go out, they move about — but they rush upon you and enter into you only to the extent you leave the door in you open. And if you have, besides, some affinity with these forces, you may get angry without even knowing why. Everything is everywhere and it is arbitrary to draw limits.

I read somewhere, in a book written by a confirmed materialist, that human beings are as though shut in a leather sack and have no contact with other beings. It is a stupidity evidently, but there are people who are helped by it; this idea that they are shut up in a shell and have no contact with others except through this shell, protects them and prevents them from receiving anything whatever from outside. True, it is a stupidity, but some stupidities are at times useful! We said the other day that the mind is not an instrument for knowledge and that in the domain of ideas everything is relative, everything is a way of seeing, everything is a way of living. Every science has its language, every religion its language, every philosophy its language, every activity its own language, and the more you learn these languages, the more do you have the impression of knowing many things. What matters is that you do know all the languages. You must come to the point where all these movements of the mind are for you a play altogether relative — you may play well or ill, but it is all a play. There are people who know how to make use of it, these are the so-called "intelligent" people and there are those who do not know how to use it, these are the so-called "fools".

Things are “in” us to the extent we identify ourselves with them. If we push back the identification, are they outside?

This is an altogether subjective way of speaking. To act, you have to make some classifications and it is just for this that the mind is useful: it organises, it puts each thing in its place, it plays the game; and it is this activity which creates the rules of the game and by obeying these rules it can win the game. But true knowledge comes from elsewhere.

“Mental faith is not sufficient; it must be completed and enforced by a vital and even a physical faith, a faith of the body. If you can create in yourself an integral force of this kind in all your being, then nothing can resist it; but... you must fix the faith in the very cells of the body. There is, for instance, now abroad the beginning of a knowledge among the scientists that death is not a necessity. But the whole of humanity believes firmly in death.... If this belief could be cast out first from the conscious mind, then from the vital nature and the subconscious physical layers, death would no longer be inevitable.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (5 May)

This is a negative way of looking at the problem. If one believed that immortality was possible, that would be a more active way of seeing; and not only that it is possible but it will be realised later, then one would be strong enough to resist.

“A fixed form was needed in order that the organised individual consciousness might have a stable support. And yet it is the fixity of the form that made death inevitable.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (5 May)

Questions and Answers

Who will tell me what constitutes an individual? What is it that gives you the impression that you are a person existing in himself?

One can say with Descartes: "I think, therefore I am."

Ah, no! That does not prove that you are individualised.

What is it that gives you the impression that you are an individual?... When you were ten, you were very different from what you were when you were born, and now you are very different from what you were at ten, aren't you? The form grows within certain limits and there is a similarity, but even so, it is quite different from what it was at your birth; you may almost say, "It was not I." So much for the physical. Now, take your inner consciousness when you were five and now. Nobody would say it is the same person. And your thoughts, at five and now? All are different. But in spite of everything, what is it that gives you the impression that it is *the same person* who is thinking?

Let us take the example of a river following its course: it is never the same water which flows. What is a river? There is not a drop that ever is the same, no stability is there, then where is the river? (Some take this example to prove that there is no personality—they are very anxious to prove that there is no personality.) For beings it is the same thing: the consciousness changes, ideas change, sensations change, what then is the being? Some say that individuality is based upon memory, remembrance: you remember therefore you are an individual being. This is absolutely wrong, for even if you had no memory you would still be an individual being.

The river's bed constitutes the river.

The bed localises the river, but the bed also changes much; which means that all is inconstant, all is fugitive, and this is true. But it is only one part of the truth, it is not the whole. You feel quite

clearly that there is something “stable” in you, don’t you, but where does this sensation of stability come from?

If I were to place it physically, I would say it is somewhere in the chest. When I say “I am going to do something”, it is not the true “I” which speaks. When I say “I think”, it is not the true “I” which thinks—the true “I” looks at the thinking, it looks at the thoughts coming. Naturally this is a way of speaking.

When the vast majority of people say “I”, it is a part of them, of their feeling, their body, their thought, indifferently, which speaks; it is something that always changes. Therefore, their “I” is innumerable, or the “I” always varies. What is the constant thing therein?... The psychic being, evidently. For, to be constant a thing must first be immortal. Otherwise it cannot be constant. Then, it must also be independent of the experiences through which it passes: it cannot be the experiences themselves. Hence, it is certainly not the bed of the river which constitutes the river; the bed is only a circumstance. If the comparison is carried a little farther (besides, comparisons are worthless, people find in them whatever they want), it can be said that the river is a good symbol of life, that what is constant in the river is the species “water”. It is not always the same drop of water, but it is always water—without water there would be no river. And what endures in the human being is the species “consciousness”. It is because it has a consciousness that it endures. It is not the forms which last, it is the consciousness, the power of binding together all these forms, of passing through all these things, not only keeping a memory of them (memory is something very external), but keeping the same vibration of consciousness.

And that is the great mystery of creation, for it is the same consciousness, the Consciousness is one. But the very moment this Consciousness manifests itself, exteriorises itself, deploys itself, it divides itself into innumerable fragments for the need

of expansion, and each one of these fragmentations has been the beginning, the origin of an individual being. The origin of every individual form is the law of this form or the truth of this form. If there were no law, no truth of each form, there would be no possibility of individualisation. It would be something extending indefinitely; there would be perhaps points of concentration, assemblages, but no individual consciousness. Each form then represents one element in the changing of the One into the many. This multiplicity implies an innumerable quantity of laws, elements of consciousness, truths which spread out into the universe and finally become separate individualities. So the individual being seems constantly to go farther and farther away from its origin by the very necessity of individualisation. But once this individualisation, that is, this awareness of the inner truth is complete, it becomes possible, by an inner identification, to reestablish in the multiplicity the original unity; that is the purpose of the universe as we perceive it. The universe has been made so that this phenomenon may take place. The Supreme has manifested Himself to Himself so as to become aware of Himself.

In any case, that is the purpose of *this* creation. Let us be satisfied with our universe, let us make the best use possible of our life upon earth and the rest will come in its time.

It is purposely, mind you, that I have not mentioned the ego as one of the causes of the sense of individuality. For the ego being a falsehood and an illusion, the sense of individuality would itself be false and illusory (as Buddha and Shankara affirm), whereas the origin of individualisation being in the Supreme Himself, the ego is only a passing deformation, necessary for the moment, which will disappear when its utility is over, when the Truth-Consciousness will be established.

5 March 1951

Mother reads a passage about natural calamities (*Questions and Answers 1929, 5 May*).

Why do disasters occur?

Because a higher consciousness wants to manifest itself in the world, and man and Nature resist it.

This is partly true. But I don't think Nature has this feeling. When there is an earthquake, for instance, or a volcano erupts, if there are men staying nearby and these events cause their death, obviously it is for these men a catastrophe, but we could very well imagine that for Nature it is good fun! We say, "What a terrible wind!" Naturally, for men it is "terrible", but not for Nature. It is a question of proportion, isn't it? I don't know if it is necessary to bring into the picture a higher force wanting to manifest and a resistance from Nature; it is possible, but not indispensable. It can be understood quite easily that it is the play of Nature with tremendous forces and that for her it is only a diversion; in any case, nothing catastrophic. For the consciousness of Nature or the material consciousness, physical forms and humanity upon earth are like ants. You yourself, when you walk, you do not find it necessary to move out of the way to avoid crushing the ants!—unless you are a stubborn "non-violent" fellow. You walk, and if you crush a few hundred ants, it can't be helped! Well, it is the same with Nature. She goes on, and if in the course of her march she destroys a few thousand men, it is not of much importance for her, she can make again a few millions! It is not difficult.

This reminds me of what happened in Paris when I was seventeen or eighteen. There was a "charity bazaar". This charity

bazaar was a place where men from all over the world came to buy and sell all kinds of things, and the proceeds of the sale went to works of charity (it was meant more for amusement than for doing good, but still, charitable works profited by it). All the elegance, all the refinement of high society was gathered there. Now, the bazaar was very beautiful but not solidly built, because it was to last only for three or four days. The roof was of painted tarpaulin which had been suspended. Everything was lighted by electricity; the work was more or less decently done, but naturally with the idea that it was only for a few days. There was a short-circuit, everything began to blaze up; the roof caught fire and suddenly collapsed upon the people. As I said, all the élite of society were there — for them, from the human point of view, it was a frightful catastrophe. There were people near the entrance who tried to escape; others, all ablaze, also tried to reach the door and run away. It was a veritable scuffle! All these elegant, refined people, who usually were so well-mannered, began to fight like street rowdies. There was even a Count of something or other, a very well-known man, a poet, a man of perfect elegance, who carried a silver-knobbled stick, and he was surprised in the act of hitting women on the head with his stick, and trying to push forward! Indeed, it was a fine sight, something most elegant! Afterwards, lamentations in society, big funerals and many stories.... Now, a Dominican, a well-known orator, was asked to give a speech over the tombs of the unfortunate who had perished in the fire. He said something to this effect: "It serves you right. You did not live according to the law of God and He has punished you by burning you."

And every time there was a disaster this story was repeated. Naturally many people protested and said, "Here's a God whom we won't have!" But these ideas are quite typical of ordinary humanity.

"Sinning" humanity is altogether a Christian idea, which falsifies our idea of the Divine — a Divine who punishes poor

people because it is their misfortune to be born “sinners” would not be very generous! However...

“...Philosophy has always failed to unveil the secret of things; it is because it has tried to fit the universe into the size of the human mind.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (5 May)

“To fit the universe into the size of the human mind”, this is precisely what everybody does. And not only do they judge the universe, but they judge the divine principles which have made it and they imagine they are able to know something.

Does “liberty” mean freedom from all attachment?

It is not only a freedom from all attachment, but a liberation from all bondage to the law of consequences. In the material field there is a determinism which comes from the law of consequences, from the law of cause and effect; hence inner liberation does not free you only from all attachment but from all consequences. As I have told you many a time, by your inner liberation your consciousness rises to a level far above the level which governs the material world and, from this high level, the Force can descend and cancel all the material consequences.

If one realises a certain truth in the higher consciousness but the mind resists, should the mind be forced to accept this new truth?

If you succeed in forcing it, very well. But it is not so easy. It is not enough to decide to force it for this to happen! It revolts. And it is not the only one to revolt. Then what are you going to do with this mind in revolt? Leave it to do what it likes? Exhaust all that? It is not a very fine procedure!

The functioning is not the same with everyone. There are people who have a great light in the mind (or think they have it!), they know things, they know how the world and others ought to behave and, moreover, they are sure that they, they are very far on the road, but when they begin to act they are more stupid than the little street urchin. Why? Because it is not the mind which has decided, and even if it has decided, it is not the mind which has executed; what has executed does not recognise at all the authority of the mind, but tells it: "Leave me alone, don't bother me! I act according to my own inspiration!" Then, what are you going to do? Try to give a lesson to your mind? You may always try, but it is not sure that you will succeed. It is not an easy problem.... Human nature is very unstable; after having thought in one way, it thinks in another; after having felt in one way, it feels in another, and so on; nothing lasts: the good not longer than the bad; the bad, a little longer than the good! But anyway, this does not last indefinitely. So, if you have the patience to wait, surely it will change!

But everything returns!

Yes, surely, because in this way nothing will change, it is only the rhythm which will change. It is like those colour-wheels: sometimes one sees one colour, sometimes another, and if one waits long enough one sees the red, blue, white, red, blue, white... indefinitely. There are people who have a pretty little theory like that, which I have often heard; they say that one's vital should never be repressed, it must be allowed to do all it wants, it will get tired and be cured! This is the height of stupidity! First, because the vital by its very nature is never satisfied, and if a certain kind of activity becomes insipid, it will double the dose: if its stupidities bore it, it will increase its stupidities and its excesses, and if that tires it, as soon as it has rested it will start again. For it will not be changed. Others say that if you sit upon your vital it will be suppressed and, one day, it will shoot up like

a steam-jet... and this is true. Hence, to repress the vital is not a solution. To let it do what it likes is not a solution either, and generally this brings on fairly serious disorders. There must be a third solution.

To aspire that the light from above may come and purify it?

Obviously, but the problem remains. You aspire for a change, perhaps for a specific change; but the answer to your aspiration will not come immediately and in the meantime your nature will resist. Things happen like this: at a given moment the nature seems to have yielded and you think you have got the desired result. Your aspiration diminishes in intensity because you think you have the desired result. But the other fellow, who is very cunning and is waiting quietly in his corner, when you are off your guard, he springs up like a jack-in-the-box, and then you must begin all over again.

But if one can tear out completely the root of the thing?

Ah! One must not be so sure of that. I have known people who wanted to save the world by reducing it so much that there was no longer a world left! This is the ascetic way—you want to do away with the problem by doing away with the possibility of the problem. But this will never change anything.

No, there is a method—a sure one—but your method must be very clear-sighted and you must have a wide-awake consciousness of your person and of what goes on there and the way in which things happen. Let us take the instance of a person subject to outbursts of rage and violence. According to one method he would be told: “Get as angry as you like, you will suffer the consequences of your anger and this will cure you.” This is debatable. According to another method he would be told: “Sit upon your anger and it will disappear.” This too

is debatable. In any case, you will have to sit upon it all the time, for if ever you should get up for a minute you will see immediately what happens! Then, what is to be done?

You must become more and more conscious. You must observe how the thing happens, by what road the danger approaches, and stand in the way before it can take hold of you. If you want to cure yourself of a defect or a difficulty, there is but one method: to be perfectly vigilant, to have a very alert and vigilant consciousness. First you must see very clearly what you want to do. You must not hesitate, be full of doubt and say, "Is it good to do this or not, does this come into the synthesis or should it not come in?" You will see that if you trust your mind, it will always shuttle back and forth: it vacillates all the time. If you take a decision it will put before you all the arguments to show you that your decision is not good, and you will be tossed between the "yes" and "no", the black and white, and will arrive at nothing. Hence, first, you must know exactly what you want — know, not mentally, but through concentration, through aspiration and a very conscious will. That is the important point. Afterwards, gradually, by observation, by a sustained vigilance, you must realise a sort of method which will be personal to you — it is useless to convince others to adopt the same method as yours, for that won't succeed. Everyone must find his own method, everyone must have his own method, and to the extent you put into practice your method, it will become clearer and clearer, more and more precise. You can correct a certain point, make clear another, etc. So, you start working.... For a while, all will go well. Then, one day, you will find yourself facing an insurmountable difficulty and will tell yourself, "I have done all that and look, everything is as bad as before!" Then, in this case, you must, through a yet more sustained concentration, open an inner door in you and bring into this movement a force which was not there formerly, a state of consciousness which was not there before. And there, there will be a power, when your own personal power will be exhausted and no longer effective. When

the personal power runs out ordinary people say, "That's good, I can no longer do anything, it is finished." But I tell you that when you find yourself before this wall, it is the beginning of something new. By an obstinate concentration, you must pass over to the other side of the wall and there you will find a new knowledge, a new force, a new power, a new help, and you will be able to work out a new system, a new method which surely will take you very far.

I do not say this to discourage you; only, things happen like that. And the worst of all is to get discouraged when it happens. You must tell yourself, "With the means of transport at my disposal I have reached a certain point, but these means do not allow me to go further. What should I do?... Sit there and not stir any longer? — not at all. I must find other means of transport." This will happen quite often, but after a while you will get used to it. You must sit down for a moment, meditate, and then find other means. You must increase your concentration, your aspiration and your trust and with the new help which comes to you, make a new programme, work out other means to replace those you have left behind. This is how one progresses stage by stage.

But you must take great care to apply at each stage, as perfectly as possible, what you have gained or learnt. If you remain in an indrawn state of consciousness and do not apply materially the inner progress, a time will certainly come when you will not be able to move at all, for your outer being, unchanged, will be like a fetter pulling you back and hindering you from advancing. So, the most important point (what everybody says but only a few do) is to put into practice what you know. With that you have a good chance of succeeding, and with perseverance you will certainly get there.

You must never get discouraged when you find yourself before a wall, never say, "Oh! What shall I do? It is still there." In this way the difficulty will still be there and still there and still there, till the very end. It is only when you reach the goal that everything will suddenly crumble down.

8 March 1951

"The true remembrance of past births may indeed be part of an integral knowledge; but it cannot be got by that way of imaginative fancies. If it is on one side an objective knowledge, on the other it depends largely on personal and subjective experience, and here there is much chance of invention, distortion or false building. To reach the truth of these things, your experiencing consciousness must be pure and limpid, free from any mental interference or any vital interference, liberated from your personal notions and feelings and from your mind's habit of interpreting or explaining in its own way."

Questions and Answers 1929 (5 May)

What should be done to get rid of mental intervention?

The mind must learn to be silent — remain calm, attentive, without making a noise. If you try to silence your mind directly, it is a hard job, almost impossible; for the most material part of the mind never stops its activity — it goes on and on like a non-stop recording machine. It repeats all that it records and unless there is a switch to stop it, it continues and continues indefinitely. If, on the other hand, you manage to shift your consciousness into a higher domain, above the ordinary mind, this opening to the Light calms the mind, it does not stir any longer, and the mental silence so obtained can become constant. Once you enter into this domain, you may very well never come out of it — the external mind always remains calm.

The only true solution is aspiration for the higher light.

How to persuade the recalcitrant parts of our nature to surrender?

Try to make them understand, as one does with a child who does not understand, by all kinds of means: pictures, explanations, symbols. Make them understand the necessity of union and harmony with the other parts of the being; reason with them, try to make them conscious of their acts and the consequences of these. Above all, be very patient, do not tire of repeating the same things.

In this work, can the mind be of help?

Yes, if a part of the mind is fully enlightened, if it is surrendered to the psychic light and has a sense of the truth, the mind can be of great help, it can explain things in the true way.

For past lives, are there any general rules, broad outlines, or is everything possible?

All depends on the category to which one belongs, and the degree of the psychic being's development. If the psychic being is in an advanced stage, near maturity, the choice before death, about which I spoke to you the other day, is quite real and this choice means that everything is possible; but in other cases, the rebirth takes place almost automatically. The will of the psychic being is not developed and it does not choose. Hence, there are no rules. It depends very much on circumstances, and especially on the line of formation which the psychic being will follow, and that depends on its origin. It is difficult to say. In the matter of sex, that may vary for a long time. As the consciousness grows and gains some unity of action, of consciousness, it can choose to follow one line to the exclusion of another, but before this choice, through innumerable creations you have been undoubtedly of different sexes. That is why perhaps some women have a masculine character, and vice versa, or have tendencies opposite to their sex. But at the time of the "choice" one may decide to belong to the creatrix Consciousness or to the immobile Witness.

Questions and Answers

That depends upon the origin.

Have all psychic beings the same origin?

This is how things happen. The origin of the psychic life, the divine Presence in Matter is one and the same, that's understood, but there are beings in the higher world who have never taken a body upon earth and who want to act there, have a terrestrial action. So they wait till some psychic beings attain their full development and unite with them to do some work according to their nature. Their consciousness is added to the psychic consciousness upon earth. These are beings who have never taken birth here, beings who materialised themselves more and more as the creation proceeded. They are perhaps the first emanations, beings sent into the universe for special reasons—men call them “gods” or “demi-gods”. So, one of these beings may have chosen, for some special reason, a psychic being in formation—he helps it, follows its development and, when this psychic is sufficiently ready and sufficiently strong to be able to support the identification, he unites with it, identifies with it to do some work upon earth. This is not very frequent, but it has happened and still happens. You find stories in ancient traditions about gods incarnating upon earth; some mythologies speak of them. That corresponds to something true. But all psychic beings are not necessarily united with a being of the higher planes.

Then Mother passes on to another question, that of “possession” or the embodiment on earth of beings of the vital world (See *Questions and Answers 1929*, 12 May).

Have these vital beings a psychic being?

No, I said that the first thing they have to do to incarnate is to drive away the psychic being of the person whom they possess. That may happen from the very birth. There are children who

are almost stillborn; they are taken to be dead and suddenly they revive — this means that a vital being has incarnated in them. I have known such cases. This may happen also in the course of an illness: someone is very ill and gradually he begins to lose contact with the psychic being, then, in a swoon or some other similar state, he cuts the contact entirely and the vital being rushes into the body. I have known cases of this kind also. Or it may be a slow action: the vital being enters into the atmosphere of the person, goes on influencing him and finally brings about illness, attacks, especially mental illness; then a time comes when the connection with the psychic being is entirely cut and the vital being takes possession of the body. There are cases of people falling very ill and coming out of the illness altogether different from what they were. Very often it is this that happens.

You have said that these beings of the vital world are attracted by the spiritual life. Why?

They are attracted, but this does not mean that they have decided sincerely to follow the spiritual life. The chief characteristic of these beings is falsehood: their nature is made of deceit. They have a power of illusion; they can take the appearance of divine beings or higher beings, they can appear in a dazzling light, but truly sincere people are not deceived, they immediately feel something that warns them. But if one likes the marvellous, the unexpected, if one loves fantastic things, if one likes to live a romance, one is likely to be easily deceived.

Not long ago there was a historical instance, that of Hitler, who was in contact with a being whom he considered to be the Supreme: this being came and gave him advice, told him all that he had to do. Hitler used to retire into solitude and remain there as long as it was necessary to come into contact with his “guide” and receive from him inspirations which he carried out later very faithfully. This being which Hitler took for the Supreme was quite plainly an Asura, one who is called the “Lord

of Falsehood” in occultism, but who proclaimed himself the “Lord of the Nations”. He had a shining appearance, he could mislead anybody except one who really had occult knowledge and could see what was there behind the appearance. He would have deceived anybody, he was truly splendid. Generally he used to appear to Hitler wearing a silver cuirass and helmet; a kind of flame came out of his head and there was an atmosphere of dazzling light around him, so dazzling that Hitler could hardly look at him. He used to tell Hitler everything that had to be done — he played with him as with a monkey or a mouse. He had decided clearly to make Hitler commit all possible extravagances till the day he would break his neck, which did happen. But cases like this are frequent, though on a smaller scale, of course.

Hitler was a very good medium, he had great mediumistic capacities, but he lacked intelligence and discrimination. This being could tell him anything whatever and he swallowed it all. It was he who pushed Hitler little by little. And he was doing this as a distraction, he did not take life seriously. For these beings men are very tiny things with whom they play, as a cat plays with a mouse, till finally they eat them up.

Are mentally deranged people possessed?

Yes, unless there is a physical lesion, a defect in the formation or an accident, a congestion. In all other cases it is always a possession. The proof of it is that if a person is brought to you who is altogether mentally deranged, if he has a lesion, he cannot be cured, while if there is no physical lesion, if it is a possession, then one can cure him. Unfortunately these things happen only to people who like them; there must be in the being much ambition, vanity, combined with much stupidity and a terrible pride — it is on such things that those beings play. I have known cases like that, of persons who were partially possessed, and I succeeded in freeing them from the beings who possessed them. Naturally they felt some relief, a kind of ease

for a time, but it did not last long; almost immediately it wore off and they thought: "Now I have become quite an ordinary creature, whereas before I was an exceptional being!" They used to feel within them an exceptional power, even if it was a power to do evil, and they were satisfied with it. So what did they do? They called back with all their force the power they had lost! Of course, the being that had been destroyed could not come back, but as these beings exist in thousands it was replaced by another. I have seen this happen three times consecutively in a case, so much so that in the end I had to tell the person: "I am tired, get rid of it yourself, I am no longer interested!"

In these cases what happens to the psychic being?

Generally, it goes away.

I must tell you that the beings of the vital world are immortal — they cannot die. They can be destroyed, but it is only the pure spiritual force which can destroy them. For example, in a vital battle (there are people who have a vital fighting power), the experience is always the same: if you fight in the vital world with a vital being, you can crush it, kill it, but it will be re-born always — always they form themselves again. I think herein lies the origin of the legends of hydras or monsters with many heads.

There is only one force in the world which can destroy them categorically, that is, without any chance of return, and it is a force which belongs to the supreme creative Power. It is a force that comes from beyond the supramental world — it is not at the disposal of everybody. It is a luminous force, of a dazzling whiteness, so brilliant that if ordinary eyes looked at it, they would turn blind. A being of the vital world has just to be touched by this light to get dissolved immediately — it is liquefied, like those slugs which melt in water if a little salt is put on them.

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Was Rasputin a vital being?

I have heard the most contradictory things about him — some looked upon him as an incarnate godhead, others as an incarnate devil. I can say nothing, I have had no contact with him.

When Hitler died, did the Lord of Falsehood pass into Stalin?

It is not altogether like that that things happen, but it is something similar. This being did not wait for Hitler's death, it is there you make a mistake. These beings are not at all tied to a single physical presence. The being in question could very well possess Hitler and at the same time influence many others. Hitler was got rid of because he had behind him a whole nation and a physical power, and if he had succeeded it would have been a disaster for humanity, but there was no deluding oneself about it; it was not sufficient to get rid of him in order to get rid of the force that was behind him — that is not so easy. I must tell you that the origin of these beings is prior to that of the gods; they are the first emanations, the first individual beings of the universe; so they cannot be got rid of so easily, by winning one war.

As long as they are necessary for the universal evolution they will exist. The day they lose their utility, they will be converted or will disappear.

Besides, they know that they are nearing their last hour and that is why they are doing as much damage as they can.

There were four of them. The first one has been converted, another is dissolved into its origin. Two are still living and these two are more ferocious than the others. One is known in occultism as the "Lord of Falsehood"(I have told you this) the other is the "Lord of Death". And as long as these two beings exist, there will be difficulties.

10 March 1951

The power of money is at present under the influence or in the hands of the forces and beings of the vital world. It is because of this influence that you never see money going in any considerable amount to the cause of Truth. Always it goes astray, because it is in the clutch of the hostile forces and is one of the principal means by which they keep their grip upon the earth. The hold of the hostile forces upon money-power is powerfully, completely and thoroughly organised and to extract anything out of this compact organisation is a most difficult task. Each time that you try to draw a little of this money away from its present custodians, you have to undertake a fierce battle.

Questions and Answers 1929 (12 May)

It is often said in fairy tales that a treasure is guarded by serpents. Is this true?

Yes, but it is not a physical serpent, it is a vital serpent. The key to the treasures is in the vital world and it is guarded by an immense black serpent—a tremendous serpent, ten times, fifty times larger than an ordinary one. It keeps the gates of the treasure. It is magnificent, black, always erect and awake. I happened once to be standing before it (usually these beings obey me when I give them an order), and I said to it, “Let me pass.” It replied, “I would willingly let you pass, but if I do, they will kill me; so I cannot let you pass.” I asked, “What must I bring you in order to gain entrance?” It said, “Oh, only one thing would oblige me to give way to you: if you could become master of the sex impulse in man, if you succeeded in conquering that in humanity, I could no longer resist, I would allow you to pass.”

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It has not yet allowed me to pass. I must admit that I have not fulfilled the condition, I have not been able to obtain such a mastery of it as to conquer it in all men.

That is quite difficult.

Before cutting one's relations with beings who are linked with a vital entity, one must be sure of their connection.

How can one be sure?

Evidently it is difficult to know, unless one has direct vision of the vital, that is to say, unless one is able to see directly into the vital world. I have seen many, many times... that two things may happen, and generally do happen. When, for some reason or other, you do not agree with someone—if there is a conflict of interests, if there has been a quarrel—there is a tendency to say of him, “He is a vital being.” One ought to mistrust oneself first, and afterwards what the other says. There is another case, still more interesting: I knew two persons at least who were not only under the vital influence but incarnations of beings of the vital world. Well, it was these very persons who constantly denounced others as possessed by beings of the vital world! So then, it is better not to jump to conclusions. There are instances where ignorance is better than half-knowledge, for if you do not know that you are dealing with a being of the vital world, you can act as you do with an ordinary human being, that is, protect yourself sufficiently, not give yourself up if it is an enemy, be on your guard, have great patience. And afterwards you don’t pay any attention to what this man does or does not do to you. Only those who possess a perfected vital being and are completely disinterested can tell you, “This person or that one is a dangerous being.”

“The human being is at home and safe in the material body; the body is his protection. There are some who are full of contempt for their bodies and think that things

will be much better and easier after death without them. But in fact the body is your fortress and your shelter. While you are lodged in it the forces of the hostile world find a difficulty in getting any direct hold upon you. What are nightmares? These are your sorties into the vital world. And what is the first thing you try to do when you are in the grip of a nightmare? You rush back into your body and shake yourself into your normal physical consciousness.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (12 May)

What becomes of the vital being after death?

It is dissolved. Rarely does it happen otherwise. But if you have had a very strong passion, if you were divided by fixed impulses, the vital being would break up into small pieces. Instead of going off like a vapour or a liquid, it goes off by little bits. Each of these pieces of vital substance is gathered around the central impulse, the central desire, the central passion of that piece, thus creating little entities which don't have a human form but take at times an indefinite form; at times they resemble the body to which the pieces belonged, at other times they take a form expressing the desire they represent. And naturally their sole concern is to satisfy their desire or passion and they search everywhere for the means of self-satisfaction.

Take, for instance, the passion of a miser for his fortune. He dies. His vital being is dissolved, but his passion for his money remains alive. It gathers around itself a certain number of elements to form a living and conscious entity in the vital world. If this man has in his lifetime hidden a treasure somewhere, that entity goes and installs itself just above the place where the treasure is, as if to guard it and stop people from coming near it. But there are sensitive people who, when they know that a treasure is hidden somewhere, feel the presence and say, “The treasure is there.” That is the first effect. The other

effect is that the entity, not wanting the treasure to be touched, always brings about some catastrophe to guard its property. It makes those who approach it ill or it causes an accident, even an assassination; any means is good for it; or if the person is very sensitive, it gives him such a fright that he goes mad.

There are also lots of little entities, quite repugnant, in very large numbers, which originate from that wretched sexual desire. If this desire (with its corresponding entities) is not dissolved at the time of death, these entities continue to exist and they come and settle in the atmosphere of sensitive persons to goad them, spur them on. These entities feed upon the vital force emanated at the time of the act and naturally their only desire is to get as much nourishment as they can. I have seen people enringed by dozens of these beings. It is a very concrete thing.... I don't know if you have heard of Maurice Magre, the writer who had come here. He has said in one of his books that people who have a very strong sexual instinct are surrounded by a swarm of these small beings, who plague them to satisfy themselves, to feed upon the vital force. He knew the thing quite well, he had observed it. To those who are ever so little sensitive, it is very perceptible. Even the people who are tormented very often feel that the impulse comes from outside — it arouses something inside them, but they feel that the excitation comes from outside. And there are hundreds of thousands of them, for unfortunately it is one of the greatest difficulties of mankind, it is a terrible slavery.

In vital nightmares, which part of the being goes out of the body?

Your vital — not the whole of it for that would produce a cataleptic state, but a portion of the vital goes out for a stroll. Some always go to the nastiest places and so have very bad nights — the possibilities in these nightly rambles are innumerable. It may be a very small thing, just a little portion of your being,

but if it is conscious, that is enough to give you a fine little nightmare!

You know, when you sleep, the inner beings are not concentrated upon the body, they go out and become more or less independent — a limited independence, but independence all the same — and they go to live in their own domains. The mind more so, for it is hardly held within the body, it is only concentrated but not contained in the body. The vital also goes beyond the body, but it is more concentrated upon the body. The mind however is such a supple substance that it is sufficient to think about a person in order to be with that person, at least partially, mentally. If you think strongly of a place, a part of your mind is there; distance, so to say, does not exist. Of course, to have a mind centralised around the body requires good training. Few people have a mind with a well-defined form: it is like clouds which roll, come and go. Even to have a vital with a form similar to that of your physical body, an analogous form, it must be very much individualised, very much centralised. The mind still more; it must be completely individualised, centralised, organised around the psychic centre in order to have a definite form.

There are people who spend their life organising their mind. I have known some who had made of their mind a kind of fortress, a huge construction (I am speaking of people who had uncommon mental capacities). They had made of their mind quite a big edifice, very powerful and of such a fixity, with such solid walls that they had lost all contact with the outer mental world: they lived completely within their own construction and all the phenomena of their consciousness were of their own making — they had no longer any contact with the outside mental world. They retained contact with their own vital and their body, in a way, but all the phenomena of their consciousness were lodged within their mental construction — they could no longer get out of it. Well, this happens very strongly to people who seek for a spiritual life through the classical methods of

a renunciation of the material consciousness, a concentration on their inner being and identification with it. If I gave you the names of some, you would be quite astonished. They construct for themselves a conception in which one finds all the gradations of the mind, a construction so solid and so fixed that they become imprisoned within it and when they believe they have reached the supreme Truth, they have only reached the centre of their own mental construction.

And they have all the experiences they used to foresee: the experience of liberation, the experience of going out of the body, the experience of identification with the Supreme, all, all, but all of their own making; this has no contact with the universal reality. Then if someone touches it, if for some reason or other someone has the power to touch it or simply to make a breach in one of the walls, at first they are completely upset, then they come to regard the force that could do this as a force of terrible destruction, a manifestation of a hostile force of the worst kind!

What is a “mental nightmare”?

When there is a chaos in the brain or a local fever, a particular turmoil in the brain, an overstrain, or if there is a want of control, you let yourself be possessed by mental formations, this is what happens most often — mental formations which, most often, you yourself have made, besides. And as the control of the rational, waking consciousness has gone, all this begins to dance a saraband in the head, with a kind of raging madness; ideas get entangled, collide, fight, it is truly hallucinating. Then, unless you have the power to bring a great peace into your head, a great tranquillity, a very strong and pure light, well, it is ten times worse than a vital nightmare. The worst of a vital nightmare consists generally in fighting with an enemy who wants to kill you, and you strike him terrible blows, and the blows never hit; you exert all your force, all your energy, and you do not

succeed in touching your adversary. He is there in front of you, he threatens you, he is going to strangle you and you gather all your strength, you try to strike, but nothing touches him. When the struggle is like that, hand to hand, with a being who throws himself upon you, it is particularly painful. That is why you are advised not to go out of the body unless you have the necessary power or the purity. You see, in this kind of nightmare the force you want to use is the “memory” of a physical force; but one may have great physical strength, be a first-class boxer, and yet be completely powerless in the vital world because one does not have the necessary vital power. As for the mental nightmares, that kind of frightful saraband in the head, one has altogether the impression of going mad.

At the time of death, the psychic being goes to take rest, doesn't it? But the vital is stopped in the vital world; does this prevent the psychic from going to rest?

But the vital does not go to rest nor does the mental being. Generally they are dissolved. It is only if one has followed a yoga throughout his whole life, if one has taken great care to individualise, to centralise the vital and the mental around the psychic being that they remain — that happens once in ten million cases, it is very exceptional. Take the case of a philosopher or a writer who has worked considerably in his brain, tried to organise it; that then persists, but as a *capacity to think*, nothing else. There are these capacities of thinking which persist after death and they try naturally to find another physical brain in which to manifest. It is in this way that the mind of a great thinker may identify itself with another mind and be able to express itself.

From the vital point of view, take the case of a great musician who has worked all his life to make his external being a good instrument for music; he has organised this vital power in his body for playing music; well then, his hands, for instance, are so

Questions and Answers

individualised in their ability to play, that they can persist subtly even after death, with their form, a form analogous to the old physical form. They float in the vital world and are attracted by people who have similar capacities; they try to become identified with them. A person who is sensitive enough, receptive enough, can become identified with these hands and execute wonderful things, profit by all the individualisation of the past life of these hands.

Does the same phenomenon occur in the case of scientists when the results of their work are realised some time after their death?

Yes, in the case of Pierre and Marie Curie, for example, it is certain that the power of work of Pierre Curie passed into his wife at his death.

Men who undertake excavations in the tombs of Egypt often meet with accidents. Why?

They deserve it! When they violate the tombs, you see... There are countless stories of this kind. But that is another phenomenon.

Let me explain: in the physical form is found the “spirit of the form” and this spirit of the form persists for a certain time even when outwardly the person is pronounced dead. And as long as the spirit of the form persists, the body is not destroyed. In ancient Egypt they had this knowledge; they knew that if they prepared the body in a certain way, the spirit of the form would not leave it and the body would not disintegrate. In some cases they have succeeded wonderfully; and if one violates the repose of beings who have remained thus for thousands of years, it is understandable that they may not be very pleased, especially when their repose is violated out of an unhealthy curiosity, legitimised in the “cause of science”.

In the Musée Guimet in Paris, there are two mummies. Of one practically nothing is left, but in the other the spirit of the form has remained very conscious, conscious to such an extent that one can make contact with the consciousness. Evidently when a bunch of idiots come to stare at you with their blank, saucer-eyes which understand nothing, and say, "Oh, it is like this, it is like that", it cannot give much pleasure.

You see, they begin by committing an outrage: these mummies are enclosed in a box of a particular form according to the person, with all that is necessary to preserve them; now, the box is opened, more or less violently, some wrappings are stripped away here and there to provide a better view.... And considering that it was never ordinary people who were mummified, these were beings who had attained an appreciable inner power or who were of royal birth, people more or less initiated.

There is a mummy which has been the cause of a large number of catastrophes; she was a princess, daughter of a Pharaoh, and secretly at the head of a college of initiation at Thebes.

Well, men are like that....

12 March 1951

In the vital world, forces exist: do mental forms exist in the mental world?

Yes, there is a concrete mental world and there are mental forms which do not resemble vital forces but have their own law. There are many, innumerable mental forms. They are almost indestructible; one can only say that they change forms and relations, it is something very fluid, and moving all the time.

“...You can understand only what you already know in your own inner self. What strikes you in a book is what you have already experienced deep within you.... The knowledge that seems to come to you from outside is only an occasion for bringing out the knowledge that is within you.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (19 May)

Why are certain subjects so very difficult?

That is due to many things — to the formation of the brain, to atavism, to the early years of education, particularly to atavism.

But there is a very interesting phenomenon here: each new idea forms a kind of small convolution in the brain, and that takes time. You see, you are told something which you have never heard before; you listen, but it is incomprehensible, it does not penetrate into your head. But if you hear the same thing a second time, a little later, it makes sense. It is because the shock of the new idea has done a little work in the brain and prepared just what was necessary for understanding. And not only does it build itself up, but it perfects itself. That is why if you read a difficult book, at the end of six months or a year you

will understand it infinitely better than at the first reading and, at times, in a very different way. This work in the brain is done without the participation of your active consciousness. The way the human being is at present constituted, the time factor must always be taken into account.

Is it the brain or the presence of thought that produces the shock?

No, it is the consciousness. Most people are not aware of it, but it works all the time in everyone.

“We say something that is quite clear, but the way in which it is understood is stupefying! Each sees in it something else than what was intended or even puts into it something that is quite the contrary of its sense. If you want to understand truly and avoid this kind of error, you must go behind the sound and the movement of the words and learn to listen in silence.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (19 May)

How can one learn to listen in silence?

It is a matter of attention. If you concentrate your attention on what is being said, with the will to understand it correctly, the silence is created spontaneously — it is attention that creates the silence.

*Is it possible to get out of the “mental fortress”?*¹

But there are people who do get out of the fortress! One can even send an army out of the fortress!

¹ See the talk of 10 March 1951.

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No, it is not the chief of the place who goes out, he clings to his fort: he orders out the soldiers. He values his fortress, for it is that which gives him the impression of existing and of being an individual.

What if one gets rid of the fortress?

Oh, but you must take care! You had better not get rid of it unless you are able to live without a fortress—something which is infinitely more difficult to do. What men generally do, with much effort and a good deal of suffering which gives them the impression that they are heroes, is to knock down their fortress... only to enter immediately into another! That does not make much difference from the standpoint of the Truth, but it gives them the impression of having made a great progress, because the old fortress is razed and they have built up another.

To live without a fortress is extremely difficult—people have the feeling that they are not living, that they are not individualised, that they are floating about. It is extremely difficult to live in something infinitely vast, moving, constantly changing, perpetually in progress, not to be held by anything to which one can cling, saying “I am this; this is my way of thinking.” It is very difficult, one must not try it too soon; there are those whose mind gets deranged by it.

What is it that makes the mental construction?

It is the mental ego which makes the construction and it clings to it desperately.

Are the “I” and the ego the same thing?

Generally they are.

How does it happen that there are people who think one thing and say another?

Yes, that often happens. They think one thing and when they begin talking they say just the contrary. If thought controlled the tongue, many stupidities would be avoided. You lose control and speak on impulse any kind of nonsense; it is like a machine which begins talking for the pleasure of talking. That seems like an absurdity, but it is happening all the time; there are very few people who escape this. They say all kinds of things and they ask, "Why did I say all that?" They do not even know why. I know some who always say what the other wants to hear. The person with whom they are speaking says to himself, "He is going to tell me this or that," or he fears, "I hope he will not tell me that," and the other one, like a little puppet, begins to say it, very calmly without knowing why!

Is it because of a lack of will?

No, it is a mental deformation. There is not much will in this. If the will intervened, it would become less absurd, perhaps.

No, they are mental movements, the formation of the mind, the mental force which moves all the time, which comes and goes, like a squirrel in a cage which runs round and round and does not know why.

Then, is it a universal play?

No, not very universal; it exists in humanity, it is very human. How many human beings have a thought of their own? I am pretty sure there are none in ordinary humanity with its ordinary mental make-up. How many people have a thought as a result of reflection? Very few, and if they have it, they are considered terribly hard or remarkably intelligent or despotic or authoritative — they are covered with all sorts of compliments!

And that, simply because they have a precise fashion of thinking.

Take any general idea; for example: “Is the world’s duration indefinite?” or “Has it a beginning and an end?” Who has a precise thought on this subject? Or again: “How did the earth begin and how did humanity commence on earth?” The mind is incapable of resolving this question; it will find itself before an indefinite number of possibilities and will not know how to choose. Then, what does it do, how does it choose?—by personal preference, the thought that gives it an agreeable, comfortable feeling; it says, “Yes, that must be it.” But if you are quite honest and scrupulous and do not allow your preferences to come into play, how will you decide? It is a subject close enough to humanity for it to take an interest in it, isn’t it? Earth is, after all, its domain. Well, if you read one book, it will tell you one thing; if you read another, it will tell you another. Then the religions with their theories take a hand in the matter and, moreover, they will tell you that such and such an idea is the “absolute Truth” and you *must* believe it, otherwise you will be damned! You read the scientists—they will tell you scientific things. You read the philosophers—they will tell you philosophical things. You read the spiritualists, they will dish up spirituality for you and... you will be exactly at the same point from which you started. But there are people who like to have a kind of stability in their mind (precisely those who build “fortresses”—they like to be in a fortress very much, it gives them a comfortable sensation), so they make a choice, and if they have sufficient mental strength, they make a choice out of a considerable number of ideas; then they trim it up for you, set up a fine wall by putting each thing in what they consider to be its proper place (that is, there must not be too many contradictions close together lest they clash! It must make a proper organisation) and they tell you, “Now, I know!”—They know nothing at all!

It is quite interesting, for the more mental activity one has, the more does one indulge in this little game. And there are

ideas to which one clings! One hangs on to them as though all life depended upon it! I have known people who had fixed upon one central idea in their formation and said, "All the rest may go to pieces, I don't care, but this idea will stand: this is the truth." And when they come to yoga, amusingly enough it is this idea which is constantly battered, all the time! All events, all circumstances come and strike at it until it begins to totter, and then one fine day they say in despair, "Ah, my idea has gone."

Someone has said rather poetically, "One must know how to lose all to win all." And it is true, especially for the mind, for if you do not know how to lose everything, you can gain nothing.

How did this earth begin?

Ask the scientists, they will tell you!

If, finally, progress consists in unlearning all that one has learned, what is the use of learning?

But it is as with gymnastics. You make all kinds of movements to form your body and make it strong, but that does not mean that you are going to spend all your life lifting weights and exercising on parallel bars! You may continue to do that as a pastime, as a profession, but surely it is not the supreme goal. For the mind it is the same thing. To have a mind capable of progressing, of adapting itself to a new life, of opening itself to higher forces, it must be put through all kinds of gymnastics. That is why children are sent to school, it is not in order that they may remember all that they learn — who remembers what he has learnt? When they are obliged to teach others, later on, they have to relearn it all, they have forgotten everything. It comes back quickly, but they have forgotten it. But if they had never gone to school, if they had never learned and had to begin

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everything... well, when you begin to do parallel bars at forty-five, it hurts, doesn't it? It is the same thing for the brain, it lacks plasticity. Do you know what the best gymnastics is? It is to have a daily conversation with a metaphysician because there is nothing concrete there, you cannot concentrate on something that has a form, an objective reality; indeed, everything is carried on exclusively with words in a field of abstraction, it is purely mental gymnastics. And if you can enter into the mental formation of a metaphysician and are able to understand and answer him, it is perfect gymnastics!

(A mathematician disciple:) *The same thing applies to mathematicians, I suppose?*

Yes.

If at the time of death the vital being is attacked in the vital world by hostile forces or entities, does it not look for a shelter somewhere?

Yes, it is for this reason that in all countries and in all religions, it is recommended that for a period of at least seven days after someone's death, people should gather and think of him. Because when you think of him with affection (without any inner disorder, without weeping, without any of those distraught passions), if you can be calm, your atmosphere becomes a kind of beacon for him, and when he is attacked by hostile forces (I am speaking of the vital being of course, not the psychic being which goes to take rest), he may feel altogether lost, not know what to do and find himself in great distress; then he sees through affinity the light of those who are thinking of him with affection and he rushes there. It happens almost constantly that a vital formation, a part of the vital being of the dead person (or at times the whole vital if it is well organised) takes shelter in the aura, the atmosphere of the people or the person who loved him. There

are people who always carry with them a part of the vital of the person who is gone. That is the real utility of these so-called ceremonies, which otherwise have no sense.

It is preferable to do this without ceremonies. Ceremonies are, if anything, rather harmful, for a very simple reason: When you are busy with a ceremony, you think more about that than about the person. When you are busy with gestures, movements, with the following of a ritual, you think much more of all that than of the person who is dead. Moreover, people perform these ceremonies most of the time for that very reason, for they are almost always in the habit of trying to forget. The fact is that one of the two principal occupations of man is to try to forget what is painful to him, and the other is to try to seek amusement in order to escape boredom. These are the two principal occupations of humanity, that is, humanity spends half of its time in doing nothing true.

And when people get bored (some do not absolutely need to keep busy, or they have the misfortune of being rich) they do silly things! The origin of all excesses, all human stupidity is “ennui”, what is called dullness, the state in which you are like a damp rag: you do not react to anything and are compelled to whip yourself (figuratively) just to make yourself move and get along.

In Nature’s economy, moments of respite are given to men to rediscover themselves but they do not know how to make use of them.

When going over the conclusion of this talk, Mother made the following remark (10 March 1965):

I would say many things now...

For instance, when the Lord draws closest to men, to establish a conscious contact with them, it is then that in their folly they commit the grossest stupidities.

This is true, altogether true, it is at the moment when all is silenced in order that man may become conscious of his origin

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that he, in his folly, in order to distract himself, conceives or carries out the worst stupidities.

To distract himself because he is unable to bear the force of the Light?

Yes.

The pressure is too strong?

Yes, there are those who are afraid, they are panic-stricken. They cannot bear it so they turn to anything at all to get out of it.

14 March 1951

“When you come to the Divine, you must abandon all mental conceptions; but, instead of doing that, you throw your conceptions upon the Divine and want the Divine to obey them. The only true attitude for a Yogi is to be plastic and ready to obey the Divine command whatever it may be....”

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What is “plasticity”?

That which can easily change its form is “plastic”. Figuratively, it is suppleness, a capacity of adaptation to circumstances and necessities. When I ask you to be plastic in relation to the Divine, I mean not to resist the Divine with the rigidity of preconceived ideas and fixed principles. I knew a man who declared: “I am wholly consecrated to the Divine, I am ready to do whatever He tells me to do; but I am not at all worried, for I know that He would never tell me to kill anybody!” I answered, “How do you know that?” He was indignant. This is a lack of plasticity.

If one is plastic in all circumstances, isn’t it a weakness?

But you are not asked to be plastic to the will of others! Nobody asked you to be plastic in relation to others. You are asked to be plastic to the divine Will—which is not quite the same thing! And that requires a great strength because the very first thing that will happen to you is to be exposed to the will of almost everyone around you. If you have a family, you will see the attitude of the family! The more plastic you are to the divine Will, the more opposition you will meet from the will of others who are not accustomed to be in contact with that Will.

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If everybody expressed the divine Will, there would be no conflict any longer, anywhere, all would be in harmony. That is what one tries to do, but it is not very easy.

But it is difficult to know the divine Will, isn't it?

We have already studied the subject at length. Don't you remember what we said? There are four conditions for knowing the divine Will:

The first essential condition: an absolute sincerity.

Second: to overcome desires and preferences.

Third: to silence the mind and listen.

Fourth: to obey immediately when you receive the order.

If you persist you will perceive the divine Will more and more clearly. But even before you know what it is, you can make an offering of your own will and you will see that all circumstances will be so arranged as to make you do the right thing. But you must not be like that person I knew who used to say, "I always see the divine Will in others." That can lead you anywhere, there is nothing more dangerous, for if you think you see the divine Will in others, you are sure to do their will, not the divine Will. There too we can say that not one among many, many human beings acts in accord with the divine Will.

You know the story of the irritable elephant, his mahout, and the man who would not make way for the elephant. Standing in the middle of the road, the man said to the mahout, "The divine Will is in me and the divine Will wants me not to move." The driver, a man of some wit, answered, "But the divine Will in the elephant wants you to move!"

Mother passes on to another question: illnesses. During the talk in 1929 someone asked whether illnesses were not due to microbes rather than to "adverse forces" or to fluctuations of yoga. Mother answered:

“Where does Yoga begin and where does it end? Is not the whole of your life Yoga? The possibilities of illness are always there in your body and around you; you carry within you or there swarm about you the microbes and germs of every disease. How is it that all of a sudden you succumb to an illness which you did not have for years? You will say it is due to a ‘depression of the vital force’. But from where does the depression come? It comes from some disharmony in the being, from a lack of receptivity to the divine forces. When you cut yourself off from the energy and light that sustain you, then there is this depression, there is created what medical science calls a ‘favourable ground’ and something takes advantage of it. It is doubt, gloominess, lack of confidence, a selfish turning back upon yourself that cuts you off from the light and divine energy and gives the attack this advantage. It is this that is the cause of your falling ill and not microbes.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (19 May)

One thing that is now beginning to be recognised by everyone, even by the medical corps, is that hygienic measures, for example, are effective only to the extent that one has confidence in them. Take the case of an epidemic. Many years ago we had a cholera epidemic here — it was bad — but the chief medical officer of the hospital was an energetic man: he decided to vaccinate everybody. When he discharged the vaccinated men, he would tell them, “Now you are vaccinated and nothing will happen to you, but if you were not vaccinated you would be sure to die!” He told them this with great authority. Generally such an epidemic lasts a long time and it is difficult to check it, but in some fifteen days, I think, this doctor succeeded in checking it; in any case, it was done miraculously fast. But he knew very well that the best effect of his vaccination was the confidence it gave to people.

Now, quite recently, they have found something else and I consider it wonderful. They have discovered that for every disease there is a microbe that cures it (call it a microbe if you like, anyway, some sort of germ). But what is so extraordinary is that this “microbe” is extremely contagious, even more contagious than the microbe of the disease. And it generally develops under two conditions: in those who have a sort of natural good humour and energy and in those who have a strong will to get well! Suddenly they catch the “microbe” and are cured. And what is wonderful is that if there is one who is cured in an epidemic, three more recover immediately. And this “microbe” is found in all who are cured.

But I am going to tell you something: what people take to be a microbe is simply the materialisation of a vibration or a will from another world. When I learned of these medical discoveries, I said to myself, “Truly, science is making progress.” One might almost say with greater reason, “Matter is progressing,” it is becoming more and more receptive to a higher will. And what is translated in their science as “microbes” will be perceived, if one goes to the root of things, as simply a vibratory mode; and this vibratory mode is the material translation of a higher will. If you can bring this force or this will, this power, this vibration (call it what you will) into certain given circumstances, not only will it act in you, but also through contagion around you.

During the talk in 1929, a disciple asked why we drank filtered water since we did not believe in microbes here. Mother answered:

“Is any one of you pure and strong enough not to be affected by suggestions? If you drink unfiltered water and think, ‘Now I am drinking impure water’, you have every chance of falling sick. And even though such suggestions may not enter through the conscious mind, the whole of your subconscious is there, almost helplessly

open to any kind of suggestion.... The normal human condition is a state filled with apprehensions and fears; if you observe your mind deeply for ten minutes, you will find that for nine out of the ten it is full of fears....

And even if by discipline and effort you have liberated your mind and your vital of apprehension and fear, it is more difficult to convince the body."

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Why is it so difficult to convince the body, when one has succeeded in liberating oneself mentally and vitally?

Because in the large majority of men, the body receives its inspirations from the subconscious, it is under the influence of the subconscious. All the fears driven out from the active consciousness go and take refuge there and then, naturally, they have to be chased out from the subconscious and uprooted from there.

Why does one feel afraid?

I suppose it is because one is egoistic.

There are three reasons. First, an excessive concern about one's security. Next, what one does not know always gives an uneasy feeling which is translated in the consciousness by fear. And above all, one doesn't have the habit of a spontaneous trust in the Divine. If you look into things sufficiently deeply, this is the true reason. There are people who do not even know that That exists, but one could tell them in other words, "You have no faith in your destiny" or "You know nothing about Grace" — anything whatever, you may put it as you like, but the root of the matter is a lack of trust. If one always had the feeling that it is the best that happens in all circumstances, one would not be afraid.

The first movement of fear comes automatically. There was a

great scientist who was also a great psychologist (I don't remember his name now); he had developed his inner consciousness but wanted to test it. So he undertook an experiment. He wanted to know if, by means of consciousness, one could control the reflex actions of the body (probably he didn't go far enough to be able to do it, for it can be done; but in any case, for him it was still impossible). Well, he went to the zoological garden, to the place where snakes were kept in a glass cage. There was a particularly aggressive cobra there; when it was not asleep, it was almost always in a fury, for through the glass it could see people and that irritated it terribly. Our scientist went and stood in front of the cage. He knew very well that it was made in such a way that the snake could never break the glass and that he ran no risk of being attacked. So from there he began to excite the snake by shouts and gestures. The cobra, furious, hurled itself against the glass, and every time it did so the scientist closed his eyes! Our psychologist told himself, "But look here, I know that this snake cannot pass through, why do I close my eyes?" Well, one must recognise that it is difficult to conquer the reaction. It is a sense of protection, and if one feels that one cannot protect oneself, one is afraid. But the movement of fear which is expressed by the eyes fluttering is not a mental or a vital fear: it is a fear in the cells of the body; for it has not been impressed upon them that there is no danger and they do not know how to resist. It is because one has not done yoga, you see. With yoga one can watch with open eyes, one would not close them; but one would not close them because one calls upon something else, and that "something else" is the sense of the divine Presence in oneself which is stronger than everything.

This is the only thing that can cure you of your fear.

Years afterwards this talk was followed up by a question from a disciple (19 May 1965):

You say, "If one always had the feeling that it is the

best that happens in all circumstances, one would not be afraid.” Is it really the best that happens in all circumstances?

It is the best, given the state of the world — it is not an absolute best.

There are two things: in a total and absolute way, at each moment, it is the best possible for the divine Goal of the whole; and for one who is consciously connected with the divine Will, it is the most favourable for his own divine realisation.

I believe this is the correct explanation.

For the whole, it is always, at every moment, what is most favourable for the divine evolution. And for the elements consciously linked with the Divine, it is the best for the perfection of their union.

Only you must not forget that it is constantly changing, that it is not a static best; it is a best which if preserved would not be the best a moment later. And it is because the human consciousness always has the tendency to preserve statically what it finds good or considers good, that it realises that it is unseizable. It is this effort to preserve which falsifies things.

(*Silence*)

I saw this when I wanted to understand the position of the Buddha who blamed the Manifestation for its impermanence; for him perfection and permanence were one and the same thing. In his contact with the manifested universe he had observed a perpetual change, therefore he concluded that the manifested world was imperfect and had to disappear. And change (impermanence) does not exist in the Unmanifest, hence the Unmanifest is the true Divine. It was by considering and concentrating on this point, that in fact I saw that his finding was right: the Manifestation is absolutely impermanent, it is a perpetual transformation.

But in the Manifestation, perfection consists in having a movement of transformation or an unfolding identical with the divine Movement, the essential Movement; whereas all that belongs to the inconscient or tamasic creation seeks to preserve exactly the very same existence instead of trying to last through constant transformation.

That is why some thinkers have postulated that the creation was the result of an error. But one finds all possible concepts: perfect creation, then a “fault” which introduced error; the creation itself as a lower movement which must have an end since it had a beginning; then the Vedic concept, as Sri Aurobindo has explained it, of an unfolding or a progressive and infinite discovery — indefinite and infinite — of the All by Himself.... Naturally, all these are human interpretations. For the moment, as long as you express yourself in human terms, it is a human translation. But according to the initial position of the human translator (that is to say, whether it is the position which admits “original sin” or an “accident” in the creation or a supreme conscious Will from the beginning in a progressive unfolding), in the yogic attitude, the conclusions or “descents” are different.... There are Nihilists, Nirvanists, Illusionists; there are all the religions which admit the devil’s intervention under one form or another; then there is the pure Vedism which is the eternal unfolding of the Supreme in a progressive objectification. And according to taste, one places oneself here, another there or elsewhere, with all the nuances between. But according to what Sri Aurobindo has felt to be the most total truth, according to this conception of a progressive universe, one is led to say that at every minute what happens is the best possible for the unfolding of the whole. It is absolutely logical. And I believe that all contradictions can arise only from a more or less pronounced tendency towards this or that, for one position or another. All who admit the intrusion of a “sin” or an “error” and the conflict resulting from it between forces which pull back and those which pull forward, may naturally contest the possibility. But one has to say that for him who is

spiritually linked with the supreme Will or the supreme Truth, for him it is necessarily, at every instant, the best that happens for his personal realisation. In all instances it is like that. An unconditional best can be admitted only by one who sees the universe as an unfolding, as the Supreme's self-awareness of Himself.

(*Silence*)

To tell you the truth, all these things are of no importance; for that which *is*, goes in every way entirely and absolutely beyond everything that human consciousness can think about it. It is only when you are no longer human that you *know*; but as soon as this knowledge is expressed, human limits reimpose themselves and then you cease to know.

This is incontestable.

And because of this incapacity, there is a kind of futility also in wanting to reduce the problem altogether to something which human reason can understand. In this case it is very wise to say like someone I knew: "We are here, we have a work to do, and what is needed is to do it as well as we can, without worrying about the why and how." Why is the world as it is?... When we are capable of understanding, we shall understand.

From the practical point of view, this is evident.

Only, each one takes a position.... I have all the examples here. I have a sample collection of all attitudes and see very clearly their reactions. I see the same Force—the same, one Force—acting in this sample collection and producing naturally different effects; but these "different" effects, to a deeper vision, are very superficial: it is only "It pleases them to think in this way, that's all, it just pleases them to think thus." But as a matter of fact, the inner journey, the inner development, the essential vibration is not affected—not at all. One aspires with all his heart for Nirvana, another aspires with all his will for the supramental manifestation, and in both of them the vibratory

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result is almost the same. And it is a whole mass of vibrations which is prepared more and more to... to receive what must be.

There is a state, a state essentially pragmatic, spiritually pragmatic, in which of all human futilities, the most futile is metaphysics.

17 March 1951

“In the workings of the universe whatever happens is the result of all that has happened before.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (26 May)

What do you mean by this?

The universe is in perpetual movement and it is the unfolding of the supreme Consciousness. So all that happens is conditioned by all that preceded it. The universe continues to be what it is because of what it has been, and what it has been was the result of what it was before. And what it will be... will be the consequence of what it is!

Is the unfolding of the universe continuous or does it stop somewhere? What is it that gives us the impression of a beginning, of a decision to begin?

Where does the decision to begin come from?... (*laughing*) From the Supreme probably, I do not know! It may be that one day He decided to have a universe of the type we have and He began to objectify himself in order to have a universe.

Each element of this universe is eternal because the universe is the Eternal. Now, in the Eternal it is difficult to speak of a “beginning”. Evidently It has always been and It will always be. Only, take for example (this is an image, remember, do not make me say things I do not say), take a sphere which is full of infinitesimal things in an incalculable number. If you change the relation of all these elements, well, the number is so great, the possibilities of relations so many that you may easily speak of an infinite, although from a philosophical point of view it is not an infinite; yet from a descriptive point of view one may say

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that it is infinite. Each element is eternal. All the combinations are infinite, but the same combination never repeats itself twice. Thus the universe is eternally new and yet it is eternally the same.

According to tradition it is said...

Yes, yes, but it is not a question of tradition. There are people who speak of Pralaya,¹ I know, but that simply means (excuse me, but one must speak a little lightly, otherwise this becomes insufferable) that one day perhaps the Supreme may feel tired, dissatisfied with the kind of universe He has made and may want to create another! Then, as it is He Himself, He takes everything back into Himself and puts it out again! That is what people call “pralaya”, but it changes nothing: all the elements of the universe are eternal and eternally will the combinations be different.

According to science, our physical world of three dimensions is not infinite: it is bent back upon itself in a space of more than three dimensions. This closed universe of three dimensions is continually expanding and all the objects of the universe are running away from each other at a speed increasing with their distance. If one goes back into the past, one reaches a time when the universe was almost condensed at one point and that would give the key to the constitution of Matter of which the ninety-two elements have never been explained till now. This “condensed point” or “primitive atom” goes back three or four billion years. This is what the Indian tradition calls “the golden egg”. But before that? Nothing is known. Quite recently an American scientist has put forth the theory that this movement of infinite expansion will not

¹ Pralaya, or the end of the world.

continue, that a contrary movement will set in and all will be gathered back again.

A universal respiration.

If one could travel with a ray of light coming from the sun to the earth, the departure and arrival would be simultaneous, for the traveller's "proper time" would be stopped.

Light seems to me to be too material for this consciousness of simultaneity.

Evidently when one emerges from form and enters the “frontier” state between form and the Formless, everything is simultaneous, but this is very far from the density of light.

I wonder (it is possible, it is to be seen), but I doubt whether something physical could be capable of giving this simultaneous consciousness of the universe.

Of course, no material object or being can travel at the speed of light, but supposing it to be possible, as the number of light-rays is practically infinite and covers the whole material universe, one would be able to know everything, apprehend everything.

But that would not be a simultaneous integral knowledge of the universe, not even of the earth. For one who remembers the extra-terrestrial light, remembers the movements of the higher light, terrestrial light is slow, as it is dark. But this would already be an expression of something higher.... I don't know.

Light is a very good symbol, but I do not think it to be a total one.

Is light faster than thought?... You cannot make a concrete experiment with thought. Sound is something very, very slow, but thought is already something quicker than light... perhaps

not. Thought gives the sensation of the instantaneous. Do you perceive thought in the physical body, for example? Do you perceive thought apart from a material quality? It remains to be seen, doesn't it? Let me explain: if you go out of your body, if you go out of the vital world and enter the mental world, all relations are different from what they are for thought when in the body. Compared with the body, thought seems an immediate thing like light, for example, even more than light. But when you have nothing to do with the physical any longer and you enter the mind itself, there are relations which may be rendered by a certain time and certain space which do not exist for the physical consciousness but which exist for the mental consciousness. That then would be, if you like, the explanation of what you were saying, that Time changes; for it is evident that in the universal formation there is an infusion of progressive consciousness which is psychologically translated by a relation with new worlds or new "dimensions".

For example, it is said that for a certain period the terrestrial world was ruled by "overmental" forces and that this rule is going to be transcended, that the world will be governed by supramental forces; well, each time new forces descend upon earth, a change is produced and a change of consciousness must have a corresponding change of movement. You say that the movement of expansion becomes more and more swift; this means that the world is filled with a consciousness which makes the movements of the world more and more rapid. This would be altogether the material transcription of the spiritual phenomenon. The earth is being charged more and more with forces coming from ever higher regions (for our consciousness), which means that they come faster and faster, giving more and more the sense of the instantaneous. What has been discovered is a kind of physical symbolism of this phenomenon which would tend to prove scientifically that the universe is in progress.

The other possibility is that it is a matter of a vibratory movement of inhaling and exhaling — this is quite possible; but

the phenomenon of concentration would not necessarily mean a retrogression; it is simply a passage from one movement to another.

The stars are receding from one another at a speed that increases with their distance.... What does this imply?

These are images, aren't they? You can conceive of a universe becoming bigger and bigger, but then what is it that will contain this universe? What would there be beyond this universe?... Immediately our small human mind conceives of something quite empty and a universe occupying more and more place in this void, which means that there would be a space in this void, which is an absurdity. In fact, one should say, "It is as though", because that is not really what happens, it is only a way of expressing it. To catch hold of a notion even a little bit accurate, one must pass from the material to the psychological explanation, and even if you arrive at the psychological, you are still very far from the truth, which is neither psychological nor spatial, but something else which evidently finds it difficult to express itself in our terms. It is a well-known experience: each time one goes into a consciousness beyond our consciousness (I cannot say spatial), our terrestrial consciousness (not even positively terrestrial, but rather individual), each time one has an experience which transcends the individual consciousness, that is to say, transcends the consciousness of the part to enter a consciousness of the Whole, when one wants to translate this experience, one finds all words empty of sense, because language has been formed to translate human experience for the human mind. We have all the necessary words, even with many shades and subtleties, to express human experience, since language has been made for that, but what language will you use to explain what is outside all language? It is extremely difficult. So you say, "It is like this, it is like that", and while you are speaking you realise that the experience is being so completely

distorted that at times you are understood to mean entirely the opposite.

For this reason science is full of paradoxes.

Yes, and all spiritual books which speak of the experiences of another world are always full of paradoxes. They say, “It is like this, it is like that”, in an attempt to give you a suppleness which will allow you to understand—but even so you do not understand.

The truth is that these experiences can be communicated only in silence.

And yet, it has been said (and it is a true fact) that these worlds, like the supramental world, are going to express themselves physically. Then what is going to happen? Will they find new words? New words must be found for them.... It is difficult, for if new words are found, they have to be explained!

After all, the ancient initiatory systems were good in a way, in the sense that they revealed the Knowledge only to those who had reached a stage where they could receive it directly without the help of words. And I’m afraid it may come to the same thing now—perhaps even one who has this supramental knowledge will never be able to make himself understood by people, unless they themselves become capable of entering into this knowledge. And so the logical result is that people will say, as I have heard it said: “Oh! It is just as in ordinary life.” Precisely because all that is not of the ordinary life completely escapes our perception, it cannot be transmitted by words.

Take a place like this, which is surcharged with certain forces, certain vibrations; these vibrations do not show themselves in visible and tangible things—they can produce changes, but as these changes occur according to a method (as all physical things do), you pass almost logically from one state to another and this logic prevents you from perceiving that there is something here which does not belong to normal life. Well, those who

have no other perception than that of the ordinary mind, who see things working out as they habitually do or seem to do in ordinary life, will tell you, "Oh that, that is quite natural." If they have no other perception than the purely physical perception, if they are not capable of feeling the quality of a vibration (some feel it vaguely, but those who are not even capable of feeling that, who have nothing in them corresponding to that or, if they have something, it is not awakened), they will look at the life here and tell you, "It is like the physical life — you have perhaps some ideas of your own, but there are many who have their own ideas; perhaps you do things in a special way, but there are lots of people who also do things in a special way. After all, it is a life like the one I live." ... And so, it may very well happen that at a given moment the supramental Force manifests, that it is conscious here, that it acts on Matter, but those who do not consciously participate in its vibration are incapable of perceiving it. People say, "When the supramental force manifests, we shall know it quite well. It will be seen" — not necessarily. They will not feel it any more than those people of little sensitivity who may pass through this place, even live here, without feeling that the atmosphere is different from elsewhere — who among you feels it in such a precise way as to be able to affirm it?... You may feel in your heart, in your thought that it is not the same, but it is rather vague, isn't it? But to have this precise perception... Listen, as I had when I came from Japan: I was on the boat, at sea, not expecting anything (I was of course busy with the inner life, but I was living physically on the boat), when all of a sudden, abruptly, about two nautical miles from Pondicherry, the quality, I may even say the physical quality of the atmosphere, of the air, changed so much that I knew we were entering the aura of Sri Aurobindo. It was a *physical* experience and I guarantee that whoever has a sufficiently awakened consciousness can feel the same thing.

I had the contrary experience also, the first time that I went out in a car after many, many years here. When I reached a

little beyond the lake, I felt all of a sudden that the atmosphere was changing; where there had been plenitude, energy, light and force, all that diminished, diminished... and then... nothing. I was not in a mental or vital consciousness, I was in an absolutely physical consciousness. Well, those who are sensitive in their physical consciousness ought to feel that quite concretely. And I can assure you that the area we call "the Ashram" has a condensation of force which is not at all the same as that of the town, and still less that of the countryside.

So, I ask you: this kind of condensation of force (which gives you quite a special vibration of consciousness), who is there that is really conscious of it?... Many among you feel it vaguely, I know, even people from outside feel it vaguely; they get an impression, they speak of it, but the precise consciousness, the scientific consciousness which could give you the exact measure of it, who has that? I'm not alluding to anyone in particular, each one can look into himself. And this, this condensation here is only a far-off reflection of the supramental force. So when this supramental force will be installed here definitively, how long will it take for people to perceive that it is there?... And that it changes everything, do you understand? And when I say that the mind cannot judge, it is on facts like these that I base myself—the mind is not an instrument of knowledge, it cannot know. A scientist can tell you the proportion of the different components in any particular atmosphere, he analyses it. But as for this proportion here, who can give it? Who can say: There is such a vibration, such a proportion of this, such a proportion of that, such a proportion of the supramental?... I put the question to you so that you may ponder over it.

19 March 1951

"Mind is one movement, but there are many varieties of the movement, many strata, that touch and even press into each other. At the same time the movement we call mind penetrates into other planes.... Now, there are mental planes that stand high above the vital world and escape its influence; there are no hostile forces or beings there. But there are others — and they are many — that can be touched or penetrated by the vital forces."

Questions and Answers 1929 (26 May)

Which mental plane are you speaking of?

Of the physical mind. Certainly not of the higher mind, for there are no adverse forces there. The reference is to the mind that deals with material things.

Are there beings in the mental worlds?

Yes, many. They are completely independent; they have their own life, their own relations among themselves, as in other worlds. But for a physical consciousness, time and space are not the same in the vital or the mental worlds as in the physical world. For example, those who are in the physical consciousness have the impression that movements in the mind are instantaneous — compared with the higher consciousness they are not instantaneous, but compared with the physical consciousness, they are instantaneous, of an extreme rapidity.

The beings of the mental world also have an individuality of their own, even a form that can be permanent if they choose to keep one. Their form is the expression of their thought and is sufficiently plastic to be able to change with their thought, yet

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has a sufficient continuity to enable one to recognise them. If you go out of your body and enter the mental world, you can meet these beings, speak to them, even make an appointment with them for the next time!

Can they exercise their influence on a human being, as the beings of the vital worlds do?

Many mental formations try to realise themselves upon earth, but these are generally created by human beings; they then continue to work in the mental world with the intention of influencing the mind of human beings. But the beings of the mental plane proper are generally creators, and because they are creators of form, they are not much concerned with influencing other forms — they are satisfied with expressing themselves through the forms they have made.

Is there any difference between the “spiritual” and the “psychic”? Are they two different planes?

This subject has given rise to great confusion in human thought. I believe philosophical, yogic and other systems use the word “spiritual” in a very vague and loose way. Whatever is not physical is spiritual! In comparison with the physical world all other worlds are spiritual! All thought, all effort which does not tend towards the material life is a spiritual effort. Every tendency which is not strictly human and egoistic is a spiritual tendency. This is a word used to fit every case.

I just read this in Illustration: “The spiritual activity par excellence is reading and writing. The centre of spiritual life is the National Library.”

It is a cheap spirituality!

Mother first read the passage on the difference between the “psychic” and the “spiritual”, then continued:

“So long as you have to draw your understanding from forms of words, you are likely to fall into much confusion about the true sense; but if in a silence of your mind you can rise into the world from which ideas descend to take form, at once the real understanding comes....”

“But here in this higher region of the unexpressed mind and its purer altitudes you are free; when you enter there, you go out of yourself and penetrate into a universal mental plane in which each individual mental world is dipping as if into a huge sea. There you can understand entirely what is going on in another and read his mind as if it were your own, because there no separation divides mind from mind. It is only when you unite in that region with others that you can understand them; otherwise you are not attuned, you do not touch....”

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It is only in the silence that one can understand. It often happens that two persons speak about a certain subject and all of a sudden, for some reason, both fall silent for a time; then, abruptly, one says a word which corresponds exactly to what the other was thinking. These are people who understand each other in silence. They have followed the same curve, they have come to the same result and one completes the thought of the other. This happens often to those who have lived together a long time and have developed a sort of mental affinity which enables them to truly understand each other behind the words. I have known people who belong to different countries — and you know the mode of thinking is very different according to the country, the manner of relating the sequence of ideas is different, even contrary to that of another country — but I have had experiences with persons of very far-removed races who succeeded so well

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in harmonising mentally with each other that there was this understanding without words.

If one is silent and the other is not, can they understand each other?

It is possible. Perhaps the one who is silent will understand the other who is not!... But when there is this full accord, even if it is not permanent, when you are with someone and follow a thought far enough to come out of the external agitation, if the other too has followed the same thought, you may find yourselves suddenly agreeing without having spoken or made any effort towards that. Generally the silence comes to both at the same time or almost the same time—it is as though you slid into the silence. Of course, it may happen also that one continues to make a noise in his head, while the other has stopped, but the one who has stopped has a much greater chance of understanding what is happening to the other!

When the class¹ is over, we are asked what you said. Should we tell?

You may say, “Well, I tried my best, but I am not sure if I have understood, and if I report what she said, I am almost certain to distort her words.” In this way you are on the safe side, at ease.

What characterises the substance of the psychic world?

The substance of the psychic world is a substance proper to it, with its own psychic characteristics: a sense of immortality, a complete receptivity to the divine influence, an entire submission to this influence by which it is wholly impregnated. It is this exactly which distinguishes the psychic from the other parts of

¹ Children used to speak of “Mother’s class” when they referred to these talks.

the being. When, for instance, I speak of organising the mind and the vital around the psychic centre, I do not mean that they become psychic; they remain the mind and the vital, but they are organised around the psychic as an army is organised around its leader—it does not become the leader, it obeys him, doesn't it? Well, it is the same thing here; the vital and the mind are organised around the psychic, they receive orders from the psychic and carry them out as well as they can. But their substance does not become psychic substance as a consequence. They can be under the influence of the psychic and assume its nature more or less but not its substance.

*You said that our body can become receptive to forces which are concentrated in certain places or in certain countries. But can we have this physical sensation without a preliminary preparation of the consciousness? Or is it truly a spontaneous sensation like heat, cold or goose-flesh, for example?*²

If it were the result of a thought or a will, it would not be an experience and it would have no value. You understand, I affirm absolutely that any experience that is the result of a thought or preconceived will has no value from the spiritual point of view.

But were you not in a state, so to say, "favourable" to this sensation?

There are people who live constantly in a higher consciousness, while others have to make an effort to enter there. But here it is an altogether different thing; in the experience I was speaking about, what gave it all its value was that I was not expecting it at all, not at all. I knew very well, I had been for a very long

² In the preceding talk Mother had described how on her return from Japan she had all of a sudden physically felt the atmosphere of Sri Aurobindo at a distance of two nautical miles from Pondicherry.

time and continuously in “spiritual” contact, if I may say so, with the atmosphere of Sri Aurobindo, but I had never thought of the possibility of a modification in the physical air and I was not expecting it in the least, and it was this that gave the whole value to the experience, which came like that, quite suddenly, just as when one enters a place with another temperature or another altitude.... I do not know if you have noticed that the air you breathe is not always the same, that there are different vibrations in the air of one country and in the air of another, in the air of one place and in the air of another. If indeed you are accustomed to have this perception of the subtle physical, you can say immediately, “Ah! This air is as in France” or “This is the air of Japan.” It is something indefinable like taste or smell. But in this instance it is not that, it is a perception of another sense. It is a physical sense, it is not a vital or mental sense; it is a sense of the physical world, but there are other senses than the five that we usually have at our disposal — there are many others.

Actually, for the physical being — note that I say the physical being — to be fully developed, it must have twelve senses. It is one of these senses which gives you the kind of perception I was speaking of. You cannot say that it is taste, smell, hearing, etc., but it is something which gives you a very precise impression of the difference of quality. And it is very precise, as distinct as seeing black and white, it is truly a sense perception.

Generally, when you want to study occultism, the first thing that the Master does is never to speak to you about it, never to explain it to you, precisely because of this ridiculous phenomenon of the mind which begins to “think” about it and brings you “experiences” which have no value: they are mental formations which make a plaything of you, that is all. They have no reality.

You must distrust the mind altogether when you want to enter the world of experiences. It is enough for the mind to be just slightly roused for it to say, “Ah, what is going on?”... Then

it may be that things do happen but it is no longer *the* thing, it is a fabrication.

First condition, know how to keep silent. And not only keep your tongue quiet, but silence your mind, keep the head silent. If you wish to have a true, sincere experience upon which you can build, you must know how to be silent, otherwise you have nothing but what you fabricate yourself, which is equivalent to zero. All that one can say is, "Heavens, what a fashioner my mind is!"

22 March 1951

You say that “time is relative”. What does that mean?

The sense of the length of time depends upon your consciousness. If you are in the ordinary human consciousness, time is measured by the number of years you expect to live. So, what requires, let us say, fifty years to be realised, seems terribly long, for you think, “Fifty years... where will I be in fifty years?” Even without your being clearly aware of it, it is there in your consciousness. But if simply you look from the point of view of a mental consciousness, of something which lasts like a written work, for instance—a work of truly fine quality can last for hundreds and even thousands of years; so, if you are told, “For your ideas to spread it will take a hundred years”, this will not seem to you so very long. And if you succeed in uniting your consciousness with the psychic consciousness, a life is only one moment among so many similar moments which have gone before; and so one life more or less is not of much importance. And if, still further, you unite with the consciousness of eternity, time no longer has any reality.

All is relative.

*When one is conscious of the different parts of the being,
what part is it which is conscious?*

It is probably not always the same. Usually the work of becoming aware ought to be done by the psychic, but it is rarely the psychic. More often it is a part of the mind, more or less enlightened, which has acquired the capacity to stand back a little and look at the rest. But you know it well: if you are conscious in your mind, one part of the mind says one thing and the other replies, and there is an endless discussion between the two parts. Many people have these dialogues in their mind.

It is difficult to say generally what is conscious; but naturally, if something observes, it is always the “witness” element in this part—in each part of the being there is something which is a “witness”, which looks on. There is even a physical witness which can get very much in the way; for instance, if it watches you playing, this can paralyse you considerably. There is also a vital witness which looks at you, sees your desires and enjoys highly all that happens; it acts also as a brake. There is the mental witness which judges ideas, which says, “This idea contradicts this other”, and which arranges everything. Then there is the great psychic Witness, who is the inner divinity.

Sometimes there is no relation among these different witnesses—there ought to be, but it is not always there. But if there is in the being a will to become perfect, the relation is established quite quickly; one can refer to another and finally, if there is a sufficient sincerity, sufficient concentration, you come to the supreme inner Witness who can judge all things. But generally it may be said that it is always a part of the mind, more or less enlightened, in a little closer contact with the inner being, which observes and judges.

What is consciousness?

(*After a silence*) I am trying to choose among several explanations! One, which is a joke, is that consciousness is the opposite of unconsciousness! Another... it is the creative essence of the universe—with consciousness, no universe; for consciousness means objectification. I could also say that consciousness is what “is”, because without consciousness nothing is—this is the best reason. Without consciousness no life, no light, no objectification, no creation, no universe.

Perhaps there is in the unmanifest Supreme a consciousness (but when one speaks of these questions one begins to say impossible things); it is said that, to begin with, the Supreme became aware of himself (which would mean that he was not conscious

of himself before! that he was in a state we cannot call “conscious”), that his first movement was to become aware of himself and once having become conscious of himself, he projected this consciousness, which formed the creation. At least, this is what old tradition says. Grant that there never was a beginning, for it is a human way of putting it: the “beginning” is the Supreme—the unmanifest Supreme becoming aware of himself. Perhaps he found that this consciousness was not altogether satisfactory (!) and he projected it, not outside himself for nothing is outside him, but he changed it into an active consciousness so that it would become an objectification of himself. Consequently, it can be said with certitude that Consciousness is the origin of all creation; there you are as exact as you can ever be with words. Consciousness is the origin of all creation—without consciousness, no creation. And what we call “consciousness” is just a far-off contact, without precision and exactness, with the supreme Consciousness. Or if you like, it is the reflection, in a not very exact or pure mirror, of the original Consciousness. What we call our consciousness is this original Consciousness reflected in a somewhat foggy mirror (sometimes very foggy, sometimes very deformed), a reflection in the individual mirror. Then through this reflection, if we go back slowly to the origin of what is reflected, we can enter into contact with the Consciousness—the True Consciousness. And once we come into contact with the True Consciousness, we become aware that it is the same everywhere, that it is only deformation which divides it; without deformation everything is contained in one and the same Consciousness. That is, it is only distortion, the reflection in a distorting mirror, which brings about difference and division in the Consciousness, otherwise it is one single Consciousness. But it is only by experience that one can understand these things.

*What are the twelve senses?*¹

¹ In the preceding talk Mother spoke of “twelve senses”.

We are granted five, aren't we? In any case, there is another one which, precisely, has a relation with consciousness. I don't know if you have ever been told this, but a person who is blind, for instance, who does not see, can become aware of an object at some distance through a kind of perception which is not touch for he does not feel it, which is not vision for he does not see, but which is a contact — something that enables him to make a contact without hearing, seeing or touching. This is one of the most developed senses apart from those we habitually use. There is another sense, a sort of sense of proximity: when one comes close to a thing, one feels it as if one had contacted it. Another sense, which is also physical, puts you in touch with events at a great distance; it is a physical sense for it belongs to the physical world, it is not purely mental: there is a sensation. Some people have a sort of sensation of contact with what is happening at a very great distance. You must not forget that in the physical consciousness there are several levels; there is a physical vital and a physical mind which are not solely corporeal. Foresight on the material plane is also one of the physical senses.... We have, then, something that sees at a short distance, something that sees at a long distance and something that sees ahead; this already makes three. These are a sort of improvement of the senses we have; as for instance, hearing at a great distance — there are people who can hear noises at a great distance, who can smell at a great distance. It is a kind of perfecting of these senses.

Which sense is used in water-divining?

The perception is different with each individual. For some, it is as though they saw the water; for others, as though they got the smell of water; and for others yet, it is a kind of intuition from the mental field; but then it is not a physical perception, it is a sort of direct knowledge. There was a man here who used to say he smelt water; he had an instrument, but it was only

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a pretext.... It is like a rod which bends, you know; try as you may to be as passive as possible, you will always make a slight movement when you have the feeling that something is there. I have tried this experiment many times: you give the rod to someone, you ask him to walk; you are silent, the man is silent, quite concentrated; then, suddenly, you think powerfully: "Here there is water" and hop! The rod makes a little movement — it is quite evident that it is your suggestion. I had thought thus, without having the least idea that there was water there, simply to make an experiment; and in the hand of the dowser the rod came down; he had received the suggestion in his subconscious.

If one is sufficiently quiet, the nerves can receive the vibrations of the water?

But there was no water! It was I who had *thought* there was water (there may have been water there, I don't know, I did not tell them to dig and see). But the experiment proves that it was simply my thought which had worked on the fingers holding the rod, and the rod had come down.... You could also tell me that I had thought of water because it was there!

There are animals with very developed senses, aren't there?

Ah! Yes, there are animals which are much more advanced than we are.

I knew an elephant which led us straight to the water when we were tiger-shooting.

Animals have much more perfect senses than those of men. I challenge you to track a man as a dog does, for instance!

This means that in the curve or rather the spiral of evolution, animals (and more so those we call "higher" animals, because

they resemble us more closely) are governed by the spirit of the species which is a highly conscious consciousness. Bees, ants, obey this spirit of the species which is of quite a special quality. And what is called "instinct" in animals is simply obedience to the spirit of the species which always knows what ought and ought not to be done. There are so many examples, you know. You put a cow in a meadow; it roams around, sniffs, and suddenly puts out its tongue and snatches a tuft of grass. Then it wanders about again, sniffs and gets another tuft of grass, and so it goes on. Has anyone ever known a cow under these conditions to eat poisonous grass? But shut this poor animal up in a cow-shed, gather and put some grass before it, and the poor creature which has lost its instinct because it now obeys man (excuse me), eats the poisonous grass along with the rest of it. We have already had three such cases here, three cows which died from having eaten poisonous grass. And these unfortunate animals, like all animals, have a kind of respect (which I could call unjustifiable) for the superiority of man—if he puts poisonous grass before the cow and tells it to eat, it eats it! But left to itself, that is, without anything interfering between it and the spirit of the species, it would never do so. All animals which live close to man lose their instinct because they have a kind of admiration full of devotion for this being who can give them shelter and food without the least difficulty—and a little fear too, for they know that if they don't do what man wants they will be beaten!

It is quite strange, they lose their ability. Dogs, for instance the sheep-dog which lives far away from men with the flocks and has a very independent nature (it comes home from time to time and knows its master well, but often does not see him), if it is bitten by a snake, it will remain in a corner, lick itself and do all that is necessary till it gets cured. The same dog, if it stays with you and is bitten by a snake, dies quietly like man.

I had a very sweet little cat, absolutely civilised, a marvellous cat. It was born in the house and it had the habit all cats have,

that is to say, if something moved, it played with that. Just then there was in the house a huge scorpion; as was its habit, the cat started playing with the scorpion. And the scorpion stung it. But it was an exceptional cat; it came to me, it was almost dying, but it showed me its paw where it was bitten — it was already swollen and in a terrible state. I took my little cat — it was really sweet — and put it on a table and called Sri Aurobindo. I told him, "Kiki has been stung by a scorpion, it must be cured." The cat stretched its neck and looked at Sri Aurobindo, its eyes already a little glassy. Sri Aurobindo sat before it and looked at it also. Then we saw this little cat gradually beginning to recover, to come around, and an hour later it jumped to its feet and went away completely healed.... In those days, I had the habit of holding a meditation in the room where Sri Aurobindo slept (the room A uses now) and it was regularly the same people who came; everything was arranged. But there was an arm-chair in which this very cat always settled beforehand — it did not wait for anyone to get into the chair, it got in first itself! And regularly it went into a trance! It was not sleeping, it was not in the pose cats take when sleeping: it was in a trance, it used to start up, it certainly had visions. And it let out little sounds. It was in a profound trance. It remained thus for hours together. And when it came out from that state, it refused to eat. It was awakened and given food, but it refused: it went back to its chair and fell again into a trance! This was becoming very dangerous for a little cat.... But this was not an ordinary cat.

To finish my story, if you leave an animal in its normal state, far from man, it obeys the spirit of the species, it has a very sure instinct and it will never commit any stupidities. But if you take it and keep it with you, it loses its instinct, and it is then you who must look after it, for it no longer knows what should or should not be done. I was interested in cats to make an experiment, a sort of inverse metempsychosis, if one can call it that, that is, to see if this could be their last incarnation as

animals, if they were ready to enter a human body in the next life. The experiment succeeded fully, I had three absolutely flagrant instances; they left with a psychic being sufficiently conscious to enter a human body. But this is not what men ordinarily do; what they usually do is to spoil the consciousness or rather the instinct of animals.

24 March 1951

You say, “Love is everywhere. Its movement is there in plants, perhaps in the very stones....”¹ If there is love in a stone, how can one see it?

Perhaps the different elements constituting the stone are coordinated by the spark of love. I am sure that when the Divine Love descended into Matter, this Matter was quite unconscious, it had absolutely no form; it may even be said that forms in general are the result of the effort of Love to bring consciousness into Matter. If one of you (I have my doubts, but still) went down into the Inconscient, what is called the pure Inconscient, you would realise what it is. A stone will seem to you a marvellously conscious object in comparison. You speak disdainfully of a stone because you have just a wee bit more consciousness than it has, but the difference between the consciousness of the stone and the total Inconscient is perhaps greater than that between the stone and you. And the coming out of the Inconscient is due exclusively to the sacrifice of the Divine, to this descent of divine Love into the Inconscient. Consequently, when I said “perhaps in the stone”, I could have removed the “perhaps”—I can assert that *even* in the stone it is there. There would be nothing, neither stone nor metal nor any organisation of atoms without this presence of Divine Love.

Most people say there is “consciousness” when they begin to think—when one doesn’t think one is not conscious. But plants are perfectly conscious and yet they do not think. They have very precise sensations which are the expression of a consciousness, but they do not think. Animals begin to think and their reactions are much more complex. But both plants and animals are

¹ *Questions and Answers 1929 (2 June).*

conscious. One can be conscious of a sensation without having the least thought.

Did material substance exist before the descent of Divine Love?

I don't think it could be said that there was a material substance. The Inconscient... is the Inconscient. I don't know how to explain this to you. If there is a negation of something, it is truly the Inconscient, it is the negation of everything. It has not even the capacity of emptiness. One needs to have descended there to know what it is and explain it. Words cannot describe it. It is the negation of all things because everything begins with consciousness. Without consciousness there is nothing.

Were there any beings before this descent of Love? Were they conscious?

There were no terrestrial beings. The terrestrial world, the earth came into existence after the descent into the Inconscient, not before.

The gradual formation of the different stages of being, from the Supreme to the most material region, is subsequent to the Inconscient. When, precisely, the Consciousness "began" its creation (don't take what I say quite literally as though it were a little history of another country, for it is not that, I am trying to make you understand, that's all), the first manifestation of the creative Consciousness was just an emanation of consciousness — of conscious light — and when this emanation separated itself from its origin, the Inconscient was born, through opposition (how to put it?) yes, really through opposition. Consequently, the birth of the Inconscient is prior to the formation of the world, and it was only when the perception came that the whole universe was going to be created uselessly that there was a call and Divine Love plunged into the Inconscient to change it into

consciousness. Therefore, it can be said that the formation of the material worlds as we know them is the result of the descent of the supreme Consciousness into the Inconscient. It cannot be said that there was something prior to that, things as we know them in the material world (I apologise for the ambiguity of my words, but you understand one cannot express these things in our usual words).

The formation of the earth as we know it, this infinitesimal point in the immense universe, was made precisely in order to concentrate the effort of transformation upon one point; it is like a symbolic point created in the universe to make it possible, while working directly upon one point, to radiate it over the entire universe.

If we want to make the problem a little more comprehensible, it is enough to limit ourselves to the creation and the history of the earth, for it is a good symbol of universal history.

From the astronomical point of view the earth is nothing, it is a very small accident. From the spiritual point of view, it is a symbolic willed formation. And as I have already said, it is only upon earth that this Presence is found, this direct contact with the supreme Origin, this presence of the divine Consciousness hidden in all things.

The other worlds have been organised more or less hierarchically, if one may say so, but the earth has a special formation due to the direct intervention, without any intermediary, of the supreme Consciousness in the Inconscient.

Have the solar fragments the same matter as the earth?

I have taken care to tell you that this radiation was a symbolic creation, and that all action on this special point had its radiation in the whole universe; remember this, instead of beginning to say that the formation of the earth comes from an element projected from the sun or that a nebula must have been scattered giving birth to the sun and all its satellites, etc.

But is it true that there is no difference between solar matter and terrestrial matter? Were the sun and the other worlds of the solar system formed at the same time as the earth?

Necessarily, everything was formed at the same time, the creation was simultaneous, with a special concentration of the Consciousness upon the earth.

Have the beings of the other worlds and planets a psychic being?

No, it is a purely terrestrial phenomenon. Only, there is nothing against the idea that psychic beings may go to the other worlds if it so pleases them. There is no reason to think that one cannot, if one went to another planet, meet psychic beings; it is not impossible; but these would be psychic beings formed upon earth who have become free in their movement, going here and there at will for some reason or other. All knowledge in all traditions, from every part of the earth, says that the psychic formation is a terrestrial formation and that the growth of the psychic being is something that takes place upon earth. But once they are formed and free in their movement, they can go anywhere in the universe, they are not limited in their movement; but their formation and growth belong to the terrestrial life, for reasons of concentration.

Are Divine Love and Grace the same thing?

Essentially, all things are the same. In its essence everything is the same, it is a phenomenon of consciousness; but Love can exist without Grace and Grace can exist without Love. But for the human consciousness all manifestation of Grace is a manifestation of the supreme Love, inevitably. Only it goes beyond human consciousness.

How can one become conscious of Divine Love and an instrument of its expression?

First, to become conscious of anything whatever, you must will it. And when I say “will it”, I don’t mean saying one day, “Oh! I would like it very much”, then two days later completely forgetting it.

To will it is a constant, sustained, concentrated aspiration, an almost exclusive occupation of the consciousness. This is the first step. There are many others: a very attentive observation, a very persistent analysis, a very keen discernment of what is pure in the movement and what is not. If you have an imaginative faculty, you may try to imagine and see if your imagination tallies with reality. There are people who believe that it is enough to wake up one day in a particular mood and say, “Ah! How I wish to be conscious of divine Love, how I wish to manifest divine Love....” Note, I don’t know how many millions of times one feels within a little stirring up of human instinct and imagines that if one had at one’s disposal divine Love, great things could be accomplished, and one says, “I am going to try and find divine Love and we shall see the result.” This is the worst possible way. Because, before having even touched the very beginning of realisation you have spoilt the result. You must take up your search with a purity of aspiration and surrender which in themselves are already difficult to acquire. You must have worked much on yourself only to be *ready* to aspire to this Love. If you look at yourself very sincerely, very straight, you will see that as soon as you begin to think of Love it is always your little inner tumult which starts whirling. All that aspires in you wants certain vibrations. It is almost impossible, without being far advanced on the yogic path, to separate the vital essence, the vital vibration from your conception of Love. What I say is founded on an assiduous experience of human beings. Well, for you, in the state in which you are, as you are, if you had a contact with pure divine Love, it would seem to you colder than

ice, or so far-off, so high that you would not be able to breathe; it would be like the mountain-top where you would feel frozen and find it difficult to breathe, so very far would it be from what you normally feel. Divine Love, if not clothed with a psychic or vital vibration, is difficult for a human being to perceive. One can have an impression of grace, of a grace which is something so far, so high, so pure, so impersonal that... yes, one can have the feeling of grace, but it is with difficulty that one feels Love.

But, then, can it be said that the psychic vibration is the vibration of divine Love?

Each one of you should be able to get into touch with your own psychic being, it is not an inaccessible thing. Your psychic being is there precisely to put you in contact with the divine forces. And if you are in contact with your psychic being, you begin to feel, to have a kind of perception of what divine Love can be. As I have just said, it is not enough that one morning you wake up saying, "Oh! I would like to be in contact with divine Love", it is not like that. If, through a sustained effort, a deep concentration, a great forgetfulness of self, you succeed in coming into touch with your psychic being, you will never dream of thinking, "Oh! I would like to be in contact with divine Love" — you are in a state in which everything appears to you to be this divine Love and nothing else. And yet it is only a covering, but a covering of a beautiful texture.

So, divine Love need not be sought and known apart from the psychic being?

No, find your psychic being and you will understand what divine Love is. Do not try to come into direct contact with divine Love because this will yet again be a vital desire pushing you; you will perhaps not be aware of it, but it will be a vital desire.

You must make an effort to come into touch with your

psychic being, to become aware and free in the consciousness of your psychic being, and then, quite naturally, spontaneously, you will know what divine Love is.

The fact of being born with a psychic being and upon earth which is a spiritual symbol proves that we have each one of us a great responsibility, doesn't it?

Surely. One has a big responsibility, it is to fulfil a special mission that one is born upon earth. Only, naturally, the psychic being must have reached a certain degree of development; otherwise it could be said that it is the whole earth which has the responsibility. The more conscious and individualised one becomes, the more should one have the sense of responsibility. But this is what happens at a given moment; one begins to think that one is here not without reason, without purpose. One realises suddenly that one is here because there is something to be done and this something is not anything egoistic. This seems to me the most logical way of entering upon the path — all of a sudden to realise, “Since I am here, it means that I have a mission to fulfil. Since I have been endowed with a consciousness, it is that I have something to do with that consciousness — what is it?”

Generally, it seems to me that this is the first question one should put to oneself: “Why am I here?”

I have seen this in children, even in children of five or six: “Why am I here, why do I live?” And then to search, with whatever consciousness is available, with a very little bit of consciousness: why am I here, for what reason?

This seems to me the normal starting-point.

26 March 1951

"At every moment one must know how to lose all in order to gain all." What does this mean?

We have already spoken about this. When we enter upon the path of yoga, why do our dear ones leave us? One loses all worldly possessions, all one's attachments; sometimes, even, one loses one's position, and to gain what? — the most important thing, the only thing which is valuable: the divine Consciousness. And to gain this one must know how to lose all the goods of this world, to let go of all one's possessions, all desires, all attachments, all satisfactions; one must know how to lose all this if one wants to get the divine Consciousness.

It is a little paradoxical for the mind.

You have said that after finishing their development psychic beings could go to other worlds; yet, the psychic being belongs exclusively to the earth, doesn't it?

But the psychic being is not material, it is psychic! It is not bound to the material world; as soon as it stops living in a body, it goes away to the psychic world which is very far from being a material world.

How can one transform the vital?

The first step: will. Secondly, sincerity and aspiration. But will and aspiration are almost the same thing, one follows the other. Then, perseverance. Yes, perseverance is necessary in any process, and what is this process?... First, there must be the ability to observe and discern, the ability to find the vital in oneself, otherwise you will find it hard to say: "This comes from the

vital, this comes from the mind, this from the body." Everything will seem to you mixed and indistinct.

After a very sustained observation, you will be able to distinguish between the different parts and recognise the origin of a movement. Quite a long time is necessary for this, but one can go quite fast also, it depends upon people. But once you have found out the different parts ask yourself, "What is there of the vital in this? What does the vital bring into your consciousness? In what way does it change your movements; what does it add to them and what take away? What happens in your consciousness through the intervention of the vital?" Once you know this, what do you do?... Then you will need to watch this intervention, observe it, find out in what way it works. For instance, you want to transform your vital. You have a great sincerity in your aspiration and the resolution to go to the very end. You have all that. You start observing and you see that two things can happen (many things can happen) but mainly two.

First, a sort of enthusiasm takes hold of you. You set to work earnestly. In this enthusiasm you think, "I am going to do this and that, I am going to reach my goal immediately, everything is going to be magnificent! It will see, this vital, how I am going to treat it if it doesn't obey!" And if you look carefully you will see that the vital is saying to itself, "Ah, at last, here's an opportunity!" It accepts, it starts working with all its zeal, all its enthusiasm and... all its impatience.

The second thing may be the very opposite. A sort of uneasiness: "I am not well, how tedious life is, how wearisome everything. How am I going to do all that? Will I ever reach the goal? Is it worth while beginning? Is it at all possible? Isn't it impossible?" It is the vital which is not very happy about what is going to be done for it, which does not want anyone to meddle in its affairs, which does not like all that very much. So it suggests depression, discouragement, a lack of faith, doubt — is it really worth the trouble?

These are the two extremes, and each has its difficulties, its obstacles.

Depression, unless one has a strong will, suggests, "This is not worth while, one may have to wait a lifetime." As for enthusiasm, it expects to see the vital transformed overnight: "I am not going to have any difficulty henceforth, I am going to advance rapidly on the path of yoga, I am going to gain the divine consciousness without any difficulty." There are some other difficulties.... One needs a little time, much perseverance. So the vital, after a few hours — perhaps a few days, perhaps a few months — says to itself: "We haven't gone very far with our enthusiasm, has anything been really done? Doesn't this movement leave us just where we were, perhaps worse than we were, a little troubled, a little disturbed? Things are no longer what they were, they are not yet what they ought to be. It is very tiresome, what I am doing." And then, if one pushes a little more, here's this gentleman saying, "Ah, no! I have had enough of it, leave me alone. I don't want to move, I shall stay in my corner, I won't trouble you, but don't bother me!" And so one has not gone very much farther than before.

This is one of the big obstacles which must be carefully avoided. As soon as there is the least sign of discontentment, of annoyance, the vital must be spoken to in this way, "My friend, you are going to keep calm, you are going to do what you are asked to do, otherwise you will have to deal with me." And to the other, the enthusiast who says, "Everything must be done now, immediately", your reply is, "Calm yourself a little, your energy is excellent, but it must not be spent in five minutes. We shall need it for a long time, keep it carefully and, as it is wanted, I shall call upon your goodwill. You will show that you are full of goodwill, you will obey, you won't grumble, you will not protest, you will not revolt, you will say 'yes, yes', you will make a little sacrifice when asked, you will say 'yes' whole-heartedly."

So we get started on the path. But the road is very long. Many things happen on the way. Suddenly one thinks one has

overcome an obstacle; I say “thinks”, because though one has overcome it, it is not totally overcome. I am going to take a very obvious instance, of a very simple observation. Someone has found that his vital is uncontrollable and uncontrolled, that it gets furious for nothing and about nothing. He starts working to teach it not to get carried away, not to flare up, to remain calm and bear the shocks of life without reacting violently. If one does this cheerfully, it goes quite quickly. (Note this well, it is very important: when you have to deal with your vital take care to remain cheerful, otherwise you will get into trouble.) One remains cheerful, that is, when one sees the fury rise, one begins to laugh. Instead of being depressed and saying, “Ah! In spite of all my effort it is beginning all over again”, one begins to laugh and says, “Well, well! One hasn’t yet seen the end of it. Look now, aren’t you ridiculous, you know quite well that you are being ridiculous! Is it worthwhile getting angry?” One gives it this lesson cheerfully. And really, after a while it doesn’t get angry again, it is quiet — and one relaxes one’s attention. One thinks the difficulty has been overcome, one thinks a result has at last been reached: “My vital does not trouble me any longer, it does not get angry now, everything is going fine.” And the next day, one loses one’s temper. It is then one must be careful, it is then one must not say, “Here we are, it’s no use, I shall never achieve anything, all my efforts are futile; all this is an illusion, it is impossible.” On the contrary, one must say, “I wasn’t vigilant enough.” One must wait long, very long, before one can say, “Ah! It is done and finished.” Sometimes one must wait for years, many years....

I am not saying this to discourage you, but to give you patience and perseverance — for there is a moment when you do arrive. And note that the vital is a small part of your being — a very important part, we have said that it is the dynamism, the realising energy, it is very important; but it is only a small part. And the mind!... which goes wandering, which must be pulled back by all the strings to be kept quiet! You think this can be done

overnight? And your body?... You have a weakness, a difficulty, sometimes a small chronic illness, nothing much, but still it is a nuisance, isn't it? You want to get rid of it. You make efforts, you concentrate; you work upon it, establish harmony, and you think it is finished, and then.... Take, for instance, people who have the habit of coughing; they can't control themselves or almost can't. It is not serious but it is bothersome, and there seems to be no reason why it should ever stop. Well, one tells oneself, "I am going to control this." One makes an effort — a yogic effort, not a material one — one brings down consciousness, force, and stops the cough. And one thinks, "The body has forgotten how to cough." And it is a great thing when the body has forgotten, truly one can say, "I am cured." But unfortunately it is not always true, for this goes down into the subconscious and, one day, when the balance of forces is not so well established, when the strength is not the same, it begins again. And one laments, "I believed that it was over! I had succeeded and told myself, 'It is true that spiritual power has an action upon the body, it is true that something can be done', and there! it is not true. And yet it was a small thing, and I who want to conquer immortality! How will I succeed?... For years I have been free from this small thing and here it is beginning anew!" It is then that you must be careful.

You must arm yourself with an endless patience and endurance. You do a thing once, ten times, a hundred times, a thousand times if necessary, but you do it till it gets done. And not done only here and there, but everywhere and everywhere at the same time. This is the great problem one sets oneself. That is why, to those who come to tell me very light-heartedly, "I want to do yoga", I reply, "Think it over, one may do the yoga for a number of years without noticing the least result. But if you want to do it, you must persist and persist with such a will that you should be ready to do it for ten lifetimes, a hundred lifetimes if necessary, in order to succeed." I do not say it will be like that, but the *attitude* must be like that. Nothing must discourage you; for there are all the difficulties of ignorance

of the different states of being, to which are added the endless malice and the unbounded cunning of the hostile forces in the world.... They are there, do you know why? They have been tolerated, do you know why?—simply to see how long one can last out and how great is the sincerity in one's action. For everything depends upon your sincerity. If you are truly sincere in your will, nothing will stop you, you will go right to the end, and if it is necessary for you to live a thousand years to do it, you will live a thousand years to do it.

Does not the vital seek its own transformation? It aspires but it is always the victim of things, of impulsions from outside.

If it seeks to transform itself, it is truly wonderful! And if it aspires for transformation, it will try to free itself. If the vital is weak, its aspiration will be weak. And mark that weakness is an insincerity, a sort of excuse one gives oneself—not very, very consciously perhaps, but you must be told that the subconscious is a place full of insincerity. And the weakness which says, "I would like it so much, but I can't" is insincerity. Because, if one is sincere, what one cannot do today one will do tomorrow, and what one cannot do tomorrow one will do the day after, and so on, until one can do it. If you understand once for all that the entire universe (or, if you like, our earth, to concentrate the problem) is nothing other than the Divine who has forgotten Himself, where will you find a place for weakness there? Not in the Divine surely! Then, in forgetfulness. And if you struggle against forgetfulness you struggle against weakness, and to the extent you draw closer to the Divine your weakness disappears.

And that holds good not only for the mind, but also for the vital and even for the body. All suffering, all weaknesses, all incapacities are, in the last analysis, insincerities.

There are many places where insincerity may be lodged, and hence it should never be said as so often people say to me, "I

am perfectly sincere.” It is like those who assure you, “I have never told a lie.” If you were perfectly sincere, you would be the Divine, if you had never told a lie, that is, something that is not true, you would be the Truth! So, as you are neither the Divine nor the Truth in fact (you are that in essence but not in fact), you have always a long way to go to reach the Truth and sincerity.

You need not look unhappy because it is like that.

It is like those people in despair who tell you, “Why is the world so frightful?” What is the use of lamenting, since it is like that? The only thing you can do is to work to change it. Naturally, from a speculative point of view one may try to understand, but the human mind is incapable of understanding such things. For the moment it is quite useless. What is useful is to change it. We all agree that the world is detestable, that it is not what it ought to be, and the only thing we have to do is to work to make it otherwise. Consequently, our whole preoccupation should be to find the best means of making it different; and we can understand one thing, it is that the best means (though we do not know it quite well yet), is we ourselves, isn’t it? And surely you know yourself better than you know your neighbour—you understand better the consciousness manifested in a human being than that manifested in the stars, for instance. So, after a little hesitation you could say, “After all, the best means is what I am. I don’t know very well what I am, but this kind of collection of things that I am, this perhaps is my work, this is perhaps my part of the work, and if I do it as well as I can, perhaps I shall be doing the best I can do.” This is a very big beginning, very big. It is not overwhelming, not beyond the limits of your possibilities. You have your work at hand, it is always within your reach, so to say, it is always there for you to attend to it—a field of action proportionate to your strength, but varied enough, complex, vast, deep enough to be interesting. And you explore this unknown world.

Many people tell you, “But then this is egoism!” It is egoism

if you do it in an egoistic way, for your personal profit, if you try to acquire powers, to become powerful enough to influence others, or if you seek means to make a comfortable life for yourself. Naturally, if you do it in this spirit, it will be egoistic. But the beauty of it is that you will not get anywhere! You will begin by deceiving yourself, you will live in increasing illusions and you will fall back into a greater and greater obscurity. Consequently, things are organised much better than one thinks; if you do your work egoistically (we have said that our field of work is always within our reach), it will come to nothing. And hence the required condition is to do it with an absolute sincerity in your aspiration for the realisation of the divine work. So if you start like that I can assure you that you will have such an interesting journey that even if it takes very long, you will never get tired. But you must do it like that with an intensity of will, with perseverance and that indispensable cheerfulness which smiles at difficulties and laughs at mistakes. Then everything will go well.

What mirror is that which can reflect the Supreme?

Consciousness itself. It is because that is there, without it one would never get anywhere. If the supreme Consciousness were not at the centre of all creation, never could the creation become aware of the Consciousness.

To transform the vital one must have will, perseverance, sincerity, etc. But in what part of the being are all these things found?

The source of sincerity, of will, of perseverance is in the psychic being, but this translates itself differently in different people. Generally it is in the higher part of the mind that this begins to take shape, but for it to be effective at least one part of the vital must respond, because the intensity of your will comes from

there, the realising power of the will comes from its contact with the vital. If there were only refractory elements in the vital, you would not be able to do anything at all. But there is always something, somewhere, which is willing — it is perhaps something insignificant, but there is always something which is willing. It is enough to have had once one minute of aspiration and a will even if it be very fugitive, to become conscious of the Divine, to realise the Divine, for it to flash like lightning through the whole being — there are even cells of the body which respond. This is not visible all at once, but there is a response everywhere. And it is by slowly, carefully, putting together all these parts which have responded, though it be but once, that one can build up something which will be coherent and organised, and which will permit one's action to continue with will, sincerity and perseverance.

Even a fleeting idea in a child, at a certain moment in its childhood when the psychic being is most in front, if it succeeds in penetrating through the outer consciousness and giving the child just an impression of something beautiful which must be realised, it creates a little nucleus and upon this you build your action. There is a vast mass of humanity to whom one would never say, "You must realise the Divine" or "Do yoga to find the Divine." If you observe well you will see that it is a tiny minority to whom this can be said. It means that this minority of beings is "prepared" to do yoga, it is that. It is that there has been a beginning of realisation — a beginning is enough. With others it is perhaps an old thing, an awakening which may come from past lives. But we are speaking of those who are less ready; they are those who have had at a certain moment a flash which has passed through their whole being and created a response, but that suffices. This does not happen to many people. Those ready to do yoga are not many if you compare them with the unconscious human mass. But one thing is certain, the fact that you are all here proves that at least you have had that — there are those who are very far on the path (sometimes they have no

Questions and Answers

idea about it), but at least all of you have had that, that kind of spontaneous integral contact which is like an electric shock, a lightning-flash which goes through you and wakes you up to something: there is something to be realised. It is possible that the experience is not translated into words, only into a flame. That is enough. And it is around this nucleus that one organises oneself, slowly, slowly, progressively. And once it is there it never disappears. It is only if you have made a pact with the adverse forces and make a considerable effort to break the contact and not notice its existence, that you may believe it has disappeared. And yet a single flash suffices for it to come back.

If you have had this just once, you may tell yourself that in this life or another you are sure to realise.

29 March 1951

"The articles and dogmas of a religion are mind-made things and, if you cling to them and shut yourself up in a code of life made out for you, you do not know and cannot know the truth of the spirit that lies beyond all codes and dogmas, wide and large and free...."

"In every religion there are some who have evolved a high spiritual life. But it is not the religion that gave them their spirituality; it is they who have put their spirituality into the religion. Put anywhere else, born into any other cult, they would have found there and lived there the same spiritual life. It is their own capacity, it is some power of their inner being and not the religion they profess that has made them what they are."

Questions and Answers 1929 (9 June)

Are all religions mental constructions?

All religions were perhaps not that in their beginning, but they have certainly become that with time.

What is the "Little Vehicle" and the "Great Vehicle"?

These are Buddhist terms. This is the translation of a Pali word, I believe. It is said that the religion of the North is the "Great Vehicle" and the religion of the South the "Little Vehicle". The Little Vehicle abides by quite a strict teaching according to what has been preserved or is believed to have been preserved of the words of the Buddha.

You know the Buddha used to say that there was no God, there was no persistence of the ego, there were no beings of higher worlds who could incarnate here, there were no... He

denied almost every possible thing. The religion of the South is like that, it is extremely nihilistic, it says no, no, no to everything; while in the religion of the North, which has been practised in Tibet, and spread from Tibet into China and from China to Japan, one finds the Bodhisattvas (who stand for saints as in all other religions), all the previous Buddhas who are also like some sort of demigods or gods. I don't know if you have ever had a chance to visit a Buddhist temple of the North (I saw them in China and Japan), for you enter halls where there are innumerable statuettes — all the Bodhisattvas, all the disciples of those Bodhisattvas, all the forces of nature deified, indeed you are overwhelmed by the number of gods! On the other hand, if you go to the South, there is nothing, not a single image. I believe they speak of the "Great Vehicle" because there are lots of things inside, and the "Little Vehicle" because there are few! I don't know exactly the origin of the two terms.

"Things have an inner value and become real to you only when you have acquired them by the exercise of your free choice, not when they have been imposed upon you. If you want to be sure of your religion, you must choose it; if you want to be sure of your country, you must choose it; if you want to be sure of your family, even that you must choose."

Questions and Answers 1929 (9 June)

What does "choose one's family" mean?

You have come into the world in a certain milieu, among certain people. When you are quite young, but for a few rare exceptions, what surrounds you seems altogether natural to you, because you are born in its midst and are quite used to it. But when, a little later, a spiritual aspiration wakes up in you, you may quite possibly feel yourself completely ill at ease in the environment where you have lived, if, for instance, the people who have

brought you up don't have the same aspiration or if their ideas are the very opposite of what is developing in you. Instead of saying, "You see, I belong to this family, what shall I do? I have a mother, a father, brothers, sisters...", you can set out in search (I don't mean necessarily travel), set out in search of spirits who have an affinity with yours, people who have a similar aspiration and, if you have the sincere aspiration to find those who like you are in quest of something, you will always have the occasion to meet them in one way or another, through quite unexpected circumstances; and when you have found one or more people who are in exactly the same state of mind and have the same aspiration, quite naturally there will be created bonds of closeness, intimacy, friendship and, among you, you will form a kind of brotherhood, that is to say, a true family. You are together because you are close to one another, you are together because you have the same aspiration, you are together because you want to create the same goal in life; you understand one another when you speak, you have no need to discuss anything which is said and you live in a kind of inner harmony. This is the true family, this is the family of aspiration, the family of spiritual inclinations.

Now, about the country, this may depend upon all sorts of things, this may depend upon a sort of inner affinity. For instance, if you come to a country and there you find a kind of response, an inner response to your aspiration, you find the surroundings more in conformity with your tastes, your tendencies, you may very well choose to live in this country, which is not necessarily that of your birth; and since you choose that country to live there, you may say, "This is my country." There are people, many people who go and settle elsewhere for very materialistic and uninteresting reasons most of the time, but there are also others who are in search of an environment which suits their inner taste, their aspiration, or who seek lands, ways of living more in keeping with their deeper nature; then they settle down somewhere and don't move again, and when they

stay there for a number of years, they can really feel that this country is theirs, much more than the house or village or city where they were born.

Is the vital distorted from the very birth?

If your birth was not an accident, you could very well think there was no distortion, but what you are at your birth is most of the time almost absolutely what your mother and father have made you, and also, through them, what your grandparents have made you. There are certain vital traditions in families and, besides, there is the state of consciousness in which you were formed, conceived—the moment at which you were conceived—and that, not once in a million times does that state conform to true aspiration; and it is only a true aspiration which could make your vital pure of all mixture, make the vital element attracted for the formation of the being a pure element, free from all contagion; I mean that if a psychic being enters there, it can gather elements favourable to its growth. In the world as it is, things are so mixed up, have been so mixed up in every way, that it is almost impossible to have elements of the vital sufficiently pure not to suffer the contagion of all other contaminated beings.

I think I have already spoken about that, I have said what kind of aspiration ought to be there in the parents before the birth; but as I said, this does not happen even once in a hundred thousand instances. The willed conception of a child is extremely rare; mostly it is an accident. Among innumerable parents it is quite a small minority that even simply bothers about what a child could be; they do not even know that what the child will be depends on what they are. It is a very small élite which knows this. Most of the time things go as they can; anything at all happens and people don't even realise what is happening. So, in these conditions how do you expect to be born with a vital being sufficiently pure to be of help to you? One is born with a slough to clean before one begins to live. And once you have made

a good start on the way to the inner transformation and you go down to the subconscious root of the being—that exactly which comes from parents, from atavism—well, you do see what it is! And all, almost all difficulties are there, there are very few things added to existence after the first years of life. This happens at any odd moment; if you keep bad company or read bad books, the poison may enter you; but there are all the imprints deep-rooted in the subconscious, the dirty habits you have and against which you struggle. For instance, there are people who can't open their mouth without telling a lie, and they don't always do this deliberately (that is the worst of it), or people who can't come in touch with others without quarrelling, all sorts of stupidities—they are there in the subconscious, deeply rooted. Now, when you have a goodwill, externally you do your best to avoid all that, to correct it if possible; you work, you fight; then become aware that this thing always keeps coming up, it comes up from some part which escapes your control. But if you enter this subconscious, if you let your consciousness infiltrate it, and look carefully, gradually you will discover all the sources, all the origins of all your difficulties; then you will begin to understand what your fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers were, and if at a certain moment you are unable to control yourself, you will understand, "I am like that because they were like that."

If you have within you a psychic being sufficiently awake to watch over you, to prepare your path, it can draw towards you things which help you, draw people, books, circumstances, all sorts of little coincidences which come to you as though brought by some benevolent will and give you an indication, a help, a support to take decisions and turn you in the right direction. But once you have taken this decision, once you have decided to find the truth of your being, once you start sincerely on the road, then everything seems to conspire to help you to advance, and if you observe carefully you see gradually the source of your difficulties: "Ah! Wait a minute, this defect was in my father; oh!

this habit was my mother's; oh! my grandmother was like this, my grandfather was like that." Or it could well be the nurse who took care of you when you were small, or brothers and sisters who played with you, the little friends you met, and you will find that all this was there, in this person or that or the other. But if you continue to be sincere, you find you can cross all this quite calmly, and after a time you cut all the moorings with which you were born, break the chains and go freely on the path.

If you really want to transform your character, it is that you must do. It has always been said that it is impossible to change one's nature; in all books of philosophy, even of yoga, you are told the same story: "You cannot change your character, you are born like that, you are like that." This is absolutely false, I guarantee it is false; but there is something very difficult to do to change your character, because it is not your character which must be changed, it is the character of your antecedents. In them you will not change it (because they have no such intention), but it is in you that it must be changed. It is what they have given you, all the little gifts made to you at your birth—nice gifts—it is this which must be changed. But if you succeed in getting hold of the thread of these things, the true thread, since you have worked upon this with perseverance and sincerity, one fine morning you will be free; all this will fall off from you and you will be able to get a start in life without any burden. Then you will be a new man, living a new life, almost with a new nature. And if you look back you will say, "It is not possible, I was never like that!"

31 March 1951

Mother reads a question asked during her talk in 1929:

“Can all physical ailments be traced to some disorder in the mind?”

Questions and Answers 1929 (16 June)

If there is one mental disorder which can bring about all illnesses, it is fear.

But, each man can make his own experiment. If one has a bad throat, this may be due to the fact that the day before one was in a state of depression. Or perhaps one is very unhappy, dissatisfied, one finds everything very bad, and the next day one gets a cold in the head.... Everyone must make his own observations.

“Each spot of the body is symbolical of an inner movement; there is there a world of subtle correspondences.... The particular place in the body affected by an illness is an index to the nature of the inner disharmony that has taken place. It points to the origin, it is a sign of the cause of the ailment. It reveals too the nature of the resistance that prevents the whole being from advancing at the same high speed. It indicates the treatment and the cure. If one could perfectly understand where the mistake is, find out what has been unreceptive, open that part and put the force and the light there, it would be possible to re-establish in a moment the harmony that has been disturbed and the illness would immediately go.”

Ibid.

Will you explain how each part of the body is symbolical of an inner movement?

In the ancient schools of initiation there was the practice of saying simply “This is true” or “This is false” to those who already had the knowledge of these things.

Can anyone relate his experience on this subject? Naturally you must be able to give the correlation between a certain psychological state and a particular part of the body.

Once, I complained to you about some pain and you asked me which part of the body was affected. When I told you which, I did not know about its correspondence with the vital, the mind, etc., yet the pain disappeared.

I don't see any contradiction!... There are two ways of curing an illness spiritually. One consists in putting a force of consciousness and truth on the physical spot which is affected. In this case the effect produced depends naturally on the receptivity of the person. Supposing the person is receptive; the force of consciousness is put upon the affected part and its pressure restores order. Many of you here can tell how Sri Aurobindo cured them. It was like a hand which came and took away the pain. It is as clear as that.

In other cases, if the body lacks receptivity altogether or if its receptivity is insufficient, one sees the inner correspondence with the psychological state which has brought about the illness and acts on that. But if the cause of the illness is refractory, not much can be done. Let us say the origin is vital. The vital absolutely refuses to change, it clings terrifically to the condition in which it is; then that is hopeless. You put the force, and usually it provokes an increase in the illness, produced by the resistance of the vital which did not want to accept anything. I speak of the vital but it can be the mind or something else.

When the action is directly upon the body, that is, on the

affected part, it is possible that one is relieved; then, some hours later or even after a few days, the illness returns. This means that the cause has not been changed, that the cause is in the vital and is still there; it is only the effect which has been cured. But if one can act simultaneously upon both the cause and the effect, and the cause is sufficiently receptive to consent to change, then one is completely cured, once for all.

I once had an illness which was almost like an experience. I wanted to get rid of jealousy. The whole night I felt a strong pressure, I had pain all over the body, to the very bones. The next morning I had a stomach-ache and sent you word with my brother. You told him that if I did not get better in a few hours, you would send the doctor. He forgot to tell me that he had seen you and what you had told him, but I learnt later that it was at the exact moment you had spoken to him that I was cured.

I knew it was that!

How can one increase the receptivity of the body?

It depends on the part. The method is almost the same for all parts of the being. To begin with, the first condition: to remain as quiet as possible. You may notice that in the different parts of your being, when something comes and you do not receive it, this produces a shrinking — there is something which hardens in the vital, the mind or the body. There is a stiffening and this hurts, one feels a mental, vital or physical pain. So, the first thing is to put one's will and relax this shrinking, as one does a twitching nerve or a cramped muscle; you must learn how to relax, be able to relieve this tension in whatever part of the being it may be.

The method of relaxing the contraction may be different

in the mind, the vital or the body, but logically it is the same thing. Once you have relaxed the tension, you see first if the disagreeable effect ceases, which would prove that it was a small momentary resistance, but if the pain continues and if it is indeed necessary to increase the receptivity in order to be able to receive what is helpful, what should be received, you must, after having relaxed this contraction, begin trying to widen yourself—you feel you are widening yourself. There are many methods. Some find it very useful to imagine they are floating on water with a plank under their back. Then they widen themselves, widen, until they become the vast liquid mass. Others make an effort to identify themselves with the sky and the stars, so they widen, widen themselves, identifying themselves more and more with the sky. Others again don't need these pictures; they can become conscious of their consciousness, enlarge their consciousness more and more until it becomes unlimited. One can enlarge it till it becomes vast as the earth and even the universe. When one does that one becomes really receptive. As I have said, it is a question of training. In any case, from an immediate point of view, when something comes and one feels that it is too strong, that it gives a headache, that one can't bear it, the method is just the same, you must act upon the contraction. One can act through thought, by calling the peace, tranquillity (the feeling of peace takes away much of the difficulty) like this: "Peace, peace, peace... tranquillity... calm." Many discomforts, even physical, like all these contractions of the solar plexus, which are so unpleasant and give you at times nausea, the sensation of being suffocated, of not being able to breathe again, can disappear thus. It is the nervous centre which is affected, it gets affected very easily. As soon as there is something which affects the solar plexus, you must say, "Calm... calm... calm", become more and more calm until the tension is destroyed.

In thought also. For instance, you are reading something and come across a thought you don't understand—it is beyond you, you understand nothing and so in your head it lies like a brick,

and if you try to understand, it becomes more and more like a brick, a stiffening, and if you persist it gives you a headache. There is but one thing to do: not to struggle with the words, remain just like this (*gesture, stretched out, immobile*), create a relaxation, simply widen, widen. And don't try to understand, above all, don't try to understand — let it enter like that, quite gently, and relax, relax, and in this relaxing your headache goes away. You no longer think of anything, you wait for a few days and after some days you see from inside: "Oh! How clear it is! I understand what I had not understood." It is as easy as that. When you read a book which is beyond you, when you come across sentences which you cannot understand — one feels that there is no correspondence in the head — well, you must do this; one reads the thing once, twice, thrice, then remains calm and makes the mind silent. A fortnight later, one takes up the same passage again and it is clear as daylight. Everything has been organised in the head, the elements of the brain which were wanted for the understanding have been formed, everything has been done gradually and one understands. I knew many people who, when I used to tell them something, argued, — they did not understand anything at all. They were shut up in their mind which could not catch the thought, which threw it out, refused it violently. You have said something, you don't insist; you have said it, that's all; if need be you say it a second time, but you don't insist. A week, a month later, those very people come looking for you and tell you with strong conviction, "But things are like that, you don't understand, things are like that!" It is exactly what you have told them, you know. But they tell you, "I thought about it, now I know, it is this, it is truly this." If you have the misfortune to tell them, "But this is exactly what I had told you", they pull a long face! And they don't understand any longer.

Illnesses enter through the subtle body, don't they? How can they be stopped?

Ah! Here we are.... If one is very sensitive, very sensitive — one must be very sensitive — the moment they touch the subtle body and try to pass through, one feels it. It is not like something touching the body, it is a sort of feeling. If you are able to perceive it at that moment, you have still the power to say "no", and it goes away. But for this one must be extremely sensitive. However, that develops. All these things can be developed methodically by the will. You can become quite conscious of this envelope, and if you develop it sufficiently, you don't even need to look and see, you feel that something has touched you. I can give you an instance of this, there are many similar ones.

Someone was seeking to establish a constant and conscious contact — absolutely constant and conscious — with the inner Godhead, not only with the psychic being but the divine Presence in the psychic being, and she had decided that she would be like this, that she would busy herself with nothing else, that is to say, whatever she might be doing, her concentration was upon this, and even when she went out walking in the street, her concentration was upon this. She lived in a big city where there was much traffic: buses, tramways, etc., many things, and to cross the street one had to be considerably careful, wide-awake and attentive, otherwise one could get run over, but this person had resolved that she would not come out of her concentration. One day when she was crossing one of the big avenues with all its cars and its tramways, still deep in her concentration, in her inner seeking, she suddenly felt at about an arm's length a little shock, like this; she jumped back and a car passed just by her side. If she had not jumped back she would have been run over.... This is an extreme point, but without going so far one can very easily feel a kind of little discomfort (it is not something which is imposed with a great force), a little uneasiness coming near you from anywhere at all: front, behind, above, below. If at that moment you are sufficiently alert, you say "no", as though you were cutting off the contact with great strength, and it is finished. If you are not conscious at that moment, the next minute or a

few minutes later you get a queer sick feeling inside, a cold in the back, a little uneasiness, the beginning of some disharmony; you feel a maladjustment somewhere, as though the general harmony had been disturbed. Then you must concentrate all the more and with a great strength of will keep the faith that nothing can do you harm, nothing can touch you. This suffices, you can throw off the illness at that moment. But you must do this immediately, you understand, you must not wait five minutes, it must be done at once. If you wait too long and begin to feel really an uneasiness somewhere, and something begins to get quite disturbed, then it is good to sit down, concentrate and call the Force, concentrate it on the place which is getting disturbed, that is to say, which is beginning to become ill. But if you don't do anything at all, an illness indeed gets lodged somewhere; and all this, because you were not sufficiently alert. And sometimes one is obliged to follow the entire curve to find the favourable moment again and get rid of the business. I have said somewhere that in the physical domain all is a question of method — a method is necessary for realising everything. And if the illness has succeeded in touching the physical-physical, well, you must follow the procedure needed to get rid of it. This is what medical science calls "the course of the illness". One can hasten the course with the help of spiritual forces, but all the same the procedure must be followed. There are some four different stages. The very first is instantaneous. The second can be done in some minutes, the third may take several hours and the fourth several days. And then, once the thing is lodged there, all will depend not only on the receptivity of the body but still more on the willingness of the part which is the cause of the disorder. You know, when the thing comes from outside it is in affinity with something inside. If it manages to pass through, to enter without one's being aware of it, it means there is some affinity somewhere, and the part of the being which has responded must be convinced.

I have known some truly extraordinary instances. If you can

at the moment... Wait, take an example which is quite concrete: sunstroke. This upsets you considerably, it is one of the things which makes you most ill—a sunstroke upsets everything, it disturbs the inner functions, it generally causes a congestion in the head and very high fever. So, if this has happened, if it has succeeded in getting through the protection and entering you, well, if you can just go into a quiet place, stretch yourself out flat, go out of your body (naturally, you must learn this; there are people who do this spontaneously, for others a long discipline is necessary), go out of your body, remain above in a way to be able to see the body (you know the phenomenon, seeing one's body when one is outside? This can be done at will, going out of one's body and remaining just above it), the body is stretched out on a bed, a bench, on the ground, anywhere; you are stretched just above it and from there, consciously, you pull the Force from above, and if you are used to doing it, if your aspiration is strong enough, you get the answer; and then, from there, taking care not to re-enter your body, you begin to push these forces into the body, like that, regularly, until you see the body receiving them (for, the first few moments they don't enter, because the body is quite upset by the illness, it is not receptive, it is tensed up), you push them gently, gently, quietly, without nervousness, very peacefully, into the body. But you must not be disturbed by anyone. If someone comes along, sees you stretched out and shakes you, it is extremely dangerous. You must do this in quiet conditions, ask people not to disturb you or better shut yourself up where they can't disturb you. But you can concentrate slowly (this takes more or less time—ten minutes, half an hour, one hour, two hours—it depends upon the seriousness of the disorder which has set in), slowly, from above, you concentrate the Force until you see that the body is receiving, that the Force is entering, the disorder is being set right and there is a relaxation in the body itself. Once that is done you can get back and you are cured. This has been done for a sunstroke, which is a fairly violent thing, and also for typhoid

fever, and many other illnesses, as, for instance, for a liver which was suddenly upset somehow (not due to indigestion, but a liver which doesn't function properly for the moment); it may also be cured in the same way. There was a case of cholera which was healed like that. The cholera had just been caught, had entered, but was not yet lodged; it was completely cured. Consequently, when I say that if one masters the spiritual force and knows how to use it, there is no malady which cannot be cured. I don't say it just like that in the air; it is said from experience with the thing. Of course, you will say you don't know how to go out of the body, draw the Force, concentrate it, have all this mastery.... It is not very frequent, but it is not impossible. And one can be sure that if one is helped... In fact, there is a much easier method, it is to call for help.

But the condition in every case — in every case — whether one does it oneself and depending only on oneself or whether one does it by asking someone to do it for one, the first condition: not to fear and to be calm. If you begin to boil and get fidgety in your body, it is finished, you can do nothing.

For everything — to live the spiritual life, heal sickness — for everything, one must be calm.

2 April 1951

You have said: “By Yoga the inner transformation that is in slow constant process in the creation is rendered more intense and rapid, but the pace of the outer transformation remains almost the same as in ordinary life. As a result, the disharmony between the inner and the outer being in one who is doing Yoga tends to be all the greater, unless precautions are taken....”

Questions and Answers 1929 (16 June)

What are these precautions?

That depends upon people. Each case is different. Individual precautions would be different according to individual reactions, difficulties, resistances. For each one there is a programme to follow which is good only for him. There is no general rule. These things cannot be distributed as one distributes sweets. If someone asks me “What should I do?” — well that, yes.

What are the causes of accidents? Are they due to a disequilibrium?

If one answers deeply... Outwardly there are many causes, but there is a deeper cause which is always there. I said the other day that if the nervous envelope is intact, accidents can be avoided, and even if there is an accident it won't have any consequences. As soon as there is a scratch or a defect in the nervous envelope of the being and according to the nature of this scratch, if one may say so, its place, its character, there will be an accident which will correspond to the diminution of resistance in the envelope. I believe almost everybody is psychologically aware of one thing: that accidents occur when one has a sort

of uncomfortable feeling, when one is not fully conscious and self-possessed, when one feels uneasy. In any case, generally, people have a feeling that they are not fully themselves, not fully aware of what they are doing. If one were fully conscious, the consciousness wide awake, accidents would not occur; one would make just the right gesture, the necessary movement to avoid the accident. Hence, in an almost absolute way, it is a flagging of consciousness. Or quite possibly it may be that the consciousness is fixed in a higher domain; for example, not to speak of spiritual things, a man who is busy solving a mental problem and is very concentrated upon his mental problem, becomes inattentive to physical things, and if he happens to be in a street or in a crowd, his attention fixed upon his problem, he will not make the movement necessary to avoid the accident, and the accident will occur. It is the same for sports, for games; you can observe this easily, there is always a flagging of the consciousness when accidents occur, or a lack of attention, a little absent-mindedness; suddenly one thinks of something else, the attention is drawn elsewhere—one is not fully conscious of what one is doing and the accident happens.

As I was telling you at the beginning, if for some reason or other—for example, lack of sleep, lack of rest or an absorbing preoccupation or all sorts of things which tire you, that is to say, when you are not above them—if the vital envelope is a little damaged, it does not function perfectly and any current of force whatever which passes through is enough to produce an accident. In the final analysis, the accident comes always from that, it is what one may call inattentiveness or a slackening of consciousness. There are days when one feels quite... not exactly uneasy, but as though one were trying to catch something which escapes, one can't hold together, one is as though half-diluted; these are the days of accidents. You must be attentive. Naturally, this is not to tell you to shut yourself up in your room and not to stir out when you feel like that! This is not what I mean. Rather I mean that you must watch all the more attentively, be all the

more on your guard, not allow, precisely, this inattentiveness, this slackening of consciousness to come in.

Are there not accidents which are almost inevitable? I just read of a case cited by an American who had the gift of clairvoyance. A child was playing on a railway track, it was in danger. Suddenly the witness saw an apparition beside the child and he breathed a sigh of relief, thinking, "The child will be saved." But to his great astonishment the apparition put its hand over the eyes of the child and threw it in some way under the train. This man was much troubled, he could not understand why a being whom he had taken for a higher being would push a child to its death.

Certainly this may be true, but without having the vision oneself, one can't explain it.

It may be a question of two absolutely different things. Perhaps, indeed, it was its destiny, in the sense that it was the end of the life necessary for its psychic being, it was a death which had been predestined for some reason, because that can happen. Or perhaps it could be an adverse force which he took to be an angel of light, for generally people make this mistake — when they see an apparition they always think it is something heavenly. It is heavenly if you like, but it depends on what heaven it comes from!

It is a strange thing because.... Yes, the moment of unconsciousness, the slackening of consciousness may be translated by this someone putting the hand over the eyes.

One of the most common activities of these intolerable little entities which are in the human physical atmosphere and amuse themselves at men's expense, is to blind you to such an extent that when you look for something, and the thing is staring you in the face, you do not see it! This happens very often. You search in vain, you turn everything over, you look into all possible

corners, but you don't find the thing. Then you give up the problem and some time later (precisely when "the hand over the eyes" is removed), you come back to the same place and it is exactly there where you have looked, quietly lying there, it had not stirred! Only you were unconscious, you did not see. This is a very, very frequent amusement of these little entities. They also take pleasure in removing things, then they put them back, but at times they also don't put them back! They displace them, indeed they have all sorts of little pranks. They are intolerable. Madame Blavatsky made much use of them, but I don't know how she managed to make them so amiable, because generally they are quite unpleasant.

I had the experience — among innumerable instances — but precisely of two very striking cases, of two opposite things, only it was not the same beings.... There are little beings like fairies who are very sweet, very obliging, but they are not always there, they come from time to time when it pleases them. I remember the time I used to cook for Sri Aurobindo; I was also doing many other things at the same time, so I often happened to leave the milk on the fire and go for some other work or to see something with him, to discuss with somebody, and truly I was not always aware of the time, I used to forget the milk on the fire. And whenever I forgot the milk on the fire, I felt suddenly (in those days I used to wear a sari) a little hand catching a fold of my sari and pulling it, like this. Then I used to run quickly and would see that the milk was just on the point of boiling over. This did not happen just once, but several times, and very clearly, like a little child's hand clutching and pulling.

The other story is of the days Sri Aurobindo had the habit of walking up and down in his rooms. He used to walk for several hours like that, it was his way of meditating. Only, he wanted to know the time, so a clock had been put in each room to enable him to see the time at any moment. There were three such clocks. One was in the room where I worked; it was, so to say, his starting-point. One day he came and asked, "What time

is it?" He looked and the clock had stopped. He went into the next room, saying, "I shall see the time there" — the clock had stopped. And it had stopped at the same minute as the other, you understand, with the difference of a few seconds. He went to the third room... the clock had stopped. He continued walking three times like that — all the clocks had stopped! Then he returned to my room and said, "But this is impossible! This is a bad joke!" and all the clocks, one after the other, started working again. I saw it myself, you know, it was a charming incident. He was annoyed, he said, "This is a bad joke!" And all the clocks started going again!

It is said that the material world in its unconsciousness has forgotten the Divine. Has it forgotten Him from the beginning?

It is concomitant. One cannot say that the material world is the result of obscurity and ignorance; one cannot say either that the obscurity and ignorance are the result of the world of Matter; but the two are concomitant, in the sense that both have exactly the same cause. What we call the material world came into being at the same time as the obscurity and ignorance, they are closely bound, but there is no cause and effect in the sense of a sequence in time. It is concomitant, both the things are the concomitant result of another cause: what has brought about obscurity and ignorance has at one go and at one time brought about the material world as we know it.

5 April 1951

“Everything here is followed by the supermind; the mind movements and not less the vital, the material movements, all the play of the universe have for it a very deep interest, but of another kind. It is about the same difference as that between the interest taken in a puppet-play by one who holds the strings and knows what the puppets are to do and the will that moves them and knows that they can do only what it moves them to do, and the interest taken by another who observes the play but sees only what is happening from moment to moment and knows nothing else. The one who follows the play and is outside its secret has a stronger, an eager and passionate interest in what will happen and he gives an excited attention to its unforeseen or dramatic events; the other, who holds the strings and moves the show, is unmoved and tranquil. There is a certain intensity of interest which comes from ignorance and is bound up with illusion, and that must disappear when you are out of the ignorance. The interest that human beings take in things finds itself on the illusion; if that were removed, they would have no interest at all in the play; they would find it dry and dull. That is why all this ignorance, all this illusion has lasted so long; it is because men like it, because they cling to it and its peculiar kind of appeal that it endures.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (23 June)

How can interest be founded on illusion?

So you think you are not in the illusion? You imagine you are outside the illusion? In the world as it is now, all is illusion. It is

perhaps an advantage, but you see only the surface of things, at most a very small part — you do not see the depth of things, you do not see the core of things, you do not see the cause of things. Do you know what is going to happen tomorrow?... You may guess it more or less, telling yourself that it will be like today but you don't know it at all. You do not know what is going to happen tomorrow, still less in a month's time, yet less in a year. And do you know where you were before your birth? And do you know what will happen to you after your death?... You take interest in what you do just because you do not know what is going to happen. If you were fully in the know of what is going to happen, I am sure that 999 persons in a 1000 would sit down quietly waiting for it to happen. If you know exactly what is going to take place, all your enthusiasm would evaporate and in most cases you would say, "Have I to do all this to get there? Ah, no!"

Then illusion is necessary?

I do not say it is necessary, I say that it is evident, which is not quite the same thing. What is necessary is to change.

One of the great things, you see, is just to be able to do something with as much interest, as much intensity, as much energy, while knowing perfectly what the result will be and even if the result is the opposite of what you seem to expect. This is not easy, but still it is indispensable.

I don't see why it is indispensable.

I am saying that it is indispensable to reach the state in which one can do things, continue to act, while knowing perfectly what the result will be and even if this result is the opposite of what one hopes for. It is this condition of detachment which is indispensable — not being in illusion!

During the 1929 talk someone asked what should be done to effect the cure of an illness, whether one should exercise one's willpower or only live in the confidence that it will be done or rely entirely on the divine Power. Mother replied:

"All these are so many ways of doing the same thing....

But whatever you ask for or whatever your effort, you must feel, even while trying your best, using knowledge or putting forth power that the result depends upon the Divine Grace."

Questions and Answers 1929 (23 June)

But first you must will it, I believe that is quite important! There is no *one* method to follow.... I read this and at the same time ask myself how many people would be satisfied to hear this. All the materialism and positivism in the world have been constructed just because people do not want the divine Grace to come in at all. If they are cured they want to say, "It is *I* who cured myself"; if they make a progress, they want to think, "It is *I* who have progressed"; if they organise something, they want to proclaim, "It is *I* who am organising." And many, many of those who try to do otherwise, if they look within themselves, would see how seldom spontaneously, sincerely (not as when one says something because one knows it should be said, or as one thinks something because it is the fashion to think like that but spontaneously, sincerely, with all their heart) they *know* that it is not they who have done the thing, but the divine force. When they have made a progress, when they have changed something in themselves, when they have learnt something, then when is it that spontaneously, without an effort of will, without thinking, without needing to tell oneself, "One ought to think like this", spontaneously one *knows* that without the divine force nothing would have been done? Look into yourself, it is a very interesting thing, very interesting, how many times a day you think (without even telling yourself), "I have done this", "I have been able to

do that”, “I succeeded in this”, “I failed in that”, and when you have made a good effort, when you have obtained a result, you need a little moment for thought, or more, to tell yourself, “If the divine force had not helped me, probably I would not have been able to do it.” The spontaneous thing is, “Oh! I have succeeded”, isn’t that true? There is indeed a part of the mind which has been educated, which has learnt, has reflected, understood, which is well-disposed and truly feels that in reality it is like that, but this is only one part of the mind, and it is not always active, sometimes it must be called up, asked its advice, “What is then the best attitude to have?”, “What should I think?” I believe all who have taken up yoga, if they are sincere, if they reflect for a moment, tell themselves, “I was not aware of it, but if I have succeeded, it was probably because the divine forces were there to help me, otherwise I would not have been able to succeed.” This is well understood. But there comes a moment when one knows that one would not have been able to lift a finger if these forces had not been there. That comes later.... But to begin with, how many times, if one thinks, if one quite simply observes oneself, does one catch oneself saying, “It is *I!*” And, then, one congratulates oneself sometimes, one says, “After all I can do something, I am capable!” I am going further: how many people would be capable of doing anything at all if simply deprived of the pleasure of being able to tell themselves, “I have done this, I have realised that, I have made a progress, how well I played this game”? How many people would be able to sincerely do something if this pleasure were taken away? I have known individuals whose mind was much more developed than the rest of the being, they had understood very well (almost too well); they sat down to meditate and all their energy was gone, all vitality evaporated into a kind of peace, not unpleasant, but very still. There is no more need to do anything, no longer any need to move, one dreams.... Under a tree, arms crossed, one leaves the Divine to do everything for oneself, even feeding you if you need it. This is perhaps very well, but this shows

that the instrument is not ready; it is not really at the service of the Divine, it is at the service of the ego, and when the ego is taken away, it does nothing any longer. Therefore, so long as one lives in the ego this illusion is necessary to make you act; it is necessary to keep up action until one is completely transformed or, in any case, till the true consciousness is established.

I have said this and I repeat it (*Mother takes up her book*):

“Whatever you do, whatever the process you use, and even if you happen to have acquired in it a great skill and power, you must leave the result in the hands of the Divine. Always you may try, but it is for the Divine to give you the fruit of your effort or not to give it. There your personal power stops; if the result comes, it is the Divine Power and not yours that brings it.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (23 June)

Well, it is this idea, which has been taught in almost all religions, that has made men atheistic, so much does it anger them—an anger of revolt: “What! It is not I!”

And this “I”, if you only knew how big it is! how it occupies the whole place.... It is this which is the base of all materialism.

In silent meditation, should not one make oneself completely empty? But, then, how can it depend on the one who meditates?

I think there is a confusion between silence in the mind and the complete emptiness in the being, they are two very different things. Besides, I don't see very well how one can make oneself completely empty—one would not exist any longer!

“To make yourself blank in meditation creates an inner silence; it does not mean that you have become nothing or have become a dead and inert mass. Making yourself

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an empty vessel, you invite that which shall fill it. It means that you release the stress of your inner consciousness towards realisation. The nature of the consciousness and the degree of its stress determine the forces that you bring into play and whether they shall help and fulfil or fail or even harm and hinder.”

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What does “the degree of its stress” mean?

Aspiration and will produce a stress in the being. But I say “degree”, for there is also the point upon which the stress works.

I say “to make yourself blank” is to release the stress of your consciousness towards realisation, towards the goal you want to realise. The “stress” is the pressure upon a point, what is concentrated upon a point and insists that it be done. Consciousness — the consciousness of the being, individual consciousness — puts a pressure upon a point, you see. We may take the example we were just speaking of: you have a chronic illness, a malformation of the body, a physical defect. Then your consciousness, in its aspiration and will puts a more or less constant stress on the thing it wants to realise, what you want to cure.

Well, when you make yourself empty within in meditation (this is one form of meditation if you like), this means that you stop this concentration of will: your consciousness becomes neutral for the moment. Its stress is upon this point (it may be on other points, on things more or less concrete or abstract, but the stress is on one point) and when you make yourself empty you withdraw this pressure, this stress, and you remain like a blank page upon which nothing is written. This is what I call “making yourself empty”, not to have any active will concentrated upon one point or another. And so I say the moment you make yourself empty, the stress indeed stops, and yet in your silent aspiration you put yourself in contact with the forces attracted by this stress you usually have, the special point of stress you

have normally. That is why I have emphasised the fact that all depends upon the person, because everything depends upon his habitual aspiration, the thing he usually wants to realise, for he is naturally in touch with the forces which will answer his aspiration. So, if for a certain time one stops the activity of this aspiration and remains silently receptive, passive, well, the effect of the habitual aspiration remains and will draw just those forces which ought to answer it.

You have said that the world and the darkness were concomitant. What is the cause of this concomitance?

The cause... is the light which has become the darkness and the consciousness which has become the unconscious! How to speak about these things? You may call this an accident if you like, if that satisfies your mind. It was perhaps, after all, the best thing that could have happened, one can't tell. All depends upon the point of view one takes. There must certainly be a consciousness in which this was foreseen, and if it has not been avoided, it means that it forms part of the programme!... It is a human way of looking at the problem, for things do not happen quite like that in those regions. One may also relate a story which could make a subject, a magnificent drama, but it would be only a story, a way of saying things.

A story is of value only to the extent it can help you to understand things. Ah! Here is an interesting subject.... A story, that is, a way of saying things, is of value only if it can make you understand the thing. A language (which is a kind of story) is of value only to the extent it is capable of putting you in contact with the Reality. Science is a language, Art is a language—all activity is a sort of language, that is, a way of expression. And the way of expression is of value only if it puts you in contact with what it wants to express. It is a very interesting generalisation, for you can bring into it all the categories you want and you will see that it is true.

It is the same for everything. The way of approaching the universe and the universal truth is also a language and all depends upon the person who uses it, the person to whom the understanding is to be communicated. Whatever may be the way of telling, if you understand, that is all that is necessary. If you do not understand, even if it be the wonder of wonders, the truth of truths, it will have no value for you. This is an essentially pragmatic point of view of the universe; things have value only if they realise that for which they have been made, and the most beautiful philosophies of the world are of no use to those who do not understand them. The most beautiful works of art in the world are quite useless to those whom they do not put on the path of the Truth. And the most perfect yoga in the world is useless to those whom it does not lead to the Realisation. And if you have this sense of relativity, you have finished with all dogmatism, all sectarianism, all that kind of absolutism which leads one always to think that all that has done us good is “the truth”—it is the truth for us, it is not necessarily the truth for our neighbour. And what our neighbour thinks is the truth for him, and when you say, “It is idiotic, it is quite useless”, if it helps him to realise the truth, it is excellent, it is the best thing possible for him. And everything, everything on earth is like that. And if you do not want to be altogether narrow, to put on visors and not see farther than the tip of your nose, you must first of all understand this. You must understand that all things in the universe tend towards a goal and that it is to the extent they help to realise this goal that they have a value, and that this value is quite relative; and what is good for one may not be so for another, what is good at one moment may not be so at another and, consequently, every kind of dogmatism is an absurdity.

It is very easy to say, “That, that’s true, now I know that it is true and I shall not think otherwise”; this is very easy, and in fact something has suddenly put you in touch with a light, you have had an experience, you have become conscious of yourself,

conscious of something which transcends you and is the reality of your being, so for you it is perfect. But do not imagine that you must go from door to door, from city to city, country to country, telling people, "I proclaim the Truth", because what is true for you may not be at all good for another. What you have seen has its truth in itself — everything has its truth in itself — but the true *raison d'être* of this truth is that it has helped you to find yourself, to find the truth of your being, and it may quite possibly not help your neighbour, unless you have a considerable power of persuasion and oblige him to see things as you have seen them yourself, but this has not much value.

When you have understood this, you will no longer say, "Why is there such a diversity in the world, why all this multiplicity, why all this confusion, why...?" It is a confusion simply because you don't understand and things are not in their place. If things were in their place, there would be no confusion. And we come to this, that you cannot take away one atom from this world without dislocating the universe. All that is, was necessary — if it had not been necessary, it would not have been. The whole totality of things is indispensable for realising the Divine. If you took away one of these things, there would be a hole in the realisation. And I am not speaking only of material things, material points, I am speaking of all the depths. So when you say as many do, "Ah! If that were not there in the world, how fine the world would be", you are displaying your ignorance.

I met in Japan one of the sons of Tolstoy; he was going round the world preaching human unity. He had caught this from his father and was going everywhere in the world preaching human unity. I met him at some friends' place and asked him, "How are you going to realise this human unity?" Do you know what reply he gave me? "Oh! It is very simple — if everybody spoke the same language, if everybody dressed in the same manner, if everybody lived in the same manner, the whole world would be united!" Then I told him, "That would be a poor world not worth living in." He did not understand me!

7 April 1951

Mother reads a question put to her in 1929 by an English disciple:

"If the Divine that is all love is the source of the creation, whence have come all the evils that abound upon earth?"

Questions and Answers 1929 (30 June)

Whence come the evils?... Who is going to answer me? A philosophic answer, a scientific answer, a psychological answer and a poetic answer!

They come from the same source as ignorance and obscurity.

A mystic answer, a religious answer. Oh! You have no imagination!

In order that the work on earth may be done perfectly, the evil forces are sent.

Evil is sent so that one may perfect oneself? What you say is quite defensible, but this would have terribly shocked the lady who asked me the question, she would have said, "How could God have done that, He who is all love?... The creation was not well done!"

Someone told me after having read *Genesis*, "God took seven days to do all that, then He said that it was good! He has a strange opinion!"

At a certain time, the great Teresa had to face many calamities. She complained to God, saying, "Why do

these things happen to me, who am full of goodwill?" Then, it seems, God replied, "It is thus that I treat my friends. It is for this reason that we have so little!"

Now we touch the source of the difficulty. I don't know if you have understood it, but there is a central fault in the question of that lady; she makes God or the Divine a personality quite independent of his creation. She should have said, "Someone who, having the power of creation, has created a world like this, truly, he must be sadistic", and she would have been right, wouldn't she?... The question is badly put, because the Divine spoken about here is not the true Divine, it is the Divine of religion—and of a certain kind of religion—but it is not the Divine as He is at all.

"All is from the Divine; but the One Consciousness, the Supreme has not created the world directly out of itself; a Power has gone out from it and has descended through many gradations of its workings and passed through many agents. There are many creators or rather 'formateurs', form-makers, who have presided over the creation of the world. They are intermediary agents and I prefer to call them 'formateurs' and not 'creators'; for what they have done is to give the form and turn and nature to matter. There have been many, and some have formed things harmonious and benignant and some have shaped things mischievous and evil. And some too have been distorters rather than builders, for they have interfered and spoiled what was begun well by others."

Questions and Answers 1929 (30 June)

I would not reply in this manner now, it is an altogether "administrative" answer! It is thus that governments always reply; they say, "It is not I who am responsible, it is my agents." That's not nice, it is better to take the responsibility upon oneself.

Questions and Answers

Mother continues her reading which begins with a question from the same listener:

“Is not this material world of ours very low down in the scale in the system of worlds that form the creation?”

“Ours is the most material world, but it is not necessarily ‘low down’, at least, not for that reason; if it is low down, it is because it is obscure and ignorant, not because it is material. It is a mistake to make ‘matter’ a synonym for obscurity and ignorance. And the material world too is not the only world in which we live: it is rather one of many in which we exist simultaneously, and in one way the most important of them all. For this world of matter is the point of concentration of all the worlds; it is the field of concretisation of all the worlds; it is the place where all the worlds will have to manifest. At present it is disharmonious and obscure; but that is only an accident, a false start. One day it will become beautiful, rhythmic, full of light; for that is the consummation for which it was made.”

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This lady had definitely an altogether Chaldean idea of God, who from nothing made a world (which is badly made, I admit it; if it has been made like that, it was truly badly made) and yet a God who looks at it and says, “I made it on purpose,” which crowns the horror of this lady!

Why is there so much misery in the world? Come on, I ask you for a scientific, a philosophic, a mystical, a religious, a poetic answer....

In order to put in a little novelty, otherwise it would be too monotonous.

This is not a poetic answer — you must use many images and symbols for that! You are like the person who said that if one were not unhappy, one could not be happy, because one would not know what it is to be happy! As others say, "If there were no shadow, there would be no light. One would not know what light is if all were light" ... and so on. So you say that without unhappiness there would be no novelty in the world? It is a rather lugubrious novelty, isn't it?

If everyone were happy the world would be happy.

If everybody entered a beatific state the world would be beatific; as a reason, it is very good. But it is a cure, it is not a cause. You are asked here what *the cause* is. Whence comes the unhappiness if it is not from God — who is, of course, all beneficent and who would never do such a horrible thing!

The world does not exist, it is an illusion of our false consciousness.

Ah! Try telling this to someone who is suffering from liver colic, for instance!

The world has been made, somebody said, to teach the poor to suffer and the rich to give.

That is what I was saying, isn't it (*laughing*), that if there were no misery upon earth what would become of philanthropy?... If we explore all the fields like this, we shall end up perhaps by understanding that all was necessary, otherwise the world would not have been. This is perhaps one conclusion. No, it is not a conclusion, for it would justify the indefinite perpetuation of what is.

Why is there imperfection, if the world is as it ought to be?

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No one has said that, if so there would be nothing else to do but sit down and not move any more!

We have already granted that the world is not what it ought to be and that we are here to work so that it may become what it ought to be. But to know this one must first know what it ought to be, isn't that so? That is the problem. What should the world be?

X: It ought to be aware of the divine consciousness.

Y: No suffering in the world.

When one makes a construction, one doesn't begin by saying, "I don't want this, I don't want that", else you will never make your construction. You must say what it ought to be, not what it ought not to be. To begin with, what it ought not to be we know already: that is what it is! We don't need to go very far—such as it is, we don't want it. So, what should it be?

A garden where one plays an eternal game with the Divine.

This sounds very fine, it is very good—"God is a child playing," Sri Aurobindo has said.¹ It seems this has shocked many people. When we translated this into French and sent it to Europe, there were people who were shocked and said, "Well, He plays at our expense!"

The world ought to be full of love and light.

What light? What love?

¹ "What is God, after all? An eternal child playing an eternal game in an eternal garden."

Thoughts and Glimpses, Cent. Vol. 16, p. 381

The divine light.

When you say “divine light”, what do you understand by it?

The world ought to be receptive.

Receptive to what?

It ought to be a constant expression of the divine Will from which it has separated.

So, it is the world which has separated from the Divine. We come to that: the world is miserable because it has separated from the Divine. Here is an answer which is neither philosophic nor poetic nor... We shall call it a practical expression. And how has it managed to separate itself from the Divine, since it *is* the Divine?... Now it becomes very complicated. We say, don't we, that the world is divine and that it is unhappy because it has separated from the Divine. How has it separated?

By its ignorance.

Good heavens! From where then does the ignorance come? Ignorance of what? Ignorance of itself?

Ignorance of its origin.

Yes, that means ignorance of itself! This is why everyone is told: “Know thyself” — it ought to be that!

Is it the world which is ignorant or is it we?

Ah! Then I must ask you, “What do you call the world?” Is it the earth or the universe?

The universe.

Then, the whole universe is not ignorant — there are parts of the universe which are not ignorant. When you say “we” you identify yourself with the universe or with mankind? Because this is a very important question. We say the world is unhappy because it has forgotten its origin, that is, its divine origin. You say, child, that we are unhappy because “we” are ignorant — the “we” is men. Consequently, unhappiness has come into the world with men — here is something serious! That is, with man mind has come upon earth, you see, for man is a mental animal, and with the mind has come misery. The mind is capable of objectifying, and so it finds that such and such a thing is miserable — without the mind there would be no such discovery and no unhappiness. So, there is no unhappiness for animals nor for plants, and yet less for stones. Are we agreed on this: there is no unhappiness for animals, plants and stones? We say unhappiness has come with the mind which has become conscious of it. Mark that I am trying to lead you to something which is not so stupid, for in the ancient Teaching it was said, “Change your consciousness and what appears to you unfortunate will not so appear to you any longer.” The Buddha taught that if you are free from desire, things that seemed to you unfortunate would no longer seem to you unfortunate at all. Therefore, we come to this: it is the thought you have about it which makes you consider this or that thing unfortunate. If you thought an event happy, it would become happy for you; and that is what it is, in fact. In most cases when the thought has accepted that a thing *ought* to be, for whatever reason, it is no longer unhappy; when the thought has not accepted this, it finds this unhappy. So, as long as you are in the field of emotions, of sentiments and thoughts, all this is true. That is, the notion of “unhappiness” has entered the world with the capacity to consider that things were unfortunate. You follow the logic? Thus, plants do not suffer because they do not know that they suffer and animals do not suffer

because they do not know that they suffer. You are sure of it?
Aren't you?

One sees an expression of pain in their eyes.

It is said you see in others what you have in yourself!

Descartes relates that a lady was beating her dog and saying, "It does not suffer, it has no soul, this is a reflex." Descartes maintains that men alone can feel!

I have always been told that he was an intelligent man!

If unhappiness entered the world with thought, happiness also entered, didn't it?

Ah! Here is logic! When there is unhappiness there is happiness... without unhappiness, no happiness. How difficult philosophy is!... Has your Mr. Descartes told us from where the soul of man has come?

He says it is a creation of God.

The rest of the world is not a creation of God?

Yes, that also.

Then, suddenly, he bethought himself that it was necessary to put in his creation something that he calls "a soul" and he chose this animal, man, to put it in. Then it becomes very difficult to get out of it.... But we were trying to find out what the world *ought* to be. It is this we must find, for the minute we know what it ought to be, we must start working on this.

It must be open to the Force which wants to manifest.

The misfortune is that it is precisely open to certain forces and manifests them. It is the quality of the Force which matters. The world as it is manifests forces, it does not exist without a manifestation of forces; but what forces does it manifest? For the moment it seems to manifest the forces of obscurity, ignorance, disharmony, suffering and all the rest.

It must have discernment.

You mean it should choose the force which is necessary? Yes, but this is not the transformation of the world, this is for us. It is we who must have discernment to know which force we want to manifest, that's understood. But to come back to our subject, you all agree that in the world we are going to build, there should not be any suffering? You agree?... You are not quite sure of it?... Then you are satisfied with suffering? I don't know, perhaps it has its purpose. But, you see, as long as one is satisfied with a thing, there are many chances that it stays. We have been told in the more or less sacred scriptures that suffering comes from ignorance; hence if you do not think of getting rid of suffering, it means that you want to keep the ignorance also? That becomes very difficult. It is like the artist to whom someone spoke of the future world which would be made all of light, and he said, "Then I won't be able to paint any longer" and he was miserable! Perhaps, indeed, there are many people who cling to their ignorance?...

It is suffering which makes us conscious of a higher force.

That is true, in many cases it is like that and that is the apparent justification of suffering. If human beings did not suffer, perhaps they would never make any progress. Aspiration is quite lukewarm when one is perfectly satisfied.

Now then, here we are quite muddled up! Well, this is an exact example of the way the human mind functions; and after that there are people who have caught the tail of something and are so satisfied with this tail, they say, "I have the truth, and you ought to believe what I tell you, otherwise you will never get out of it." The fact is that in the state of your thought at that moment, anyone at all could come to tell you "I have the truth", and you would be happy to catch on to it to come out of your confusion.... Let's see, we have two minutes, and during those two minutes we won't speak, and all our confusion will disappear. Then we shall disperse. So, do not talk, try to be as silent as possible for two minutes.

(A meditation follows)

9 April 1951

Mother reads a passage about art and yoga (*Questions and Answers* 1929, 28 July), then asks:

What is the relation between art and yoga? Can the artist and the yogi have the same source of inspiration? (*Mother turns to a disciple*:) Amrita, will you tell us what relation there is between art and yoga?

A beautiful relation.... Art can be a yoga and yoga is an art.

That's very fine! I knew someone, an American lady, who said that spirituality was supreme good taste, the best possible good taste. This is quite similar.

What do snakes signify in books and in dreams?

That depends on the books! That depends on the dreams! If you give me an example from a dream I shall tell you what the nature of your serpent was, but just like that, "snakes" is too vague.

Why is modern art so ugly?

I believe the chief reason is that people have become more and more lazy and do not want to work. They want to produce something before having worked, they want to know before having studied and they want to make a name before having done anything good. So, this is the open door for all sorts of things, as we see.... Naturally, there are exceptions.

I have known artists who were great artists, who had worked hard and produced remarkable things, classical, that

is, not ultra-modern. But they were not in fashion because, precisely, one had not to be classical. When a brush was put in the hands of an individual who had never touched a brush, and when a brush was put on a palette of colours and the man had never touched a palette before, then if this individual had in front of him a bit of canvas on an easel and he had never done a picture before, naturally he daubed anything at all; he took the colours and threw them in a haphazard way; then everybody cried out "Admirable", "Marvellous", "It is the expression of your soul", "How well this reveals the truth of things", etc.! This was the fashion and people who knew nothing were very successful. The poor men who had worked, who knew their art well, were not asked for their pictures any longer; people said, "Oh! This is old-fashioned, you will never find customers for such things." But, after all, they were hungry, you see, they had to pay their rent and buy their colours and all the rest, and that is costly. Then what could they do? When they had received rebuffs from the picture dealers who all told them the same thing, "But try to be modern, my friend; look here, you are behind the times", as they were very hungry, what could they do?... I knew a painter, a disciple of Gustave Moreau; he was truly a very fine artist, he knew his work quite well, and then... he was starving, he did not know how to make both ends meet and he used to lament. One day, a friend intending to help him, sent a picture dealer to see him. When the merchant entered his studio, this poor man told himself, "At last! Here's my chance", and he showed him all the best work he had done. The art dealer made a face, looked around, turned over things and began rummaging in all the corners; and suddenly he found... Ah! I must explain this to you, you are not familiar with these things: a painter, after his day's work has at times some mixed colours left on his palette; he cannot keep them, they dry up in a day; so he always has with him some pieces of canvas which are not well prepared and which he daubs with what are called "the scrapings of palettes" (with supple

knives he scrapes all the colours from the palette and applies them on the canvases) and as there are many mixed colours, this makes unexpected designs. There was in a corner a canvas like that on which he used to put his palette-scrapings. The merchant suddenly falls upon that and exclaims, "Here you are! My friend, you are a genius, this is a miracle, it is this you should show! Look at this richness of tones, this variety of forms, and what an imagination!" And this poor man who was starving said shyly, "But sir, these are my palette-scrapings!" And the art-dealer caught hold of him: "Silly fool, this is not to be told!" Then he said, "Give me this, I undertake to sell it. Give me as many of these as you like; ten, twenty, thirty a month, I shall sell them all for you and I shall make you famous." Then, as I told you, his stomach was protesting; he was not happy, but he said, "All right, take it, I shall see." Then the landlord comes to demand his rent, the paint merchant comes demanding payment of the old bill; the purse is quite empty, and what is to be done? So though he did not make pictures with palette-scrapings, he did something which gave the imagination free play, where the forms were not too precise, the colours were all mixed and brilliant, and one could not know overmuch what one was seeing; and as people did not know very much what they saw, those who understood nothing about it exclaimed, "How beautiful it is!" And he supplied this to his art-dealer. He never made a name for himself with his real painting, which was truly very fine (it was really very fine, he was a very good painter), but he won a world reputation with these horrors! And this was just at the beginning of modern painting, this goes back to the Universal Exhibition of 1900; if I were to tell you his name, you would all recognise it.... Now, of course, they have gone far beyond, they have done much better. However, he had the sense of harmony and beauty and his colours were beautiful. But at present, as soon as there is the least beauty, it won't do at all, it has to be outrageously ugly, then that, that is modern!

The story began with... the man who used to do still-life and

whose plates were never round.... Cézanne! It was he who began it; he said that if plates were painted round that would not be living; that when one looks at things spontaneously, never does one see plates round: one sees them like this (*gesture*). I don't know why, but he said that it is only the mind that makes us see plates as round, because one knows they are round, otherwise one does not see them round. It is he who began.... He painted a still-life which was truly a very beautiful thing, note that; a very beautiful thing, with an impression of colour and form truly surprising (I could show you reproductions one day, I must be having them, but they are not colour reproductions unfortunately; the beauty is really in the colour). But, of course, his plate was not round. He had friends who told him just this, "But after all, why don't you make your plate round?" He replied, "My dear fellow, you are altogether mental, you are not an artist; it is because you think that you make your plates round: if you only see, you will do it like this" (*gesture*). It is in accordance with the impression that the plate ought to be painted; it gives you an impact, you translate the impact, and it is this which is truly artistic. It is like this that modern art began. And note that he was right. His plates were not round, but he was right in principle.

What has made art what it is (do you want me to tell you this, psychologically?) is photography. Photographers did not know their job and gave you hideous things, frightfully ugly; it was mechanical, it had no soul, it had no art, it was horrible. All the first attempts of photography until... not very long ago, were like that. It is about fifty years ago that it became tolerable, and now with gradual improvement it has become something good; but it must be said that the process is absolutely different. In those days, when your portrait was taken, you sat in a comfortable chair, you had to sit leaning nicely and facing an enormous thing with a black cloth, which opened like this towards you. And the man ordered, "Don't move! Steady!" That, of course, was the end of the old painting. When the

painter made something lifelike, a lifelike portrait, his friends said, "Why now, this is photography!"

It must be said that the art of the end of the last century, the art of the Second Empire, was bad. It was an age of businessmen, above all an age of bankers, financiers, and taste, upon my word, had gone very low. I don't believe that businessmen are people necessarily very competent in art, but when they wanted their portrait, they wanted a likeness! One could not leave out the least detail, it was quite comic: "But you know I have a little wrinkle there, don't forget to put it in!" and the lady who said, "You know, you must make my shoulders quite round", and so on. So the artists made portraits which indeed turned into photography. They were flat, cold, without soul and without vision. I can name a number of artists of that period, it was truly a shame for art. This lasted till about the end of the last century, till about 1875. Afterwards, there started the reaction. Then there was an entire very beautiful period (I don't say this because I myself was painting) but all the artists I then knew were truly artists, they were serious and did admirable things which have remained admirable. It was the period of the impressionists; it was the period of Manet, it was a beautiful period, they did beautiful things. But people tire of beautiful things as they tire of bad ones. So there were those who wanted to found the "Salon d'Automne". They wanted to surpass the others, go more towards the new, towards the truly anti-photographic. And my goodness, they went a little beyond the limit (according to my taste). They began to depreciate Rembrandt — Rembrandt was a dauber, Titian was a dauber, all the great painters of the Italian Renaissance were daubers. You were not to pronounce the name of Raphael, it was a shame. And all the great period of the Italian Renaissance was "not worth very much"; even the works of Leonardo da Vinci; "You know, you must take them with a pinch of salt." Then they went a little further; they wanted something entirely new, they became extravagant. And then, from there, there was

only one more step to take for the palette-scrapings and then it was finished.

This is the history of art as I knew it.

Now, to tell you the truth, we are climbing up the curve again. Truly, I think we had gone down to the depths of incoherence, absurdity, nastiness—of the taste for the sordid and ugly, the dirty, the outrageous. We had gone, I believe, to the very bottom.

Are we really going up again?

I think so. Recently I saw some pictures which truly showed something other than ugliness and filth. It is not yet art, it is very far from being beautiful, but there are signs that we are going up again. You will see, fifty years hence we shall perhaps have beautiful things to see. I felt this some days ago, that truly we had come to the end of the descending curve—we are still very low down, but are beginning to climb up. There is a kind of anguish and there is still a complete lack of understanding of what beauty can and should be, but one finds an aspiration towards something which will not be sordidly material. For a time art had wanted to wallow in the mire, to be what they called “realistic”. They had chosen as “real” what was most repulsive in the world, most ugly: all deformities, all filth, all ugliness, all the horrors, all the incoherences of colour and form; well, I believe this is behind us now. I had this feeling very strongly these last few days (not through seeing pictures, for we do not have a chance to see much here, but by “sensing the atmosphere”). And even in the reproductions we are shown, there is some aspiration towards something which would be a little higher. It will need about fifty years; then... Unless there is another war, another catastrophe; because certainly, to a large extent, what is responsible for this taste for the sordid are the wars and the horrors of war. People were compelled to put aside all refined sensibility, the love of harmony, the need for beauty, to be able

to undergo all that; otherwise, I believe, they would really have died of horror. It was so unspeakably foul that it could not be tolerated, so it perverted men's taste everywhere and when the war was over (admitting that it ever ended), they wanted only one thing, to forget, forget, forget. To seek distraction, not to think of all the horror they had suffered. Then, one goes very low. The whole vital atmosphere is completely vitiated and the physical atmosphere is terribly obscure.

Hence, if we can escape another world war... Because war is there, it has never stopped. It has been there from almost the beginning of this century; it began with China, Turkey, Tripolitania, Morocco — you are following? — the Balkans, it has never stopped, it has become worse, but each time it has become a world war, it has assumed altogether sordid proportions. All you my children, you have been born after the war (I am speaking of the First [World] War), so you do not know much about this, and then you have been born here, in a country which has been truly privileged. But the children born in Europe, latterly, these little ones, who were children of the war, carry something in them which will be very difficult to eradicate, a kind of horror, a fright. One could not have been mixed up with that without knowing what horror is. The first war was perhaps worse than the second. The second was so atrocious that all was lost.... But the first, oh! I don't know.... The last months I spent in Paris were truly fantastic. And it can't be told. The life in the trenches, for example, is something that cannot be told. The new generations do not know.... But, you see, the children born now will not even know if this was true, all these horrors which are related to them. What happened in the conquered countries, in Czechoslovakia, in Poland, in France — the frightful things, unbelievable, unthinkable, which took place — unless one has been very close by, has seen, one cannot believe it. It was... I was saying the other day that the vital world is a world of horrors; well, all the horrors of the vital world had descended upon earth, and upon earth they are still more horrible than in the vital world, because

in the vital world, if you have an inner power, if you have the knowledge, if you have strength, you act upon them—you act, you can subdue them, you can show yourself stronger. But all your knowledge, all your power, all your strength is nothing in this material world when you are subjected to the horrors of a war. And this acts in the terrestrial atmosphere in such a way that it is very, very difficult to eradicate it.

Naturally, men are always very anxious to forget. There are already those who have begun to say, "Are you quite sure it was like that?" But those who have gone through that, do not want it to be forgotten; so the places of torture, massacre—hideous places which go beyond all the worst the human imagination can conceive—some of these places have been preserved. You can go and visit the torture-chambers the Germans built in Paris, and they will never be destroyed, I hope, so that those who come and say, "Oh! You know, these things have been exaggerated" (for one does not like to know that such frightful things have happened), could be taken by the hand and told, "Come and see, if you are not afraid."

This forms character. If it is taken in the right way (and I think there are people who have taken it in the right way), this may lead you straight to yoga, straight. That is, one feels such a deep detachment for all things in the world, such a great need to find something else, an imperious need to find something which is truly beautiful, truly fresh, truly good... then, quite naturally, this brings you to a spiritual aspiration. And these horrors have, as it were, divided men: there was a minority which was ready and rose very high, there was a majority which was not ready and went down very low. These wallow in the mud at present, and hence, for the moment, one does not get out of it; and if this continues, we shall go towards another war and this time it will truly be the end of this civilisation—I don't say the end of the world, because nothing can be the end of the world, but the end of this civilisation, that is to say, another will have to be built. You will perhaps tell me that this would be very well, for

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this civilisation is in its decline, it is on the way to perish; but after all, there are very beautiful things in it, worthy of being preserved, and it would be a great pity if all this disappeared. But if there is another war, I can tell you that all this will disappear. For men are very intelligent creatures and they have found the means of destroying everything, and they will make use of this, for what's the good of spending billions to find certain bombs, if one might not use them? What is the use of discovering that one can destroy a city in a few minutes, if it is not for destroying it! One wants to see the fruit of one's efforts. If there is war, this is what will happen.

There we are, I am telling you things which are not very cheerful, but it is sometimes good to knock some sense into you to make one think.

12 April 1951

What is the difference between Japanese art and the art of other countries, like those of Europe, for example?

The art of Japan is a kind of directly mental expression in physical life. The Japanese use the vital world very little. Their art is extremely mentalised; their life is extremely mentalised. It expresses in detail quite precise mental formations. Only, in the physical, they have spontaneously the sense of beauty. For example, a thing one sees very rarely in Europe but constantly, daily in Japan: very simple people, men of the working class or even peasants go for rest or enjoyment to a place where they can see a beautiful landscape. This gives them a much greater joy than going to play cards or indulging in all sorts of distractions as they do in the countries of Europe. They are seen in groups at times, going on the roads or sometimes taking a train or a tram up to a certain point, then walking to a place from where one gets a beautiful view. Then at this place there is a small house which fits very well into the landscape, there is a kind of small platform on which one can sit: one takes a cup of tea and at the same time sees the landscape. For them, this is the supreme enjoyment; they know nothing more pleasant. One can understand this among artists, educated people, quite learned people, but I am speaking of people of the most ordinary class, poor people who like this better than resting or relaxing at home. This is for them the greatest joy.

And in that country, for each season there are known sites. For instance, in autumn leaves become red; they have large numbers of maple-trees (the leaves of the maple turn into all the shades of the most vivid red in autumn, it is absolutely marvellous), so they arrange a place near a temple, for instance, on the top of a hill, and the entire hill is covered with maples. There

is a stairway which climbs straight up, almost like a ladder, from the base to the top, and it is so steep that one cannot see what is at the top, one gets the feeling of a ladder rising to the skies — a stone stairway, very well made, rising steeply and seeming to lose itself in the sky — clouds pass, and both the sides of the hill are covered with maples, and these maples have the most magnificent colours you could ever imagine. Well, an artist who goes there will experience an emotion of absolutely exceptional, marvellous beauty. But one sees very small children, families even, with a baby on the shoulder, going there in groups. In autumn they will go there. In springtime they will go elsewhere.

There is a garden quite close to Tokyo where irises are grown, a garden with very tiny rivulets, and along the rivulets, irises — irises of all possible colours — and it is arranged according to colour, organised in such a way that on entering one is dazzled, there is a blaze of colour from all these flowers standing upright; and there are heaps and heaps of them, as far as the eye can reach. At another time, just at the beginning of spring (it is a slightly early spring there), there are the first cherry-trees. These cherry-trees never give fruit, they are grown only for the flowers. They range from white to pink, to a rather vivid pink. There are long avenues all bordered with cherry-trees, all pink; they are huge trees which have turned all pink. There are entire mountains covered with these cherry-trees, and on the little rivulets bridges have been built which too are all red: you see these bridges of red lacquer among all these pink flowers and, below, a great river flowing and a mountain which seems to scale the sky, and they go to this place in springtime.... For each season there are flowers and for each flower there are gardens.

And people travel by train as easily as one goes from house to house; they have a small packet like this which they carry; in it they have a change of clothes, that's quite enough for them; on their feet they wear rope or fibre sandals; when these get worn out they throw them away and take others, for they cost nothing at all. All their life is like that. They have paper handkerchiefs,

when they have used them they get rid of them, and so on—they don't burden themselves with anything. When they go by train, at the stations small meals are sold in boxes (it is quite clean, quite neat), small meals in boxes of white wood with little chop-sticks for eating; then, as all this has no value, when one has finished, one puts them aside, doesn't bother about them or encumber oneself. They live like that. When they have a garden or a park, they plant trees, and they plant them just at the place where when the tree has grown it will create a landscape, will fit into a landscape. And as they want the tree to have a particular shape, they trim it, cut it, they manage to give it all the shapes they want. You have trees with fantastic forms; they have cut off the unnecessary branches, fostered others, contrived things as they liked. Then you come to a place and you see a house which seems to be altogether a part of the landscape; it has exactly the right colour, it is made of the right materials; it is not like a blow in your face, as are all those European buildings which spoil the whole landscape. It is just there where it should be, hidden under the trees; then you see a creeper and suddenly a wonderful tree: it is there at the right place, it has the right form. I had everything to learn in Japan. For four years, from an artistic point of view, I lived from wonder to wonder.

And in the cities, a city like Tokyo, for example, which is the biggest city in the world, bigger than London, and which extends far, far (now the houses are modernised, the whole centre of the city is very unpleasant, but when I was there, it was still good), in the outlying parts of the city, those which are not business quarters, every house has at the most two storeys and a garden—there is always a garden, there are always one or two trees which are quite lovely. And then, if you go for a walk... it is very difficult to find your way in Tokyo; there are no straight streets with houses on either side according to the number, and you lose your way easily. Then you go wandering around—always one wanders at random in that country—you go wandering and all of a sudden you turn the corner of a street and come

to a kind of paradise: there are magnificent trees, a temple as truly beautiful, you see nothing of the city any longer, no more traffic, no tramways; a corner, a corner of trees with magnificent colours, and it is beautiful, truly beautiful. You do not know how you have reached there, you seem to have come by luck. And then you turn, you seek your way, you wander off again and go elsewhere. And some days later you want to come back to this very place, but it is impossible, it is as though it had disappeared. And this is so frequent, this is so true that such stories are often told in Japan. Their literature is full of enchantment. They tell you a story in which the hero comes suddenly to a magic place: he sees fairies, he sees marvellous beings, he spends exquisite hours among flowers, music; all is splendid. The next day he is obliged to leave; it is the law of the place, he goes away. He tries to come back, but never does. He can no longer find the place: it was there, it has disappeared!... And everything in this city, in this country, from beginning to end, gives you the impression of impermanence, of the unexpected, the exceptional. You always come to things you did not expect; you want to find them again and they are lost—they have made something else which is equally charming. From the artistic point of view, the point of view of beauty, I don't think there is a country as beautiful as that.

Now, I ought to say, to complete my picture, that the four years I was there I found a dearth of spirituality as entire as could be. These people have a wonderful morality, live according to quite strict moral rules, they have a mental construction even in the least detail of life: one must eat in a certain way and not another, one must bow in a certain way and not another, one must say certain words but not all; when addressing certain people one must express oneself in a certain way; when speaking with others, one must express oneself in another. If you go to buy something in a shop, you must say a particular sentence; if you don't say it, you are not served: they look at you quizzically and do not move! But if you say the word, they wait upon you

with full attention and bring, if necessary, a cushion for you to sit upon and a cup of tea to drink. And everything is like that. However, not once do you have the feeling that you are in contact with something other than a marvellously organised mental-physical domain. And what energy they have! Their whole vital being is turned into energy. They have an extraordinary endurance but no direct aspiration: one must obey the rule, one is obliged. If one does not submit oneself to rules there, one may live as Europeans do, who are considered barbarians and looked upon altogether as intruders, but if you want to live a Japanese life among the Japanese you must do as they do, otherwise you make them so unhappy that you can't even have any relation with them. In their house you must live in a particular way, when you meet them you must greet them in a particular way.... I think I have already told you the story of that Japanese who was an intimate friend of ours, and whom I helped to come into contact with his soul—and who ran away. He was in the countryside with us and I had put him in touch with his psychic being; he had the experience, a revelation, the contact, the dazzling inner contact. And the next morning, he was no longer there, he had taken flight! Later, when I saw him again in town after the holidays, I asked him, "But what happened to you, why did you go away?" — "Oh! You understand, I discovered my soul and saw that my soul was more powerful than my faith in the country and the Mikado; I would have had to obey my soul and I would no longer have been a faithful subject of my emperor. I had to go away." There you are! All this is authentically true.

Why are great artists born at the same time in the same country?

That depends on the person to whom you put the question. The explanation will be different accordingly. From the point of view of evolution, I think Sri Aurobindo has explained this very clearly in *The Human Cycle*. Evolution, that is to say, culture

and civilisation, describes a more or less regular spiral movement around the earth, and the results of one civilisation, it may be said, slowly go to form another; then, when the total development is harmonious, this creates simultaneously the field of action and the actors, in the sense that at the time of the great artistic periods all the conditions were favourable to the development of art, and naturally, the fact that all the circumstances were favourable, attracted the men who could use them. There have been concrete movements like that, great ages like that of the Italian Renaissance or the similar period in France, almost at the same time, when artists from all countries were gathered at the same place because the conditions were favourable to the development of their art. This is one of the reasons — a so-to-say external reason — for the formation of civilisations.

There is another, this is that from an occult point of view it is almost always the same forces and same beings which incarnate during all the ages of artistic beauty upon earth and that, according to occultists, there are cycles of rebirth: beings return, group themselves through affinity at the time of birth; so it happens that regularly, almost all come together for a similar action. Some occultists have studied this question and given very precise numbers based upon the actual facts of the development of the earth: they have said that once in a hundred years, once in a thousand years, once in five thousand years, etc., certain cycles were repeated; that certain great civilisations appeared every five thousand years, and that it was (according to their special knowledge) the same people who came back. This is not quite exact, that is why I am not going into details, but in a sense this is true: it is the same forces which are at work. It is the same forces and they are grouped according to their affinities and, for a reason which may be quite material or for a mental or cyclic reason, they reunite at a certain place, and in this place there is a new civilisation or a special progress in a civilisation or a kind of effervescence, blossoming, flowering of beauty, as in the great ages in Greece, Egypt, India, Italy, Spain.... Everywhere,

in all the countries of the world, there have been more or less beautiful periods.

If you put the question to astrologers, they will explain this to you by the position of the stars; they will say that certain positions of the stars have a certain effect on the earth. But, as I have told you, all these things are “languages”, a way of expression, of making oneself understood; the truth is deeper, it is more complex, more complete.

Is the average Indian more advanced spiritually than the average man in other countries, like those of Europe, for instance?

There is an essential difference, but generally if he has not been contaminated by European materialism, when someone speaks to him about spiritual things, he has an opening, he understands. In the countries of the West, if you are in touch with the average man and speak to him of spiritual things, he is absolutely closed up and, moreover, if you speak to him of a possibility of relation with higher states of consciousness, he looks at you as though you were mad! If someone renounces the ordinary life to live an ascetic life, they think he is out of his senses!

There is a small minority among those who have kept the religious traditions, which understands, but understands only under the religious form. That is to say, if someone enters a monastery, they understand him more or less. But for the average man (I am not speaking of cultured people), if someone wants to lead a spiritual life independent of all religion, simply setting out in the personal quest of a higher truth, then surely he is ready to be put in a lunatic asylum! It would be better not to speak of it. There are those who have read a little, who are educated, who may think you a little eccentric, but still they understand what it means; but the ordinary man, no. I am speaking of fifty years ago, of course; now, after the Second [World] War, I don't know, I can't say if this has begun to change. But evidently,

the educated classes of Europe are now in search of something higher because their life has been so tragic that they need to lean upon something else; and perhaps their effort is contagious, in a sense, and there are more people than one thinks who are seeking—it is possible. But fifty years ago it was not like that. While here, ordinary people, people of the “lower” classes don’t perhaps have any discernment, perhaps they cannot distinguish between the imposter and the sincere man, but it is understood that if somebody comes along in the yellow robe and with the beggar’s bowl, he will be given something, he won’t be kicked out. If a man did that in Europe (naturally there is no question of the yellow robe), but if he came in sordid clothes, he would be immediately taken to the first police station and arrested for indigence. It is understood that in the so-called civilised countries, if you don’t have the minimum money in your pocket, you are a vagabond, and the vagabond has no right to be on the streets, he is put into prison for vagabondage. That is the difference.

Do certain arts express more truth than others?

This is more or less a mental gymnastic!

There are people who say that certain arts are physical. If you frequent artists, painters, they will tell you that sculpture, oh! it is laborious, because sculptors work with the very matter, and painting may be considered not much of an intellectual art by a musician. The truth is that in all arts everything depends upon the artist, and what he does depends upon the state of consciousness in which he is. A sculptor may be an extremely spiritual man and his production extremely spiritual also, if he knows how to express his experience. And a poet can be quite a commonplace materialist if he does not receive his inspiration from a higher state. It is the mind which makes little categories (this is more convenient for it), but that does not resemble the truth very much.

You have said that Wagner had an intuition of the occult and that to have spiritual power one must conquer sexuality. In fact, Wagner had the intuition of this victory to be achieved, for in "The Ring of the Niebelungen" there is a treasure hidden at the bottom of a river. Three nymphs guard the treasure and to take it one must renounce all desire for love and woman.

This is an old tradition in Nordic countries. But in his story it ends badly: the one who had to renounce the love of woman is drowned and it ends with the twilight of the gods.

14 April 1951

Mother reads a question asked during her talk in 1929:

“Is not surrender the same as sacrifice?”

Questions and Answers 1929 (4 August)

Who is going to answer? What is the difference?

Surrender comes spontaneously.

I congratulate those whose surrender is spontaneous! It is not so easy. No, that is not the difference.

Sacrifice diminishes the being.

That is true, but why? One thing is so, so simple — it is the very meaning of the word. To sacrifice means to give up something to which one clings. To sacrifice one's life is to give up one's life to which one clings; otherwise it would not be a sacrifice, it would be a gift. If you use the word “sacrifice”, it means it is something which makes you suffer when you give it up. The word “sacrifice” is used at random, that is understood, but I am speaking of the true sense. One can sacrifice only what one holds dear. If one does not cling to it, it is not a sacrifice, it is a gift with all the joy of the giving. Surrender has no value if it is painful, if it is a sacrifice. Surrender must be truly a joyous offering (I am using the word *soumission* in the sense of surrender, but it is not quite surrender — surrender is between *soumission* and *abandon*). One gives up something, surrenders oneself, but without sacrifice.

"In our Yoga there is no room for sacrifice. But everything depends on the meaning you put in the word. In its pure sense it means a consecrated giving, made sacred by offering to the Divine. But in the significance that it now bears, sacrifice is something that works for destruction; it carries about it an atmosphere of negation. This kind of sacrifice is not fulfilment; it is a deprivation, a self-immolation.... When you do anything with the sense of a compression of your being, be sure that you are doing it in the wrong way."

Ibid.

Why does sacrifice have such a great value in religion?

Many religions are founded upon the idea of sacrifice; for instance, all the Chaldean religions. The reforms of the Muslim religion also had a very strong tendency towards sacrifice. All the first adepts, the first faithful, paid with their life for changing their religion. In Persia, they were persecuted beyond all telling. There are even many writings in which the joys of sacrifice are praised highly — that is a Chaldean idea. But you should be on your guard; all depends upon the meaning given to the word. It is obvious that for him who sacrifices himself willingly, that is, who gives up his life voluntarily and with joy, it is no longer a sacrifice, by the very definition we have given to the word.

We also speak of the “sacrifice” of the Divine. But I have noticed that one calls it “sacrifice” when one understands that if obliged to do it oneself it would be very difficult! It would give you much pain, it would be very hard (*laughing*) so one speaks of sacrifice, but it is probable that for the Divine it was not painful and he did it willingly, with all the joy of self-giving.

I knew Abdul Baha very well, the successor of Baha Ullah, founder of the Bahai religion; Abdul Baha was his son. He was born in prison and lived in prison till he was forty, I believe. When he came out of prison his father was dead and he began

to preach his father's religion. He told me his story and what had happened in Persia at the beginning of the religion. And I remember him telling me with what intense joy, what a sense of the divine Presence, of the divine Force, these people went to the sacrifice — it can't be called "sacrifice", it was a very joyful gift of their life.... He always spoke to me of someone who was, it appears, a very great poet and who had been arrested as a heretic because he followed the Bahai religion. They wanted to take him away to kill him — or burn him, hang him, crucify him, I don't know what, the manner of death in vogue at the time — and, because he expressed his faith and said he would be happy to suffer anything for his faith and his God, people devised the plan of fixing small lighted candle-ends on his body, his arms, his shoulders. Naturally the candles melted with the hot wax all over, till the wick of the candle burnt the skin. It seems Abdul Baha was there when this man was tortured and as they came to the spot where he was to be killed, Abdul Baha went up to speak to him affectionately — and he was in an ecstasy of joy. Abdul Baha spoke to him of his sufferings; he replied, "Suffer! It is one of the most beautiful hours of my life...." This cannot be called a sacrifice, can it?

Generally, all those who have suffered tortures for their faith, that is, for their highest thought, their most sublime ideal, have always felt a kind of divine grace helping them and keeping them from suffering. Of course, outsiders call this a "sacrifice" (that is understandable, they have sacrificed their life), but one cannot use the word for what personally concerns them, because for them it was not a sacrifice, it was a joy. All depends on the inner attitude. Now, if for a single moment during the torture they had had the least idea, "Why am I being tortured?" they would have undergone unbearable suffering. A single passing thought suffices.

Almost all events — at least all the important circumstances of human life — may be looked at from two sides: from below or from above. If you see them from below, with the feelings of

the ordinary man, you are terrified by the amount of suffering of all those who have preached a new religion or wished to set an example to humanity—they have all suffered, that is, they have all been persecuted by men. Generally speaking, with a very few exceptions, men do not like what is superior to them, and when they meet someone who is far above them (I am saying, apart from some exceptions), that makes them furious. They suffer an almost insurmountable annoyance in meeting something so infinitely higher than what they are. They have only one idea, to destroy it, and in fact that is what they have done. Throughout human history it has been thus. Those who have come with special abilities, a special grace, and have tried to make men come out of their ordinary rut, have been more or less persecuted, martyred, burnt alive, put on the cross.... The situation now is apparently a little better because now slightly more plausible reasons than those of old are needed to burn men—the habit of doing so is no longer there—but the feelings are not very different. The human race, generally, has a sort of rancour against what surpasses it; it feels humiliated, and men do not like to be humiliated.

Sometimes, on waking up, one forgets everything, one forgets where one is. Why?

It is because you have gone into the unconscious and lost all contact with the consciousness, and this takes a little time to be reestablished. Of course, it may happen that instead of going into the unconscious one goes into the superconscious, but this is not frequent. And the feeling is not the same because, instead of having this negative impression of not knowing who one is or where one is or what is what, one has a positive sensation of having risen into something other than one's ordinary life, of no longer being the same person. But when one has altogether lost contact with one's ordinary consciousness, generally it is that one has slept and been for a long time in the unconscious. Then

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the being is scattered, it is absorbed by this inconscient and all the pieces have to be put together again. Naturally, this is done much more quickly than at the beginning of existence, but the conscious elements have to be gathered up again and a cohesion re-formed to begin to know once more who one is.

Sometimes in dreams one goes into houses, streets, places one has never seen. What does this mean?

There may be many reasons for this. Perhaps it is an exteriorisation: one has come out of the body and gone for a stroll. They may be memories of former lives. Perhaps one has become identified with someone else's consciousness and has the memories of this other person. Perhaps it is a premonition (this is the rarest case, but it may happen): one sees ahead what one will see later.

The other day I spoke to you about those landscapes of Japan; well, almost all—the most beautiful, the most striking ones—I had seen in vision in France; and yet I had not seen any pictures or photographs of Japan, I knew nothing of Japan. And I had seen these landscapes without human beings, nothing but the landscape, quite pure, like that, and it had seemed to me they were visions of a world other than the physical; they seemed to me too beautiful for the physical world, too perfectly beautiful. Particularly I used to see very often those stairs rising straight up into the sky; in my vision there was the impression of climbing straight up, straight up, and as though one could go on climbing, climbing, climbing.... It had struck me, and the first time I saw this in Nature down there, I understood that I had already seen it in France before having known anything about Japan.

There are always many explanations possible and it is very difficult to explain for someone else. For oneself, if one has studied very carefully one's dreams and activities of the night, one can distinguish fine nuances. I was saying I thought I had a vision of another world—I knew it was something which

existed, but I could not imagine there was a country where it existed; this seemed to me impossible, so very beautiful it was. It was the active mind which interfered. But I knew that what I was seeing truly existed, and it was only when I saw these landscapes physically that I realised in fact that I had seen something which existed, but I had seen it with inner eyes (it was the subtle-physical) before seeing it physically. Everyone has certain very small indications, but for that one must be very, very methodical, very scrupulous, very careful in one's observation and not neglect the least signs, and above all not give favourable mental explanations to the experiences one has. For if one wants to explain to oneself (I don't even speak of explaining to others), if one wants to explain the experience to oneself advantageously, to draw satisfaction, one does not understand anything any more. That is, one may mix up the signs without even noticing that they are mixed up. For instance, when one sees somebody in a dream (I am not speaking of dreams in which you see somebody unknown, but of those where you see somebody you know, who comes to see you) there are all sorts of explanations possible. If it is someone living far away from you, in another country, perhaps that person has written a letter to you and the letter is on the way, so you see this person because he has put a formation of himself in his letter, a concentration; you see the person and the next morning you get the letter. This is a very frequent occurrence. If it is a person with a very strong thought-power, he may think of you from very far, from his own country and concentrate his thought, and this concentration takes the form of that person in your consciousness. Perhaps it is that this person is calling you intentionally; deliberately he comes to tell you something or give you a sign, if he is in danger, if he is sick. Suppose he has something important to tell you, he begins to concentrate (he knows how to do it, as everyone does not) and he enters your atmosphere, comes to tell you something special. Now if you are passive and attentive, you receive the message. And then, two more instances still: someone has exteriorised

himself more or less materially in his sleep and has come to see you. And you become conscious of this person because (almost by miracle) you are in a corresponding state of consciousness. And finally, a last instance, this person may be dead and may come to see you after his death (one part of him or almost the whole of his being according to the relation you have with him). Consequently, for someone who is not very, very careful it is very difficult to distinguish these nuances, very difficult. On the other hand, quite often imaginative people will tell you, "Oh! I saw this person — he is dead." I have heard that I don't know how many times. These are people whose imagination runs freely. It is possible that the person is dead, but not because he has appeared to you!... One must pay great attention to the outer forms things take. There are shades very difficult to distinguish, one must be very, very careful. For oneself, if one is in the habit of studying all this, one can become aware of the differences, but to interpret another's experiences is very difficult, unless he gives you in great detail all that surrounds the dream, the vision: the ideas he had before, the ideas he had later, the state of his health, the feelings he experienced when going to sleep, the activities of the preceding day, indeed, all sorts of things. People who tell you, "Oh! I had this vision, explain it to me!", that is childishness — unless it is someone whom you have followed very carefully, whom you yourself have taught how to recognise the planes, and whose habits, whose reactions you know; otherwise it is impossible to explain, for there are innumerable explanations for one single thing.

There are some very remarkable instances of exteriorisation. I am going to tell you two incidents about cats which occurred quite a long time ago in France. One happened very long ago, long before the war even. We used to have small meetings every week — quite a small number of friends, three or four, who discussed philosophy, spiritual experiences, etc. There was a young boy, a poet, but one who was rather light-minded; he was very intelligent, he was a student in Paris. He used to come regularly

to these meetings (they took place on Wednesday evenings) and one evening he did not come. We were surprised; we had met him a few days before and he had said he would come — he did not come. We waited quite a long time, the meeting was over and at the time of leaving I opened the door to let people out (it was at my house that these meetings were held), I opened the door and there before it sat a big dark grey cat which rushed into the room like mad and jumped upon me, like this, mewing desperately. I looked into its eyes and told myself, "Well, these are so-and-so's eyes" (the one who was to come). I said, "Surely something has happened to him." And the next day we learnt that he had been assassinated that night; the next morning he had been found lying strangled on his bed. This is the first story. The other happened long afterwards, at the time of the war — the First [World] War, not the Second — the war of the trenches. There was a young man I knew very well; he was a poet and artist (I have already spoken about him), who had gone to the war. He had enlisted, he was very young; he was an officer. He had given me his photograph. (This boy was a student of Sanskrit and knew Sanskrit very well, he liked Buddhism very much; indeed he was much interested in things of the spirit, he was not an ordinary boy, far from it.) He had given me his photograph on which there was a sentence in Sanskrit written in his own hand, very well written. I had framed this photograph and put it above a sort of secretaire (a rather high desk with drawers); well, above it I had hung this photograph. And at that time it was very difficult to receive news, one did not know very well what was happening. From time to time we used to receive letters from him, but for a long time there had been nothing, when, one day, I came into my room, and the moment I entered, without any apparent reason the photograph fell from the wall where it had been well fixed, and the glass broke with a great clatter. I felt a little anxious, I said, "There is something wrong." But we had no news. Two or three days later (it was on the first floor; I lived in a house with one room upstairs, all the rest on

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the ground-floor, and there was a flight of steps leading to the garden) I opened the entrance door and a big grey cat rushed in—light grey, this time—a magnificent cat, and, just as the other one had done, it flung itself upon me, like this, mewing. I looked into its eyes—it had the eyes of... that boy. And this cat, it turned and turned around me and all the time tugged at my dress and miaowed. I wanted to put it out, but it would not go, it settled down there and did not want to move. The next day it was announced in the papers that this boy had been found dead between two trenches, dead for three days. That is, at the time he must have died his photograph had fallen. The consciousness had left the body completely: he was there abandoned, because they did not always go to see what was happening between the trenches; they could not, you understand; he was found two or three days later; at that time probably he had gone out altogether from his body and wanted definitely to inform me about what had happened and he had found that cat. For cats live in the vital, they have a very developed vital consciousness and can easily be taken possession of by vital forces.

But these two examples are quite extraordinary, for they both came about almost in the same way, and in both instances the eyes of these cats had completely changed—they had become human eyes.

17 April 1951

"The spiritual life reveals the one essence in all, but reveals too its infinite diversity; it works for diversity in oneness and for perfection in that diversity."

Questions and Answers 1929 (4 August)

This is the very motive of the creation of the universe, that is to say, all are one, all is one in its origin, but each thing, each element, each being has as its mission the revealing of one part of this unity to itself, and it is this particularity which must be developed in everyone, while awakening at the same time the sense of the original unity. This is "to work for unity in diversity". And the perfection in that diversity lies in everyone's being perfectly what he ought to be.

You have said: "Men have the impression that their desires are born within; they feel as if they come out of themselves or arise in themselves; but it is a false impression. Desires are waves of the vast sea of the obscure lower nature and they pass from one person to another. Men do not generate desire in themselves, but are invaded by these waves; whoever is open and without defence is caught in them and tossed about."

Ibid.

Can the protective envelope also feel the waves of desire, the impulsions from others, etc.?

You mean whether the protective envelope of which I spoke from a physical point of view can serve also from a moral, a psychological point of view? It is not the same envelope, it is another domain. A man may have this subtle-physical envelope

quite intact and it may work marvellously to protect him from all illnesses and accidents, and yet at the same time he may be full of desires, because desires belong to another sphere. Desire is not a physical thing, desire is something vital, and this envelope is more material than the vital: it cannot prevent the vital from entering into contact with the vital world and receiving from there all its impulsions. Naturally he who has mastered himself, who has found his psychic being, who lives constantly in the consciousness of this psychic being, who has established a perfect relation or at least a constant relation with the inner divine Presence is enveloped in an atmosphere of knowledge, light, beauty, purity, which is the best of all protections against desires, but all the same it is possible for desire to intrude if one is not always on one's guard, because we say that it comes from outside. One may have overcome a desire within oneself, and yet it may come from outside as a contagion; but through this envelope of light, knowledge and purity, the desire loses its force and instead of coming like a movement which evokes a blind and immediate response, one perceives what is happening, becomes aware of the force which wants to enter and one can quietly — when it is not wanted — make an inner movement and reject the incoming desire. This is the only true defence: a wakeful consciousness, pure and alert, so to say, which does not sleep, does not let things enter without being aware of them. The worst thing is that people are quite unconscious and that it is only after the contagion has entered that they notice it, and it is a little late to react — it is not impossible, but it is more difficult — while if one sees it coming, if in the surrounding atmosphere it comes making a kind of little black mark, one can chase it off as one would something disagreeable. But the protective envelope on the material plane has no effect in this instance.

This is indeed something very interesting.... I have seen that material things are arranged in such a way at present that one could reach a high degree of perfection of the physical instrument in any field whatever, no matter what may be the degree of

inner or psychic development. This was what I thought yesterday evening about the talkies. It is evidently a great progress in the cinematographic art and it can't be called in itself bad or good. It so happened that I had always seen only talkies of idiotic, vulgar, crude stories, indeed all the stupidities generally shown in cinemas, and this perfection of the instrument had made the crudity yet more crude, the stupidity yet more stupid, and this kind of impression of degradation yet more strong. But yesterday, when we saw that documentary with the beautiful birds singing.... Those who made this film have taken great pains, one can't imagine how much of effort and work it entails to film birds in their nests without disturbing them, then to record the sound accurately enough to be able to amplify it and make it perceptible to all. It is a very big work they have done there. And it is the same perfecting of the same instrument which permitted the production of the lovely thing we saw yesterday evening and that ignoble thing we saw sometime ago.... This makes us reflect deeply on material things.

Physical perfection does not at all prove, not in the least, that one has taken one step farther towards spirituality. Physical perfection means that the instrument the force will use — any force whatever — will be sufficiently perfected to be remarkably expressive. But the important point, the essential point is the force which will use the instrument, and it is there that the choice is necessary. If you perfect your body and make of it a remarkable instrument, you must not at all think that because of that you are nearer to the spiritual life. You prepare a remarkable instrument so that this spiritual life may manifest in it, if it manifests itself. But it is for you always to choose what will be manifested. There are people who perfect their body, who build a strong, solid, energetic, agile, capable body, and all this simply to be able to better affirm their ego and the strength of their ego. Others may prepare the body to be sure that when the spiritual light manifests, it will find an instrument capable of doing all that is asked of it. Whatever the work required, the instrument

will be so perfected as to be able to do it without difficulty, spontaneously, immediately.... This is to arouse your attention to the most important fact which is the choice of the force you will allow to manifest in your body. Perfect your body, make it a remarkable instrument, but never forget that there is a choice to be made and that this choice ought to be made constantly — one doesn't make it once for all, it must always be renewed. Because, before one reaches the total union, the total expression, there will always be this invasion of external things which will try to enter you and spoil all the work. So, the necessary, indispensable condition is a constant vigilance. Do not sleep with satisfaction under the pretext that you have once made your choice: "Oh! Now it is all right, everything is all right." In principle everything is all right; in the sincerity of your choice lies also the guarantee of its duration. But for the sincerity to be perfect and the choice unshakable, one must never sleep — I don't mean you must not sleep physically, I mean the consciousness must not sleep! And this is an introduction to what I shall read to you next time, a letter Sri Aurobindo wrote quite a long time ago; if I remember rightly, it was in 1928, October 1928. You see, things do not change very quickly.

How should one express the particularity of one's being?

You must live it, that is to say, live according to the inner law, the truth of your being. I have explained this at some length in "The Science of Living", I have said that this truth of the being is precisely the particularity of every one.

But it differs with every one, doesn't it?

The law of each being is different, yes, otherwise how would a distinction be made? From top to bottom, the nature, appearance, actions, all would be the same. If there were only one law, there would be only one law and every one would repeat the

same thing. There would be no need at all to manifest a universe because it would be one single law. The very characteristic of the universe is an infinite multiplicity of laws which altogether, in their totality, reproduce the One. And it is this which is particularly marvellous in the physical world (in man and in the physical world, for it is proper to the terrestrial being), that it can be one of the innumerable elements which in their totality reproduce the One, and yet at the same time have a personal relation with the One—that is to say, contain in itself the consciousness of the One and the relation with the One, and at the same time be an element of the whole. But if the fact of becoming conscious of the One and identifying oneself with it stopped one from being particular, one would cease existing as a personality. This is precisely what the Buddhists and the disciples of Shankara try to realise; they wish to abolish totally their personality, their individuality, abolish the truth of their being, the special law of their being. This is what they consider to be a fusion with the Divine. But this is the negation of this creation. And as I was saying, the miracle of this creation, as far as the terrestrial individuality goes, is that we may achieve this union, this complete identification with the Supreme, the One, and at the same time keep the consciousness of our diversity, of the particular law we have to express. It is more difficult but infinitely more complete, and it is the very truth of this universe. The universe has not been made for anything else but that, to unite these two poles, the two extremes of consciousness. And when they are united, one understands that these two extremes are exactly the same thing—a whole, at once one and innumerable.

But one feels very different from others!

Externally, this is evident.

It is ignorance.

No, the ignorance is to deny the essential identity, the one origin. And I consider it an ignorant absurdity to want to deny the external differences of the manifestation. Why should there be a manifestation then? What purpose would it serve? This would mean there has been an absurdity at the beginning of creation. If this had not been done on purpose, it would mean that things are not made on purpose or that He has made a mistake or even that He has not understood what He wanted to do! that He thought of doing one thing and did another! Besides, I hasten to tell you that if there were a universe in which all the elements were identical, truly one would immediately ask why it existed. If all of you in front of me, all, were all the same, speaking in the same way, thinking in the same way, reacting in the same way, I believe I would immediately run away!

You said that if there were a third world war, it would be the end of the present civilisation. Would the terrestrial condition be affected favourably by it or adversely?

Listen. Would you ask whether a fatal illness is favourable to health or not? It is exactly that. A civilisation, whatever it may be, is the result of very long efforts to become conscious of oneself, of Nature, and to master this Nature and draw the best possible advantage from it. We were saying a while ago that the training of the physical being consists in preparing an instrument so that the Divine may manifest Himself. A civilisation prepares an instrument so that the Divine may manifest in that instrument. The more slowly, carefully, minutely the civilisation is worked out, and succeeds in conquering the laws of Nature, the more favourable is the instrument to the manifestation of the Divine. That is why we also have this idea of the prolongation of life, it is to be able to perfect the instrument so as to manifest the divine Force which wants to manifest. Otherwise, it would evidently be much easier, as soon as the body became a little ill or a little old or incapable of reacting as it did when young, to

do what one does with an old torn dress — one throws it away and gets another. Unfortunately, it is not like that. All the fruit of the work, all the accumulated effort to become conscious is lost. If, for instance, this civilisation we have built, which in a way has so considerably mastered the forces of Nature, which has succeeded in understanding laws of an altogether unique order and has accumulated so many experiences of all kinds to reach self-understanding and self-expression, if all this disappeared, it would be necessary, naturally, to begin all over again. And then, for a new-born child, how many years of slow and insipid education are needed for its brain to be ready to express even a simple general idea, for its movements to be conscious instead of being absolutely unconscious, how many years! For a civilisation, how many years would be necessary simply to get back all that is lost? There have been many civilisations on the earth, there are scientists trying to rediscover what has been, but nobody can say with certitude exactly what was there: the major part of these civilisations is completely lost (I am speaking of civilisations preceding this one which for us is historical) . Well, if thousands of years are yet needed to begin another, obviously.... In any case, for our external human consciousness, it is a loss of time. But we are told that the Work to be done, the promised Realisation is going to take place now. It is going to take place now because the framework of this civilisation seems to be favourable as a platform or a base for building up. But if this civilisation is destroyed, upon what are we going to build? First a foundation platform must be made in order to be able to build. If five or ten thousand years are still needed to make this platform, this proves that it is not now that things will be done — they will be done, that is well understood, they will be done, but... How many lives have you all had? What do you remember of your past lives? What is the good of all the efforts you have made in your past lives to perfect yourselves, to try to understand yourselves, to master yourselves a little, simply to make use of the instrument which has been given to you? What

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remains to you of all that? Will you tell me? Who here can tell me that he is consciously profiting by the experiences of his past lives — unconsciously there is something which remains but not much — but consciously?... No one will answer?

No, precisely, one has the impression that after having lived so long, one is only beginning to know a very little.

Yes, exactly, it is just like that. This is because the farther one goes, the more does one realise that there is everything to understand and everything to learn. And consequently, if one has behind him some sixty years, it is nothing. One would like to have hundreds and hundreds of years behind oneself to be able to do the work. It is like that, you are all little children, you see, so the years seem to you long, because you have not lived much; but you will see, the more one advances, the more does one realise that there is a long road in front, long, very long, and one would not like to have to begin all over again, for it is so much more time lost.

19 April 1951

This yoga can only be done to the end by those who are in total earnest about it and ready to abolish their little human ego and its demands in order to find themselves in the Divine. It cannot be done in a spirit of levity or laxity; the work is too high and difficult, the adverse powers in the lower Nature too ready to take advantage of the least sanction or the smallest opening, the aspiration and tapasya needed too constant and intense. It cannot be done if there is a petulant self-assertion of the ideas of the human mind or wilful indulgence of the demands and instincts and pretensions of the lowest part of the being, commonly justified under the name of human nature.

Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga*, p. 1310

Everybody knows this; those who do not want to change their way of doing things or their way of being always say, “Oh! What do you expect, it is human nature.” This is what is called a “wilful indulgence”. That is to say, instead of becoming conscious that these are weaknesses and difficulties on the way, one justifies these things, saying, “Oh! It can’t be helped, it is human nature.” One wants to continue to do what one is doing, without changing, one is full of a wilful indulgence of one’s demands. For the lower nature of man always demands things; it says, “These are necessities, these are needs, I can’t do without them.” Then, the instincts—a sort of instinct for one’s own satisfaction—and pretensions: the lower being claims that it has a considerable importance and must be given what is necessary for it, otherwise it won’t be able to live; it asserts that it alone is important, and so on. It is all this which creates obstacles, all these obscure, ignorant movements, all these justifications of the old ways of being: those who fly into a temper and say, “What do you expect,

it can't be helped”, and everything one does saying, “Oh! It is human nature”, everything one justifies saying, “What can be done, people are like that, there is nothing to be done about it.” It is the old idea that we are born with a particular nature and must get adjusted to it, for we cannot change it.

So Sri Aurobindo tells us that if one cannot change the nature it is not worth the trouble of doing yoga, for yoga is done precisely in order to change the nature, otherwise it has no meaning.

When the little ego is abolished, can't one “find oneself in the Divine” directly?

But one can find oneself in the Divine even before having completely abolished one's little ego, for, to abolish one's little ego is not a small matter!

But how is it to be done?

How is it to be done? How to abolish the ego? — First of all, you must want to do it, and there are very few people who want to. And that is exactly what they say, it is this justification of their way of being, “That is the way I am made, I can't do otherwise. And then, if I change this, if I change that or if I do without this thing or if I get rid of that other, I shall no longer exist!” And if one doesn't say this openly, one thinks it. And all these little desires, these little satisfactions, these little reactions, all these small ways of being, one clings to them, clings hard — one sticks to them, one doesn't want to let them go. I have seen hundreds of cases where someone's difficulty had been removed (with a particular power a certain difficulty had been removed), but after a few days he brought it back with enthusiasm. He said, “But without that I do not exist any longer!” I have known people who had been given mental silence almost spontaneously and who, after a day or two, came back frightened: “Have I

become an idiot?" — for the mental machine was not working all the time.... You cannot imagine it, you don't know how very difficult it is to separate oneself from this little ego; how much it gets into the way though it is so small. It takes up so much room while being so microscopic. It is very difficult. One pushes it away in certain very obvious things; for example, if there is something good and someone rushes forward to make sure of having it first, even jostling his neighbour (this happens very frequently in ordinary life), then here one becomes quite aware that this is not very, very elegant, so one begins to suppress these crudities, one makes a big effort — and one becomes highly self-satisfied: "I am not selfish, I give what is good to others, I don't keep it for myself", and one begins to get puffed up. And so one is filled with a moral egoism which is much worse than physical egoism, for it is conscious of its superiority. And then there are those who have left everything, given up everything, who have left their families, distributed their belongings, gone into solitude, who live an ascetic life, and who are terribly conscious of their superiority, who look down at poor humanity from the height of their spiritual grandeur — and they have, these people, such a formidable ego that unless it is broken into small bits, never, never will they see the Divine. So it is not such an easy task. It takes a lot of time. And I must tell you that even when the work is done, it must always be begun again.

Physically, we depend upon food to live — unfortunately. For with food, we daily and constantly take in a formidable amount of *inconscience*, of *tamas*, heaviness, stupidity. One can't do otherwise — unless constantly, without a break, we remain completely aware and, as soon as an element is introduced into our body, we immediately work upon it to extract from it only the light and reject all that may darken our consciousness. This is the origin and rational explanation of the religious practice of consecrating one's food to God before taking it. When eating one aspires that this food may not be taken for the little human ego but as an offering to the divine consciousness within oneself.

In all yogas, all religions, this is encouraged. This is the origin of that practice, of contacting the consciousness behind, precisely to diminish as much as possible the absorption of an in-consciousness which increases daily, constantly, without one's being aware of it.

Vitally, it is the same thing. You live vitally in the vital world with all the currents of vital force entering, going out, joining and opposing each other, quarrelling and intermingling in your consciousness, and even if you have made a personal effort to purify your vital consciousness, to master in it the desire-being and the little human ego, you are constantly under a sort of obligation to absorb all the contrary vibrations which come from those with whom you live. One can't shut oneself up in an ivory tower, it is yet more difficult vitally than physically, and one takes in all sorts of things; and unless one is constantly wide awake, constantly on one's guard, and has quite an efficient control over all that enters, so as not to admit in one's consciousness unwanted elements, one catches the constant contagion of all desires, all the lower movements, all the small obscure reactions, all the unwanted vibrations which come to us from those around us.

Mentally, it is still worse. The human mind is a public place open on all sides, and in this public place, things come, go, cross from all directions; and some settle there and these are not always the best. And there, to obtain control over that multitude is the most difficult of all controls. Try to control the thought coming into your mind, you will see. Simply, you will see to what a degree you have to be watchful, like a sentinel, with the eyes of the mind wide open, and then keep an extremely clear vision of the ideas which conform to your aspirations and those which do not. And you must police at every minute that public place where roads from all sides meet, so that all passers-by do not rush in. It is a big job. Then, don't forget that even if you make sincere efforts, it is not in a day, not in a month, not in a year that you will reach the end of all these difficulties. When one begins, one must begin with an unshakable patience. One

must say, "Even if it takes fifty years, even if it takes a hundred years, even if it takes several lives, what I want to accomplish, I shall accomplish."

Once you have decided upon this, once you are quite conscious that it is so and that the goal is worth the trouble of a constant and sustained effort, you may begin. Otherwise, after a time you will fall flat; you will get discouraged, you will tell yourself, "Oh! It is very difficult—I do it and then it is undone, I do it again and it is once again undone, and then I do it again and it is perpetually undone.... Then what? When will I get there?" One must have plenty of patience. The work may be undone a hundred times, you will do it again a hundred and one times; it may be undone a thousand times, you will re-do it a thousand and one times, until finally it is no longer undone. And finally it is no longer undone.

Only, you see, if one were made all of a piece, it would be very easy, but one is made of many pieces. Then, there is one piece which is ahead, which has worked hard, is very conscious, altogether awake, and when it is there, all goes well, one does not allow anything to enter, one is on one's guard, and then... one goes to sleep and the next day when one gets up it is another part which is there and one tells oneself, "But where then is all the work I had done?..." And one must begin all over again. Begin all over again until all the parts, one after another, enter the field of consciousness and each one can be changed. And when you reach your limit, there is a change, you have made progress—afterwards, you must make another, but still that one is made. But it is completely made only when all the pieces of the being are brought like that, one after another, to the front, and upon all without exception you have applied the consciousness, the light, the will and the goal, in such a way that everything changes.

This is not to discourage you, but to warn you. I do not want you to say afterwards, "Oh! If I had known it was so difficult, I would not have started." You must know that it is

excessively difficult and begin with great firmness and continue to the end, even if the end is a very long way off — there are many things to do. Now, I may tell you that if you do it sincerely, with application and care, it is extremely interesting. Even those whose life is quite monotonous, without interest (there are, you know, poor people who have to do utterly uninteresting work and always the same thing, and always in the same conditions, and whose mind is not sufficiently awakened to be able to find an interest in anything whatever), even those people, if they begin to do this little work upon themselves, of control, of elimination, that is to say, if each element which comes with its ignorance, its unconsciousness, its egoism, is put before the will to change and one remains awake, compares, observes, studies and slowly acts, that becomes infinitely interesting, one makes marvellous and quite unexpected discoveries. One finds in oneself lots of small hidden folds, little things one had not seen at the beginning; one undertakes a sort of inner chase, goes hunting into small dark corners and tells oneself: "What, I was like that! This was there in me, I am harbouring this little thing!" — sometimes so sordid, so mean, so nasty. And once it has been discovered, how wonderful! One puts the light upon it and it disappears and you no longer have those reactions which made you so sad before, when you used to say, "Oh! I shall never get there." For instance, you take a very simple resolution (apparently very simple): "I shall never tell a lie again." And suddenly, without your knowing why or how, the lie springs up all by itself and you notice it after you have uttered it: "But this is not correct — what I have just said; it was something else I meant to say." So you search, search.... "How did it happen? How did I think like that and speak like that? Who spoke in me, who pushed me?..." You may give yourself quite a satisfactory explanation and say, "It came from outside" or "It was a moment of unconsciousness", and not think any longer about it. And the next time, it begins again. Instead of that, you search: "What can be the motive of one who tells lies?..." and you push — you push and all of a

sudden you discover in a little corner something which wants to justify itself, thrust itself forward or assert its own way of seeing (no matter what, there are a number of reasons), show itself a little different from what it is so that people may have a good opinion of you and think you someone very remarkable.... It was that which spoke in you—not your active consciousness, but what was there and pushed the consciousness from behind. When you were not quite on your guard, it made use of your mouth, your tongue, and then there you were! The lie came out. I am giving you this example—there are a million others. And it is extremely interesting. And to the extent one discovers this within oneself and says sincerely, “It must change”, one finds that one acquires a sort of inner clear-sightedness, one gradually becomes aware of what goes on in others, and instead of getting angry when they are not quite what one would like them to be, one begins to understand how things happen, how it is that one is “like this”, how reactions are produced.... Then, with the indulgence of knowledge, one smiles. One no longer judges severely, one offers the difficulty in oneself or in others, whatever may be its centre of manifestation, to the divine Consciousness, asking for its transformation.

On June 8, 1966, at the time of the publication of this talk, Mother spoke about the same question in terms of her present experience which forms the basis of the “yoga of the body”.

Precisely this is what I have been doing for the last two days. The last two days I have spent all my time seeing all this accumulation, oh! heaps of little sordid things which one lives constantly, very tiny sordid things. And so there is only one way—there is only one way, always the same: to offer.

It is almost as though this Supreme Consciousness were putting you in touch with things long forgotten, which belong to the past, which even are or were or seemed to be completely effaced, with which you no longer have any contact, all sorts

of little circumstances, which yet are seen in the new consciousness, in their true place, and make such a poor, miserable, mean, sordid whole of the entire life, the entire general human life. And so, it is a luminous joy of offering all this for transformation, for transfiguration.

Now it has become the very movement of the cellular consciousness. All weaknesses, all responses to adverse suggestions (I mean the smallest things of every minute in the cells), are taken in the same movement of offering (and these come sometimes in waves, to such an extent that the body feels it will swoon before this assault), and then comes a light, so warm, so deep, so powerful, which puts everything back in order, in its place, and opens the way to transformation.

These periods are very difficult periods of the bodily life; one feels that there is now only one thing which decides, the Supreme Will. There is no longer any support — any support, from the support of habit to the support of knowledge and of will, all the supports have vanished — there is only the Supreme.

(*Silence*)

Aspiration in the cellular consciousness for perfect sincerity of consecration.

And the lived experience — lived intensely — that it is only this absolute sincerity of consecration which allows existence.

The least pretension is an alliance with the forces of dissolution and of death.

Well, it is like a song of the cells — but they must not even have the insincerity of watching themselves do it — the song of the cells: “Thy Will, O Lord, Thy Will.”

And the great habit of depending upon the will of others, the consciousness of others, the reactions of others (of others and of all things), this kind of universal comedy which all play with all and everything plays to everything, ought to be replaced by an absolute, spontaneous sincerity of consecration.

It is evident that this perfection of sincerity is possible only in the most material part of the consciousness.

It is there that one can succeed in being, existing, doing, without watching oneself being, watching oneself existing, watching oneself doing, with an absolute sincerity.

21 April 1951

"[This yoga] cannot be done if you insist on identifying these lowest things of the Ignorance with the divine Truth or even the lesser truth permissible on the way. It cannot be done if you cling to your past self and its old mental, vital and physical formations and habits; one has continually to leave behind his past selves and to see, act and live from an always higher and higher conscious level. It cannot be done if you insist on 'freedom' for your human mind and vital ego. All the parts of the human being are entitled to express and satisfy themselves in their own way at their own risk and peril, if he so chooses, as long as he leads the ordinary life. But to enter into a path of yoga whose whole object is to substitute for these human things the law and power of a greater Truth and the whole heart of whose method is surrender to the Divine Shakti, and yet to go on claiming this so-called freedom, which is no more than a subjection to certain ignorant cosmic Forces, is to indulge in a blind contradiction and to claim the right to lead a double life.

"Least of all can this yoga be done if those who profess to be its sadhaks continue always to make themselves centres, instruments or spokesmen of the forces of the Ignorance which oppose, deny and ridicule its very principle and object."

Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga*, p. 1310

Is it the same thing, the same work, to be conscious that the nature must be changed and to master the different parts of the being?

One precedes the other. First of all one must be conscious, then

control, and by continuing the mastery one changes one's character. Changing the character is what comes last. One must control bad habits, the old habits, for a very long time for them to drop off and the character to change.

We may take the example of someone who has frequent depressions. When things are not exactly as he would like them to be, he becomes depressed. So, to begin with, he must become aware of his depression — not only of the depression but of the causes of depression, why he gets depressed so easily. Then, once he has become conscious, he must master the depressions, must stop being depressed even when the cause of depression is there — he must master his depression, stop it from coming. And finally, after this work has been done for a sufficiently long time, the nature loses the habit of having depressions and no longer reacts in the same way, the nature is changed.

What does being “spokesmen of the forces of the Ignorance” mean?

The forces of the Ignorance in the present world always seek people who can express their ignorance in the world. This is not difficult! There are many people ready to say ignorant things, that is, to deny all spiritual realisation, deny the capacity for progress, deny the possibility of realising another life than this existing one, deny that human nature can be changed, and so on; or if you like, ready to affirm that it is impossible to escape from illness, that it is impossible to escape death, impossible to understand; ready to assert that never will the Light and Knowledge be attained, and so on. Those who say these things are the spokesmen of the Ignorance. Instead of expressing the forces of Light and Knowledge they serve to express the forces of the Ignorance — is it clear?

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Sri Aurobindo says here, “... The aspiration and tapasya needed [are] too constant...”¹

Yes, one cannot do the yoga if one does not take it seriously. For one must be very serious to have a constant aspiration and do tapasya. If one is not serious, for five minutes one has an aspiration and for ten hours one hasn't; for one day there is a great urge and for a month nothing, and so on. Well, one can't do yoga in these conditions. It must be a continuous, constant thing which does not flag. If one forgets or slackens, one cannot do yoga.

Should not one be born with a great aspiration?

No, aspiration is a thing to be developed, educated, like all activities of the being. One may be born with a very slight aspiration and develop it so much that it becomes very great. One may be born with a very small will and develop it and make it strong. It is a ridiculous idea to believe that things come to you like that, through a sort of grace, that if you are not given aspiration, you don't have it — this is not true. It is precisely upon this that Sri Aurobindo has insisted in his letter and in the passage I am going to read to you in a minute. He says you must choose, and the choice is constantly put before you and constantly you must choose, and if you do not choose, well, you will not be able to advance. You must choose; there is no “force like that” which chooses for you, or chance or luck or fate — this is not true. Your will is free, it is deliberately left free and you have to choose. It is you who decide whether to seek the Light or not, whether to be the servitor of the Truth or not — it is you. Or whether to have an aspiration or not, it is you who choose. And even when you are told, “Make your surrender total and the work will be done for you”, it is quite all right, but to make your surrender

¹ *Letters on Yoga*, p. 1310.

total, every day and at every moment you must choose to make your surrender total, otherwise you will not do it, it will not get done by itself. It is you who must want to do it. When it is done, all goes well, when you have the Knowledge also, all goes well, and when you are identified with the Divine, all goes even better, but till then you must will, choose and decide. Don't go to sleep lazily, saying, "Oh! The work will be done for me, I have nothing to do but let myself glide along with the stream." Besides, it is not true, the work is not done by itself, because if the least little thing thwarts your little will, it says, "No, not that!..." Then?

What is "the lesser truth permissible on the way"?

One cannot at the outset, immediately, attain the supreme Truth. There are things on the way which are more true than those you know but which are not *the* Truth, and these things are like discoveries one makes: suddenly one has a kind of illumination, one discovers a law, finds a lever, sees a road opening before one; it is not the supreme Truth, not the supreme experience, it is not what comes when one is identified with the Divine, but it is like something which has fallen from there and entered you, and gives you a partial illumination. These partial illuminations are just what he calls "lesser truths".

What is the true meaning of "tapasya"?

Tapasya is the discipline one imposes upon oneself to arrive at the discovery of the Divine.

Are tapasya and aspiration the same thing?

No, you can't do tapasya without aspiration. Aspiration is first, the will to attain something. Tapasya is the process — there is indeed a process, a method.

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Isn't the lower vital conscious of the work going on in it?

Then, if it is logical and well-meaning, it ought to admit the presence of the Divine. You understand, it is a vicious circle; it does not want the Divine to be there and it denies Him because it is much troubled that there is this discipline which will oblige it to change, to master itself, check its desires, bow its head instead of always protesting, so it says violently, "There is no Divine." But it may very well know, at the same time, that the work has begun and, consequently, have the proof that the Divine is there. But it will deny Him all the same, it is ill-willed, it uses this argument wilfully to avoid making an effort.

What is the difference between the "old habits" and the "old formations" Sri Aurobindo speaks about?

It is almost the same thing. Your body, for instance, has certain reactions to cold, heat, hunger, and you are in the habit of having these reactions, and this habit has made a kind of formation in your physical nature, that is, a crease, a fixed crease of the body, and that's how it is. Formations are the result of habits. Similarly, there are "formations" of character; for instance, if you are in the habit of getting angry when things do not please you, the habit makes a sort of inner crease in your nature, and every time a thing doesn't please you, automatically, without any control, you will get angry. This is what is called a "formation", they are habits which have become like a part of your character.

If one is too serious in yoga, doesn't one become obsessed by the difficulty of the task?

There is a limit to be kept!... But if one chooses one's obsession well, it may be very useful because it is no longer quite an obsession. For example, one has decided to find the Divine within oneself, and constantly, in every circumstance, whatever

happens or whatever one may do, one concentrates in order to enter into contact with the inner Divine. Naturally, first one must have that little thing Sri Aurobindo speaks about, that “lesser truth” which consists in knowing that there is a Divine within one (this is a very good example of the “lesser truth”) and once one is sure of it and has the aspiration to find it, if that aspiration becomes constant and the effort to realise it becomes constant, in the eyes of others it looks like an obsession, but this kind of obsession is not bad. It becomes bad only if one loses one’s balance. But it must be made quite clear that those who lose their balance with that obsession are only those who were quite ready to lose their balance; any circumstance whatever would have produced the same result and made them lose their balance — it is a defect in the mental structure, it is not the fault of the obsession. And naturally, he who changes a desire into an obsession would be sure to go straight towards imbalance. That is why I say it is important to know the object of the obsession.

Someone has said that he who is capable of pushing his fixed idea to the point of madness will see the light.

If you concentrate on any idea with sufficient obstinacy, you will “go through”, as the occultists say, and behind the idea upon which you concentrate, you will find the light. But this is a bit risky.

This means that he who is capable of this kind of concentration will see the light.

Surely. That, surely. If one is capable of this kind of concentration, it is very good, but one must know upon what to concentrate. That is the important point.

How can one know whether the surrender is total or not?

This does not seem to me difficult. One may try out a little exercise. One may say, "Let me see, I surrender to the Divine, I want Him to decide everything in my life." This is your starting point. A little exercise: the Divine is going to decide that such and such a thing happens, precisely something in contradiction with your feeling. Then one tells oneself, "Well, and if the Divine tells me, 'You are going to give that up'" — you will see quite easily, immediately, what the reaction is; if it causes a little prick like this, inside, you may tell yourself, "The surrender is not perfect" — it pricks, it pricks....

"On one side there is the supramental realisation, the overshadowing and descending power of the supramental Divine, the light and force of a far greater Truth than any yet realised on the earth, something therefore beyond what the little human mind and its logic regard as the only permanent realities, something whose nature and way and process of development here it cannot conceive or perceive by its own inadequate instruments or judge by its puerile standards; in spite of all opposition this is pressing down for manifestation in the physical consciousness and the material life. On the other side is this lower vital nature with all its pretentious arrogance, ignorance, obscurity, dullness or incompetent turbulence, standing for its own prolongation, standing against the descent, refusing to believe in any real reality or real possibility of a supramental or superhuman consciousness and creation, or, still more absurd, demanding, if it exists at all, that it should conform to its own little standards, seizing greedily upon everything that seems to disprove it, denying the presence of the Divine, — for it knows that without that presence the work is impossible, — affirming loudly its own thoughts, judgments, desires, instincts, and, if these are contradicted, avenging itself by casting abroad doubt, denial, disparaging criticism,

revolt and disorder. These are the two things now in presence between which every one will have to choose.

“For this opposition, this sterile obstruction and blockade against the descent of the divine Truth cannot last for ever. Every one must come down finally on one side or the other, on the side of the Truth or against it. The supramental realisation cannot coexist with the persistence of the lower Ignorance; it is incompatible with continued satisfaction in a double nature.”

Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga*, pp. 1310-11

If the lower nature is completely ignorant, how can it “choose”?

It is not absolutely ignorant. Things are not so absolute; it can feel there is something lacking. All depends upon that. Naturally, those who are quite satisfied with themselves as they are—it is not worth the trouble trying to change them, because they don't want it. But in fact, even in the lower nature, it is possible to have a kind of feeling that things could be better. For example, take someone whose health is bad or who is weak, who has desires but is too weak to fulfil them, who has ambitions but no capacity; such a person will perhaps tell himself, “Oh! If I were better than I am, if I knew a little more, if I were a little stronger, if I understood a little what ought to be done...” Or suppose, for instance, in ordinary life, someone who needs to earn his living and must choose a job, and the job offered is not to his liking; he is caught in this dilemma: not to have anything to eat or to accept this unpleasant situation; he finds himself facing this problem and says, “What should I do?” He does not know, does not understand; but even in his stupidity he will have a sort of impression that it would be better if he could see a little more clearly, could know a little better, could have some elements of foresight. Then this awakens a slight aspiration for progress—it is the beginning of a choice. Someone has said that

if there were no ticks to bite the dogs, they would always be in a state of inertia, stretched out on the ground, motionless. Now, these trouble them, they begin to scratch, they move, and this awakens them a little from their tamas. For men, it is the same thing. When they have a small desire which they cannot satisfy, they are a little shaken up: they come out of their inertia and try to find a solution to their problem. It is like that. There is no absolute unconsciousness — there is no absolute ignorance, no absolute night. Behind all unconsciousness, behind all ignorance, behind the night, there is always the supreme Light which is everywhere. The least little thing suffices for a beginning of contact to be established.

At the beginning of this letter Sri Aurobindo writes that he has “no intention of giving his sanction to a new edition of the old fiasco.”² Does the word “fiasco” refer to something particular or general?

It refers to all the Teachers who have come to the world. One has said, “I bring Love”, another “I bring Peace”, another “I bring Liberation”, and then, there has been a little change within, something has awakened in the depths of men’s consciousness, but externally everything has remained just the same. It is this which makes it a fiasco.

Don’t the inner realisation and experiences help in the outer change?

Not necessarily. They help only if one wants it; otherwise, on the contrary, one detaches oneself more and more from the outer nature. This is what happens to all those who seek *mukti*, liberation; they reject their outer nature with its character and habits as something altogether contemptible with which one

² *Letters on Yoga*, p. 1306.

should not busy oneself; they withdraw all their energies, all forces of consciousness towards the heights, and if they do it with sufficient perfection, generally they leave their body once for all. But in the immense majority of instances, they do it only partially and, when they come out of their meditation, their contemplation, their trance or their *samadhi*, they are generally worse than others because they have left their outer nature aside without working on it at all. Even ordinary people, when their defects are a little too glaring, try to correct them or control them a little so as not to have too much trouble in life, while these people who think that the right attitude is to leave one's body and one's outer consciousness completely and withdraw entirely to the "spiritual heights", treat that like an old coat one throws aside and does not mend — and when one takes it back it is full of holes and stains.

That does not help. It helps only if one has the sincere will to change; if one sincerely has the will to change, it is a powerful help because it gives you the force to make the change, the fulcrum to make the change. But one must sincerely want to change.

23 April 1951

Mother reads Sri Aurobindo's "The Divine Superman" (Cent. Vol. 17, p. 74).

"Thou must reach thy own summit," says Sri Aurobindo. Is the summit the same for everybody or does each one have his particular summit?

In the last analysis, it is always the same summit — the divine oneness which is behind all things — but everyone will reach his own summit, that is, through his own nature and own way of manifesting the divine unity. This is what we were saying the other day: each one represents a special way of having a relation with the Divine and manifesting the Divine. You don't need to follow another's path! You must follow your own path and it is by this path that you will reach the summit, which is one, but found by your own route. The goal is beyond the summits — the goal is one and beyond the summits — but one may attain this summit each by his own road, climbing his own mountain, not the mountain of another.

"Imagine not the way is easy; the way is long, arduous, dangerous, difficult. At every step is an ambush, at every turn a pitfall. A thousand seen or unseen enemies will start up against thee, terrible in subtlety against thy ignorance, formidable in power against thy weakness. And when with pain thou hast destroyed them, other thousands will surge up to take their place."

Sri Aurobindo, "The Way", Cent. Vol. 17, p. 39

This is to give you courage, courage to act. You must be vigilant and must keep your will, whatever happens. If you put the two things end to end, you have the complete thing.

How can one remain conscious in the midst of unconsciousness?

One must be vigilant.

And when asleep?

One can remain conscious in sleep, we have already explained that! One must work.

Then one doesn't sleep!

Not at all, one sleeps much better, one has a quiet sleep instead of a restless one. Most people do so many things in their sleep that they wake up more tired than before. We have already spoken about this once. Naturally, if you keep yourself from sleeping, you won't sleep. I always tell those who complain of not being able to sleep, "Meditate then and you will end up by sleeping." It is better to fall asleep while concentrating than "like that", scattered and strewn without knowing even where one is.

To sleep well one must learn how to sleep.

If one is physically very tired, it is better not to go to sleep immediately, otherwise one falls into the inconscient. If one is very tired, one must stretch out on the bed, relax, loosen all the nerves one after another until one becomes like a rumpled cloth in one's bed, as though one had neither bones nor muscles. When one has done that, the same thing must be done in the mind. Relax, do not concentrate on any idea or try to solve a problem or ruminate on impressions, sensations or emotions you had during the day. All that must be allowed to drop off quietly: one gives oneself up, one is indeed like a rag. When you have succeeded in doing this, there is always a little flame, there — that flame never goes out and you become conscious of it when you have managed this relaxation. And all of a sudden this little flame rises slowly into an aspiration for the divine life,

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the truth, the consciousness of the Divine, the union with the inner being, it goes higher and higher, it rises, rises, like that, very gently. Then everything gathers there, and if at that moment you fall asleep, you have the best sleep you could possibly have. I guarantee that if you do this carefully, you are sure to sleep, and also sure that instead of falling into a dark hole you will sleep in light, and when you get up in the morning you will be fresh, fit, content, happy and full of energy for the day.

When one is conscious in sleep, does the brain sleep or not?

When does the brain ever sleep? When does it sleep? This is of all things the most difficult. If you succeed in making your brain sleep, it would be wonderful. How it runs on! It is rambling. It is this I meant when I spoke of relaxation in the brain. If you do it really well, your brain enters a silent restfulness and that is wonderful; when you attain that, five minutes of that and you are quite fresh afterwards, you can solve a heap of problems.

If the brain is always working, why don't we remember what has happened during the night?

Because you have not caught the consciousness at its work. And perhaps because if you remembered what was going on in your brain, you would be horrified! It is really like a madhouse, all these ideas which clash, all dancing a saraband in the head! It is as if one were throwing balls in all directions at once. So, if you saw that, you would be a bit troubled.

Sri Aurobindo writes here: "...Few and brief in their visits are the Bright Ones who are willing or permitted to succour."¹ Why?

¹ "The Way", Cent. Vol. 17, p. 40.

One must go and ask them! But there is a conclusion, the last sentences give a very clear explanation. It is said: "Nay, then, is immortality a plaything to be given lightly to a child, or the divine life a prize without effort or the crown for a weakling?"² This comes back to the question why the adverse forces have the right to interfere, to harass you. But this is precisely the test necessary for your sincerity. If the way were very easy, everybody would start on the way, and if one could reach the goal without any obstacle and without any effort, everybody would reach the goal, and when one has come to the end, the situation would be the same as when one started, there would be no change. That is, the new world would be exactly what the old has been. It is truly not worth the trouble! Evidently a process of elimination is necessary so that only what is capable of manifesting the new life remains. This is the reason and there is no other, this is the best of reasons. And, you see, it is a tempering, it is the ordeal of fire, only that which can stand it remains absolutely pure; when everything has burnt down, there remains only the little ingot of pure gold. And it is like that. What puts things out very much in all this is the religious idea of fault, sin, redemption. But there is no arbitrary decision! On the contrary, for each one it is the best and most favourable conditions which are given. We were saying the other day that it is only his friends whom God treats with severity; you thought it was a joke, but it is true. It is only to those who are full of hope, who will pass through this purifying flame, that the conditions for attaining the maximum result are given. And the human mind is made in such a way that you may test this; when something extremely unpleasant happens to you, you may tell yourself, "Well, this proves I am worth the trouble of being given this difficulty, this proves there is something in me which can resist the difficulty", and you will notice that instead of tormenting yourself, you rejoice — you will be so happy and so strong that even the most unpleasant things will seem to

² *Ibid.*

you quite charming! This is a very easy experiment to make. Whatever the circumstance, if your mind is accustomed to look at it as something favourable, it will no longer be unpleasant for you. This is quite well known; as long as the mind refuses to accept a thing, struggles against it, tries to obstruct it, there are torments, difficulties, storms, inner struggles and all suffering. But the minute the mind says, "Good, this is what has to come, it is thus that it must happen", whatever happens, you are content. There are people who have acquired such control of their mind over their body that they feel nothing; I told you this the other day about certain mystics: if they think the suffering inflicted upon them is going to help them cross the stages in a moment and give them a sort of stepping-stone to attain the Realisation, the goal they have put before them, union with the Divine, they no longer feel the suffering at all. Their body is as it were galvanised by the mental conception. This has happened very often, it is a very common experience among those who truly have enthusiasm. And after all, if one must for some reason or other leave one's body and take a new one, is it not better to make of one's death something magnificent, joyful, enthusiastic, than to make it a disgusting defeat? Those who cling on, who try by every possible means to delay the end even by a minute or two, who give you an example of frightful anguish, show that they are not conscious of their soul.... After all, it is perhaps a means, isn't it? One can change this accident into a means; if one is conscious one can make a beautiful thing of it, a very beautiful thing, as of everything. And note, those who do not fear it, who are not anxious, who can die without any sordidness are those who never think about it, who are not haunted all the time by this "horror" facing them which they must escape and which they try to push as far away from them as they can. These, when the occasion comes, can lift their head, smile and say, "Here I am."

It is they who have the will to make the best possible use of their life, it is they who say, "I shall remain here as long as it is

necessary, to the last second, and I shall not lose one moment to realise my goal"; these, when the necessity comes, put up the best show. Why? — It is very simple, because they live in their ideal, the truth of their ideal; because that is the real thing for them, the very reason of their being, and in all things they can see this ideal, this reason of existence, and never do they come down into the sordidness of material life.

So, the conclusion:

One must never wish for death.

One must never will to die.

One must never be afraid to die.

And in all circumstances one must will to exceed oneself.

26 April 1951

“... Reject too the false and indolent expectation that the divine Power will do even the surrender for you. The Supreme demands your surrender to her, but does not impose it: you are free at every moment, till the irrevocable transformation comes, to deny and to reject the Divine or to recall your self-giving, if you are willing to suffer the spiritual consequence.”

Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 4

What does an “irrevocable transformation” mean?

The transformation is irrevocable when your consciousness is transformed in such a way that you can no longer go back to your old condition. There is a moment when the change is so complete that it is impossible to become once again what one was before.

Doesn’t transformation itself imply that it is irrevocable?

The transformation may be partial. The transformation Sri Aurobindo speaks about here is a reversal of consciousness: instead of being egoistical and turned towards personal satisfactions, the consciousness is turned towards the Divine in surrender. And he has explained clearly that the surrender could be partial at first—there are parts which surrender and parts which don’t. So it is only when the entire being, integrally, in all its movements, has made its surrender, that it is irrevocable. It is an irrevocable transformation of attitude.

What is the difference between the divine Shakti and the divine Power?

The divine Power is only a part of the divine Shakti; the divine Power is an attribute of the divine Shakti. Sri Aurobindo uses the word divine Shakti, here, in the sense of *chit-tapas*, the creative power, the creative consciousness; consequently, the divine Power is only a part of the Shakti.

“An inert passivity is constantly confused with the real surrender, but out of an inert passivity nothing true and powerful can come. It is the inert passivity of physical Nature that leaves it at the mercy of every obscure or undivine influence. A glad and strong and helpful submission is demanded to the working of the Divine Force....”

Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, pp. 4-5

What is “a glad and strong and helpful submission”?

Do you know what it means to be glad? Do you know what it means to be strong? Do you know what it means to be helpful? Well, the surrender, that is, the self-giving to the Divine, must be happy, joyful, made gladly; it must be strong, one must not give oneself through weakness and impotence but with an active and strong will. And then the surrender must not remain absolutely indolent: “I have made my surrender, I have nothing more to do in life, I have only to remain still, my surrender is made.” And it must be helpful, that is, it must be active — it must undertake the transformation of the being or do some useful work.

“Your surrender must be the surrender of a living being, not of an inert automaton or mechanical tool.”

Ibid., p. 4

You may speak, for instance, of the surrender of your watch: you wind it up and it runs, but this is not a response of conscious collaboration.

“The transformation must be integral, and integral therefore the rejection of all that withstands it.”

Ibid.

That is well understood. It is not enough to have a positive movement, there must also be the negative movement of rejection. For you cannot attain a stable transformation as long as you harbour in your being elements which oppose it. If you keep obscurities within you, they may for a time remain silent and immobile, so well that you attach no importance to them, and one day they will wake up again and your transformation won't be able to resist them. Not only is the positive movement of self-giving necessary but also the negative movement of rejection of everything in you that opposes this giving. You must not leave things “like that”, buried somewhere, in such a way that at the first opportunity they wake up and undo all your work. There are parts of the being which know very well how to do this, there are elements of the vital which are extraordinary from this point of view: they keep quiet, hide in a corner, remain so absolutely silent and motionless that you think they don't exist; so you are no longer on your guard, you are satisfied with your transformation and your surrender, you think everything is going well, and then, suddenly, one fine day, without warning, the thing jumps up like a jack-in-the-box and makes you commit all the stupidities in the world. And it is the stronger for having remained repressed—repressed and closed tight in a corner—it has remained as though buried so as not to draw your attention, it has kept very, very quiet, and the moment you are not expecting it, it springs up and you tell yourself, “Oh! What was the good of all my transformation?” That thing was there, and so it happened. It is just like that, these things remain there and hide themselves so well, that if you do not go looking for them with a well-lit lantern, you will not know they are there till the day they come out and demolish all your work in one minute.

Does this happen even if one has a great aspiration?

The aspiration must be very vigilant.

I have known people (many, not only a few, I mean among those who do yoga), I have known many who, every time they had a fine aspiration, and their aspiration was very strong and they received an answer to this aspiration, every time, the very same day or at the latest the next day, they had a complete setback of consciousness and were facing the exact opposite of their aspiration. Such things happen almost constantly. Well, these people have developed only the positive side. They make a kind of discipline of aspiration, they ask for help, they try to come into contact with higher forces, they succeed in this, they have experiences; but they have completely neglected cleaning their room; it has remained as dirty as ever, and so, naturally, when the experience has gone, this dirt becomes still more repulsive than before.

One must never neglect to clean one's room, it is very important; inner cleanliness is at least as important as outer cleanliness.

Vivekananda has written (I don't know the original, I have only read the French translation): "One must every morning clean one's soul and one's body, but if you don't have time for both, it is better to clean the soul than clean the body."

How can one know whether the little dirty things have hidden themselves or have gone?

One can always try little experiments. I have said that one must use a torch, a strong light; then one must take a round within one's being. If one is very attentive, one can very easily find these ugly corners. Suppose you have a beautiful experience, that suddenly in answer to your aspiration a great light comes; you feel all flooded with joy, force, light, beauty, and have the impression that you are on the point of being transfigured... and then, it

passes away — it always passes away, doesn't it? especially at the beginning — suddenly, it stops. Then you tell yourself, when you are not vigilant, "There, it came and it has gone! Poor me! It came and has gone, it just gave me a taste of the thing and then let me fall." Well, that's foolish. What you should tell yourself is, "Look, I was not able to keep it, and why was I not able to keep it?" So, you take your torch and go on a round within yourself trying to find a very close relation between the change of consciousness and the movements accompanying the cessation of the experience. And if you are very, very attentive, and make your round very scrupulously, you will find that suddenly some part of the vital or some part of the mind or of the body, something has not kept up, in this sense that mentally, instead of being immobile and attentive, something has begun to ask, "Wait a minute, what is this experience? What does it mean?", begun to try to find an explanation (what it calls an "understanding"). Or maybe in the vital something has begun to enjoy the experience: "How pleasant it is, how I would like it to grow, how good if it were constant, how..." Or something in the physical has said, "Oh! It is a bit hard to endure that, how long am I going to be able to keep it?" It is perhaps not as obvious as all this, but it is a wee bit hidden like this, somewhere. You will always find one of these three things or others analogous. Then, it is there the lantern is needed: where is the weak point? where is the egoism? where is the desire? where is that old dirt we do not want any longer? where is that thing which turns back upon itself instead of giving itself, opening itself, losing itself? which turns back upon itself, tries to take advantage of what has happened, wants to appropriate to itself the fruit of the experience? Or rather which is too weak, too hard, too rigid to be able to follow the movement?... It is that, you are now on the track, you begin precisely to put the light you have just acquired upon it; it is that you must do, focus the light upon it, turn it in such a way that the thing cannot resist it.

You won't be able to succeed the very first day but you must do it persistently and little by little or perhaps suddenly one day it will vanish. Then you will find out after a time that you are another person.

But if you take the attitude I have already spoken about and throw the blame upon the Grace and the Light, if you say to yourself, "There, it has gone and left me in the lurch", you may be sure that even thirty, forty, fifty years hence you will be still at the same place, you will not have changed. There will always be something which will rise suddenly and eat up your experience. And then, instead of progressing, you will be stuck there marking time because you cannot advance. But if, immediately, you take the opportunity.... Note, sometimes it hurts a little; if you go and brutally put the light upon the thing which wants to enjoy the experience or wants to get knowledge or control the experience by a mental understanding or is too lazy to make the necessary effort to receive the experience and bear it or to change quickly enough, if you put the will with the light of consciousness upon this thing, with firmness, it may hurt just a little. And you say, "Oh! Not so fast! I need rest, I tired myself uselessly." Then everything has to be begun all over again. Sometimes days, even months, sometimes years will pass without its coming back. Sometimes, if you are a little more active and intense in your aspiration, it will return sooner. But if you commit the same stupidity again, the same thing will happen — while if, immediately, you are very vigilant and when the mind starts nosing around to understand what is happening you tell it, "Silence, keep quiet", then the experience can continue. When the vital begins to say, "I want lots and lots, more and more", you say, "Quiet, quiet, don't move, calm yourself, don't get excited." Or when the physical being, "Oh! I shall be crushed...." — "A little endurance, if you please; you are a coward, you don't know how to stand the test." If you manage to do this in time, with the necessary calmness, with the necessary determination and will, you will arrive at something. But if you are like that, passive,

indolent, fatalistic, and tell yourself, “Now I have surrendered myself, what will happen will happen, we shall see what is going to happen, that’s all”, then, you understand, I give you fifty years not to change by half a step.

In the last lesson I told you it was not so easy.... If you want to do it, you must do it properly, otherwise it is not worth the trouble; it is useless to do things by halves, one must do them well.

Of course, there are other roads. One may simply not try to perfect oneself. One may try to forget oneself in an ever more absorbing work, that is, do what one does as a consecration to the Divine, altogether disinterestedly, but with a plenitude, a self-giving, a total self-forgetfulness: no longer thinking about oneself but about what one is doing. You know this, I have already told you this: if you want to do something well, whatever it may be, any kind of work, the least thing, play a game, write a book, do painting or music or run a race, anything at all, if you want to do it well, you must *become* what you are doing and not remain a small person looking at himself doing it; for if one looks at oneself acting, one is... one is still in complicity with the ego. If, in oneself, one succeeds in becoming what one does, it is a great progress. In the least little details, one must learn this. Take a very amusing instance: you want to fill a bottle from another bottle; you concentrate (you may try it as a discipline, as a gymnastic); well, as long as you are the bottle to be filled, the bottle from which one pours, and the movement of pouring, as long as you are only this, all goes well. But if unfortunately you think at a given moment: “Ah! It is getting on well, I am managing well”, the next moment it spills over! It is the same for everything, for everything. That is why work is a good means of discipline, for if you want to do the work properly, you must *become* the work instead of being someone who works, otherwise you will never do it well. If you remain “someone who works” and, besides, if your thoughts go vagabonding, then you may be sure that if you are

handling fragile things they will break, if you are cooking, you will burn something, or if you are playing a game, you will miss all the balls! It is here, in this, that work is a great discipline. For if truly you want to do it well, this is the only way of doing it.

Take someone who is writing a book, for instance. If he looks at himself writing the book, you can't imagine how dull the book will become; it smells immediately of the small human personality which is there and it loses all its value. When a painter paints a picture, if he observes himself painting the picture, the picture will never be good, it will always be a kind of projection of the painter's personality; it will be without life, without force, without beauty. But if, all of a sudden, he becomes the thing he wants to express, if he becomes the brushes, the painting, the canvas, the subject, the image, the colours, the value, the whole thing, and is entirely inside it and lives it, he will make something magnificent.

For everything, everything, it is the same. There is nothing which cannot be a yogic discipline if one does it properly. And if it is not done properly, even tapasya will be of no use and will lead you nowhere. For it is the same thing, if you do your tapasya, all the time observing yourself doing it and telling yourself, "Am I making any progress, is this going to be better, am I going to succeed?", then it is your ego, you know, which becomes more and more enormous and occupies the whole place, and there is no room for anything else. And we said the other day that the spiritual ego is the worst of all, for it is altogether unconscious of its inferiority, it is convinced it is something very superior, if not absolutely divine!

There we are. When you are at school, you must become the concentration which tries to catch what the teacher is saying, or the thought which enters you or the knowledge you are given. That is what you must be. You must not think of yourself but only of what you want to learn. And you will see that your capacities will immediately be doubled.

Questions and Answers

What gives most the feeling of inferiority, of limitation, smallness, impotence, is always this turning back upon oneself, this shutting oneself up in the bounds of a microscopic ego. One must widen oneself, open the doors. And the best way is to be able to concentrate upon what one is doing instead of concentrating upon oneself.

28 April 1951

“But so long as the lower nature is active the personal effort of the Sadhaka remains necessary.”

Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 6

Outwardly, one believes in one's own personality and one's own effort. So long as you believe in personal effort, you must make a personal effort.

There is one part of the being which is not at all conscious of being a part of the Divine. The whole of the outer being is convinced that it is something separate, independent and related only to itself. This part of the being must necessarily make a personal effort. It can't be told, “The Divine does the sadhana for you”, for it would never do anything, it would never be changed. When one speaks with somebody, one should use his language,¹ shouldn't one?

What is “physical tamas”?

You don't know that, you don't? Then, congratulations! For instance, does it never happen to you that being seated you don't want to get up, that having something to do you say, “Oh! I have to do all that!”?

Is it the same thing as laziness?

Not quite. Of course, laziness is a kind of tamas, but in laziness

¹ At the time of publication of this talk, Mother made the following remark: “This is not true. This is not true for it is too categorical. One must not use the language of the outer being, for its language is altogether false, but things must be said in a form in which it can understand them — that is different. But to say things exactly takes a very long time; that is why Sri Aurobindo always used long sentences and what appeared to be long explanations. These are not explanations: they are meant for saying the thing with precision.”

there is an ill-will, a refusal to make an effort — while tamas is inertia: one wants to do something, but one can't.

I remember, a long time ago, having been among some young people, and they remarked that when I decided to get up I used to get up with a jump, without any difficulty. They asked me, "How do you do it? We, when we want to get up, have to make an effort of will to be able to do it." They were so surprised! And I was surprised by the opposite. I used to tell myself, "How does it happen? When one has decided to get up, one gets up." No, the body was there, like that, and it was necessary to put a will into it, to push this body for it to get up and act. It is like that, this is tamas. Tamas is a purely material thing; it is very rare to have a vital or mental tamas (it may occur but through contagion), I believe it is more a tamas of the nerves or the brain than vital or mental tamas. But laziness is everywhere, in the physical, the vital, the mind. Generally lazy people are not always lazy, not in all things. If you propose something that pleases them, amuses them, they are quite ready to make an effort. There is much ill-will in laziness.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of "the will to open and make plastic the physical consciousness and nature".²

Because the physical consciousness and nature are closed up and rigid—they are shut up in their habits, they don't want to change them, they accept only one regular routine. There is nothing more routine-bound than the body. If you change its habits in the least, it is quite bewildered, it doesn't know any longer what to do, it says, "Excuse me, excuse me! but that's not how one goes about living."

Those whose vital being is very active and dominating may succeed in awakening the body, and if they have the spirit of

² Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 7.

adventure (which happens very often, for the vital is an adventurous being), the physical obeys, it obeys the impulse, the inner order; then it consents to the change, the novelty, but it is an effort for it. But for the physical being and physical consciousness to be ready to receive the divine impulsion, they must be extremely plastic, because the vital uses coercion, it imposes its will, and the poor body has but to obey, while the Divine just shows the light, gives the consciousness, and so one must obey consciously and willingly—it is a question of collaboration, it is no longer a question of coercion. The physical being and physical consciousness must be very plastic to be able to lend themselves to all the necessary changes, so as to be of one kind one day and another the next, and so on.

Sri Aurobindo speaks here of the “stability of Light, Power, Ananda”.³ But isn’t power always dynamic?

Well, there is a static power. How to explain it to you? Look, there is the same difference between static power and dynamic power as between a game of defence and a game of attack; you understand? It is the same thing. Static power is something which can withstand everything, nothing can act upon it, nothing can touch it, nothing can shake it—it is immobile, but it is invincible. Dynamic power is something in action, which at times goes forth and may at times receive blows. That is to say, if you want your dynamic power to be always victorious, it must be supported by a considerable static power, an unshakable base.

I know what you want to say... that a human being becomes aware of power only when it is dynamic; a human being doesn’t consider it a power except when it acts; if it doesn’t act he does not even notice it, he does not realise the tremendous force which is behind this inaction—at times, even frequently, a force more formidable than the power which acts. But you

³ *Ibid.*

may try it out in yourself, you will see, it is much more difficult to remain calm, immobile, unshakable before something very unpleasant — whether it be words or acts levelled against you — infinitely more difficult than to answer with the same violence. Suppose someone insults you; if in the face of these insults, you can remain immobile (not only outwardly, I mean integrally), without being shaken or touched in any way: you are there like a force against which one can do nothing and you do not reply, you do not make a gesture, you do not say a word, all the insults thrown at you leave you absolutely untouched, within and without; you can keep your heart-beats absolutely quiet, you can keep the thoughts in your head quite immobile and calm without their being in the least disturbed, that is, your head does not answer immediately by similar vibrations and your nerves don't feel clenched with the need to return a few blows to relieve themselves; if you can be like that, you have a static power, and it is infinitely more powerful than if you had that kind of force which makes you answer insult by insult, blow by blow and agitation by agitation.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of “the rejection of ... stupidity, doubt, disbelief”.⁴ If one rejects stupidity does one become intelligent?

Do you mean whether one can get rid of stupidity? Yes, there is a way. It is not easy, but there is a way. I have known people who were extremely stupid, truly stupid; well, these people succeeded through aspiration — an aspiration which was not formulated, had not even the power to express itself in words — succeeded in coming into contact with their psychic being. It was not a constant contact, it was momentary, at times very fugitive. But while they were in contact with their psychic being, they became remarkably intelligent, they said wonderful things. I knew a girl

⁴ Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 7.

who had no education, nothing, truly stupid; people said, "There is nothing to be done about it, it is not possible." Well, when she was in contact with her psychic being, she understood the profoundest things and made astounding remarks. But when the contact stopped she became stupid once again. It was not something permanent, it was only the contact that took away her stupidity. So, it is a difficult cure, that is, one must establish the contact with one's psychic being and keep it always.

There is a Muslim legend like that about Christ. You know the story: Christ healed the sick, made the lame walk, the blind see and even raised the dead. Seeing all these miracles, someone went up to Christ and said, "Oh! I have a very interesting case to put before you.... Yes, I have a son who is stupid." Christ opened his eyes wide and ran away! It seems that was the only thing he could not do! This is a joke, of course, and the thing is difficult, but it is possible.

"The Divine ... is behind all action but he is veiled by his Yoga Maya...."⁵

Yes, he is veiled by the consciousness of material Nature. There is the consciousness in its origin which does not veil the Divine but expresses him. There is the consciousness in its outer form which veils him. Some say this is willed, that it is to allow the game to be played; that the Divine hides himself behind material Nature to compel all conscious beings to find Him. That is an opinion... people say many things.

One of the great difficulties for most philosophies is that they have never recognised or studied the different planes of existence, the different regions of the being. They have the Supreme and then the Creation and then that's all, nothing between the two. This makes explanations very difficult.... All explanations, in the last analysis, are simply languages — there are languages

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

which make understanding easier and others which make it more difficult. And some of these theories make the understanding of things very difficult — while if you recognise and study and become aware of the different intermediary states between the most material Nature and the Supreme Origin, if you recognise and become conscious of all the intermediary regions, of all the inner states of being and all the outer regions, that can explain many problems. We have already studied this in connection with determinisms. If you say that the determinism is absolute and remain there, you understand nothing; it is quite obvious that all the events of life contradict this idea; or else the problem is so complicated that you can't get hold of it. But if you understand that there are a large number of determinisms acting upon each other, interpenetrating, changing the action of one determinism by the action of another, then the problem becomes comprehensible. It is the same thing for explaining the action of the Divine in the universe. If you take a central creative Force or a central creative Consciousness or a central immobile Witness, and then the universe, only that, nothing between the two, you cannot understand. There are people who have used this in such a naive way! They have made a Creator God and then his creatures. So all the problems come up. He has made the world, with what? Some tell you it is from the dust, but what is it, this dust? What was it doing before it was used to make a world?... Or from nothing! A universe was created out of nothing — that is foolish! It is very awkward for a logical mind. And over and above all that, you are told that He did this consciously, deliberately, and when he had finished he exclaimed, "Look, it is very good." Then, those who are in the universe reply, "We don't find it so good. It is perhaps very good for you but not for us." These are naive conceptions. They are simply ignorant and naive conceptions which make the problem of the universe absolutely incomprehensible. And all these explanations are inadmissible for a mind which is ever so slightly awakened. That is why you are told, "Don't try to understand, you will never understand."

But that is mental laziness, it is the mind's bad will. You see, one feels within oneself that, because one has this kind of power of thought-activity, this aspiration to find a light, a solution, it must correspond to something, otherwise... otherwise, truly (I think I have written this somewhere), if the universe were reduced to that simple notion, well, it would be the most sinister of farces and I should very well understand those who have declared, "Run away, get out of it as fast as possible." Unfortunately, I don't see how they would be able to get out of it, for there is nothing else — how can you get out of something which alone exists? So, one enters a vicious circle, one turns round and round and this leads quite naturally to mental despair. But when one has the key — there are one or two keys, but there is one which opens all the doors — when one has the key, one follows one's road and little by little understands *the Thing*.

What is the difference between consciousness and physical Nature?

Tell me, is your body absolutely conscious, conscious of itself, conscious of its functioning? No, then what is it? It can only be physical Nature. And if there is a physical Nature which is not conscious, it means that physical Nature and consciousness are not the same thing. Physical Nature includes everything that is physical: your body belongs to physical Nature, mountains, stones, the sky, water, fire... all this belongs to physical Nature. But your physical Nature contains a consciousness, it is animated by a consciousness, though it is not entirely conscious. And precisely because it is not entirely conscious, it can be inert, tamasic, "unconscious". Otherwise all would be conscious, stones also would be conscious (I don't know how far they are so, but it is to a very small extent compared with human consciousness).

Does not surrender consist in offering one's work like a good servant?

Work is a good discipline. But it is not this idea, it is not the idea of a passive, unconscious and almost involuntary submission. It is not that. It does not lie only in work.

The most important surrender is the surrender of your character, your way of being, so that it may change. If you do not surrender your very own nature, never will this nature change. It is this that is most important. You have certain ways of understanding, certain ways of reacting, certain ways of feeling, almost certain ways of progressing, and above all, a special way of looking at life and expecting from it certain things—well, it is this you must surrender. That is, if you truly want to receive the divine Light and transform yourself, it is your whole way of being you must offer—offer by opening it, making it as receptive as possible so that the divine Consciousness which sees how you ought to be, may act directly and change all these movements into movements more true, more in keeping with your own truth. This is infinitely more important than surrendering what one does. It is not what one does (what one does is very important, that's evident) that is the most important thing but what one *is*. Whatever the activity, it is not quite the way of doing it but the state of consciousness in which it is done that is important. You may work, do disinterested work without any idea of personal profit, work for the joy of working, but if you are not at the same time ready to leave this work, to change the work or change the way of working, if you cling to your own way of working, your surrender is not complete. You must come to a point when everything is done because you feel within, very clearly, in a more and more imperious way, that it is this which must be done and in this particular way, and that you do it only because of that. You do not do it because of any habit, attachment or preference, nor even any conception, even a preference for the idea that it is the best thing to do—else your surrender is not total. As long as you cling to something, as long as there is something in you which says, “This may change, that may change, but *that*, that will not change”, as long as you say

about anything at all, "That will not change" (not that it refuses to change, but because you can't think of its changing), your surrender is not complete.

It goes without saying that if in your action, your work, you have in the least this feeling, "I am doing it because I have been told to do it", and there is not a total adherence of the being, and you do not do the work because you feel it must be done and you love doing it; if something holds back, stands apart, separate, "I was told it had to be done like that so I did it like that", it means there is a great gulf between you and surrender. True surrender is to feel that one wants, one has, this complete inner adherence: you cannot do *but that*, that which you have been given to do, and what you have not been given to do you cannot do. But at another moment the work may change; at any moment it may be something else, if it is decided that it be something else. It is there that plasticity comes in. That makes a very great difference. It is well understood that those who work are told, "Yes, work, that is your way of surrendering", but it is a beginning. This way has to be progressive. It is only a beginning, do you understand?

3 May 1951

“Money is the visible sign of a universal force, and this force in its manifestation on earth works on the vital and physical planes and is indispensable to the fullness of the outer life. In its origin and its true action it belongs to the Divine. But like other powers of the Divine it is delegated here and in the ignorance of the lower Nature can be usurped for the uses of the ego or held by Asuric influences and perverted to their purpose. This is indeed one of the three forces—power, wealth, sex—that have the strongest attraction for the human ego and the Asura and are most generally misheld and misused by those who retain them.... For this reason most spiritual disciplines ... proclaim poverty and bareness of life as the only spiritual condition. But this is an error; it leaves the power in the hands of the hostile forces. To reconquer it for the Divine to whom it belongs and use it divinely for the divine life is the supramental way for the sadhaka.”

Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, pp. 11-12

How can one know if one’s way of using money is in accordance with the divine Will?

One must first know what the divine Will is. But there is a surer way—to surrender money for the divine work, if one is not sure oneself. “Divinely” means at the service of the Divine—it means not to use money for one’s own satisfaction but to place it at the Divine’s service.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of “a weak bondage to the habits that the possession of riches creates”.

Ibid., p. 14

When you are rich and have a lot of money to spend, generally you spend it on things you find pleasant, and you become habituated to these things, attached to these things, and if one day the money is gone, you miss it, you are unhappy, you are miserable and feel all lost because you no longer have what you were in the habit of having. It is a bondage, a weak attachment. He who is quite detached, when he lives in the midst of these things, it is well with him; when these things are gone, it is well also; he is totally indifferent to both. That is the right attitude: when it is there he uses it, when it is not he does without it. And for his inner consciousness this makes no difference. That surprises you, but it is like that.

If one has the power to acquire a lot of money, does this mean that one has a certain control over terrestrial forces?

This depends upon how one acquires it. If you get it by foul ways, that does not mean that you have a control. But if someone, scrupulously doing his duty, sees that money comes to him, it is evidently because he exercises a control over these forces. There are people who have the power of attracting money and they haven't the least need to practise dishonesty to get it. Others, even to get a few pennies, must make all sorts of contrivances, more or less clean. So one cannot say.... We see a rich man and think he must be exercising a control over the forces of money — no, not necessarily. But if a man remains perfectly honest and does what he thinks is his duty without caring to acquire money, and yet money comes to him, evidently he has a certain affinity with those forces.

It is said, “One cannot make a heap without making a hole”, one cannot enrich oneself without impoverishing someone else. Is this true?

This is not correct. If one produces something, instead of an impoverishment it is an enrichment; simply one puts into circulation in the world something else having a value equivalent to that of money. But to say that one cannot make a heap without making a hole is all right for those who speculate, who do business on the Stock Exchange or in finance — there it is true. It is impossible to have a financial success in affairs of pure speculation without its being detrimental to another. But it is limited to this. Otherwise a producer does not make a hole if he heaps up money in exchange for what he produces. Surely there is the question of the value of the production, but if the production is truly an acquisition for the general human wealth, it does not make a hole, it increases this wealth. And in another way, not only in the material field, the same thing holds for art, for literature or science, for any production at all.

When I was doing business (export-import), I always had the feeling of robbing my neighbour.

This is living at the expense of others, because one multiplies the middlemen. Naturally, it is perhaps convenient, practical, but from the general point of view, and above all in the way it is practised, it is living at the expense of the producer and the consumers. One becomes an agent, not at all with the idea of rendering service (because there is not one in a million who has this idea), but because it is an easy way of earning money without making any effort. But of course, among the ways of making money without any effort, there are others much worse than that! They are countless.

*Friends from outside have often asked me this question:
“When one is compelled to earn his living, should one just conform to the common code of honesty or should one be still more strict?”*

This depends upon the attitude your friend has taken in life. If he wants to be a sadhak, it is indispensable that rules of ordinary morality do not have any value for him. Now, if he is an ordinary man living the ordinary life, it is a purely practical question, isn't it? He must conform to the laws of the country in which he lives to avoid all trouble! But all these things which in ordinary life have a very relative value and can be looked upon with a certain indulgence, change totally the minute one decides to do yoga and enter the divine life. Then, all values change completely; what is honest in ordinary life, is no longer at all honest for you. Besides, there is such a reversal of values that one can no longer use the same ordinary language. If one wants to consecrate oneself to the divine life, one must do it truly, that is, give oneself entirely, no longer do anything for one's own interest, depend exclusively upon the divine Power to which one abandons oneself. Everything changes completely, doesn't it? — everything, everything, it is a reversal. What I have just read from this book applies solely to those who want to do yoga; for others it has no meaning, it is a language which makes no sense, but for those who want to do yoga it is imperative. It is always the same thing in all that we have recently read: one must be careful not to have one foot on one side and the other foot on the other, not to stand in two different boats each following its own course. This is what Sri Aurobindo said: one must not lead a "double life". One must give up one thing or the other — one can't follow both.

This does not mean, however, that one is obliged to get out of the conditions of one's life: it is the inner attitude which must be totally changed. One may do what one is in the habit of doing, but do it with quite a different attitude. I don't say it is necessary to give up everything in life and go away into solitude, to an ashram necessarily, to do yoga. Now, it is true that if one does yoga in the world and in worldly circumstances, it is more difficult, but it is also more complete. Because, every minute one must face problems which do not present themselves

to someone who has left everything and gone into solitude; for such a one these problems are reduced to a minimum — while in life one meets all sorts of difficulties, beginning with the incomprehension of those around you with whom you have to deal; one must be ready for that, be armed with patience, and a great indifference. But in yoga one should no longer care for what people think or say; it is an absolutely indispensable starting-point. You must be absolutely immune to what the world may say or think of you and to the way it treats you. People's understanding must be something quite immaterial to you and should not even slightly touch you. That is why it is generally much more difficult to remain in one's usual surroundings and do yoga than to leave everything and go into solitude; it is much more difficult, but we are not here to do easy things — easy things we leave to those who do not think of transformation.

If someone has acquired a lot of money by dishonest means, could some of it be asked for the Divine?

Sri Aurobindo has answered this question. He says that money in itself is an impersonal force: the way in which you acquire money concerns you alone personally. It may do you great harm, it may harm others also, but it does not in any way change the nature of the money which is an altogether impersonal force: money has no colour, no taste, no psychological consciousness. It is a force. It is like saying that the air breathed out by a scoundrel is more tainted than that breathed out by an honest man — I don't think so. I think the result is the same. One may for reasons of a practical nature refuse money which has been stolen, but that is for altogether practical reasons, it is not because of divine reasons. This is a purely human idea. One may from a practical point of view say, "Ah! No, the way in which you have acquired this money is disgusting and so I don't want to offer it to the Divine", because one has a human consciousness. But if you take someone (let us suppose the worst) who has killed and acquired

money by the murder; if all of a sudden he is seized by terrible scruples and remorse and tells himself, "I have only one thing to do with this money, give it where it can be utilised for the best, in the most impersonal way", it seems to me that this movement is preferable to utilising it for one's own satisfaction. I said that the reasons which could prevent one from receiving ill-gotten money may be reasons of a purely practical kind, but there may also be more profound reasons, of a (I do not want to say moral but) spiritual nature, from the point of view of tapasya; one may tell somebody, "No, you cannot truly acquire merit with this fortune which you have obtained in such a terrible way; what you can do is to restore it", one may feel that a restitution, for instance, will help one to make more progress than simply passing the money on to any work whatever. One may see things in this way—one can't make rules. This is what I never stop telling you: it is impossible to make a rule. In every case it is different. But you must not think that the money is affected; money as a terrestrial force is not affected by the way in which it is obtained, that can in no way affect it. Money remains the same, your note remains the same, your piece of gold remains the same, and as it carries its force, its force remains there. It harms only the person who has done wrong, that is evident. Then the question remains: in what state of mind and for what reasons does your dishonest man want to pass on his money to a work he considers divine? Is it as a measure of safety, through prudence or to lay his heart at rest? Evidently this is not a very good motive and it cannot be encouraged, but if he feels a kind of repentance and regret for what he has done and the feeling that there is but one thing to do and that is precisely to deprive himself of what he has wrongly acquired and utilise it for the general good as much as possible, then there is nothing to say against that. One cannot decide in a general way—it depends upon the instance. Only, if I understand well what you mean, if one knows that a man has acquired money by the most unspeakable means, obviously, it would not be good to go and *ask* him for money

for some divine work, because that would be like “redeeming” his way of gaining money. One cannot ask, that is not possible. If, spontaneously, for some reason, he gives it, there is no reason to refuse it. But it is quite impossible to go and ask him for it, because it is as though one legitimised his manner of acquiring money. That makes a great difference.

And generally, in these cases, those who go and ask money from rascals use means of intimidation: they frighten them, not physically but about their future life, about what may happen to them, they give them a fright. It is not very nice. These are procedures one ought not to use.

Besides money, what are the other divine powers “delegated” here on earth?

All. All the divine powers are manifested here and deformed here—light, life, love, force—all—harmony, ananda—all, all, there is nothing which is not divine in its origin and which does not exist here under a completely distorted, travestied form. The other day we had spoken at length about the way in which divine Love is deformed in its manifestation here, it is the same thing.

How can money be reconquered for the Mother?

Ah!... There is a hint here. Three things are interdependent (Sri Aurobindo says here): power, money and sex. I believe the three are interdependent and that all three have to be conquered to be sure of having any one—when you want to conquer one you must have the other two. Unless one has mastered these three things, desire for power, desire for money and desire for sex, one cannot truly possess any of them firmly and surely. What gives so great an importance to money in the world as it is today is not so much money itself, for apart from a few fools who heap up money and are happy because they can heap it up and count

it, generally money is desired and acquired for the satisfactions it brings. And this is almost reciprocal: each of these three things not only has its own value in the world of desires, but leans upon the other two. I have related to you that vision, that big black serpent which kept watch over the riches of the world, terrestrial wealth — he demanded the mastery of the sex-impulse. Because, according to certain theories, the very need of power has its end in this satisfaction, and if one mastered that, if one abolished that from human consciousness, much of the need for power and desire for money would disappear automatically. Evidently, these are the three great obstacles in the terrestrial human life and, unless they are conquered, there is scarcely a chance for humanity to change.

Does an individual mastery over desire suffice or is a general, collective mastery necessary?

Ah! There we are.... Is it possible to attain a total personal transformation without there being at least a correspondence in the collectivity?... This does not seem possible to me. There is such an interdependence between the individual and the collectivity that, unless one does what the ascetics have preached, that is, escapes from the world, goes out of it completely, leaves it where it is and runs away selfishly leaving all the work to others, unless one does that.... And even so I have my doubts. Is it possible to accomplish a total transformation of one's being so long as the collectivity has not reached at least a certain degree of transformation? I don't think so. Human nature remains what it is — one can attain a great change of consciousness, that yes, one can purify one's consciousness, but the total conquest, the material transformation depends definitely to a large extent, on a certain degree of progress in the collectivity. Buddha said with reason that as long as you have in you a vibration of desire, this vibration will spread in the world and all those who are ready to receive it will receive it. In the same way, if you have in you the

least receptivity to a vibration of desire, you will be open to all the vibrations of desire which circulate constantly in the world. And that is why he concluded: Get out of this illusion, withdraw entirely and you will be free. I find this relatively very selfish, but after all, that was the only way he had foreseen. There is another: to identify oneself so well with the divine Power as to be able to act constantly and consciously upon all vibrations circulating through the world. Then the undesirable vibrations no longer have any effect upon you, but you have an effect upon them, that is, instead of an undesirable vibration entering into you without being perceived and doing its work there, it is perceived and immediately on its arrival you act upon it to transform it, and it goes back into the world transformed, to do its beneficent work and prepare others for the same realisation. This is exactly what Sri Aurobindo proposes to do and, more clearly, what he asks you to do, what he intends us to do:

Instead of running away, to bring into oneself the power which can conquer.

Note that things are arranged in such a way that if the tiniest atom of ambition remained and one wanted this Power for one's personal satisfaction, one could never have it, that Power would never come. Its deformed limitations, of the kind seen in the vital and physical world, those yes, one may have them, and there are many people who have them, but the true Power, the Power Sri Aurobindo calls "supramental", unless one is absolutely free from all egoism under all its forms, one will never be able to manifest. So there is no danger of its being misused. It will not manifest except through a being who has attained the perfection of a complete inner detachment. I have told you, this is what Sri Aurobindo expects us to do — you may tell me it is difficult, but I repeat that we are not here to do easy things, we are here to do difficult ones.

5 May 1951

“If you want to be a true doer of divine works, your first aim must be to be totally free from all desire and self-regarding ego.”

Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 15

Sometimes we go to the bazaar to buy our things. Is that good?

One cannot make general rules. This depends on the spirit in which you make your purchases. It is said that you should have no desires — if this is not a desire, it is all right. You understand, there is no movement, no action which in itself is good or bad; it depends absolutely on the spirit in which it is done. If, for instance, you are in a state of total indifference about what you have and what you do not have (it is a condition a little difficult to realise, but after all, one can attain it — a state of detachment: “If I have it, I have it; if I don’t, I don’t”), there comes a moment when, if your state is quite sincere and you really need something (it must not be a fancy or a desire or a caprice but a true need), automatically the thing comes to you. Since I have been here — it is a long time, isn’t it? — I have known people who have never asked me for anything; I don’t even think (naturally there are always weaknesses in human nature), but I don’t even think they have had a violent desire for anything at all, but when it was a need, automatically it came to them. Suddenly the idea would come to me, “Ah! This must be given to so-and-so”, and if it was not directly through me, in some way, quite unexpectedly, the thing came to them. On the other hand, if one is preoccupied with one’s needs (I don’t want even to speak of desires, for that is quite another thing), but if one is preoccupied with one’s needs, if one thinks of them, tells oneself, “Truly I must have this”,

it is not often that it comes to you; so you are obliged to do something to satisfy yourself and, if you have the means, to go and buy the thing. Now there are people who always take their desires for their needs, that... we do not speak of these, they form the great majority. They are convinced that without this or that one cannot live: "It is impossible, one can't live without that.... I shall fall ill or something very unpleasant will happen to me or I shall not be able to do my work. It is impossible, if I don't have this I can't do my work." So, the first step for these people is to try a small experiment (if they are sincere): "Well, I won't have this thing and we are going to see what happens." This is a very interesting experiment. And I can guarantee that 999 times out of a thousand, after a few days one asks oneself, "But why the devil did I think I had such a great need of this thing, I can do without it very well!" There you are. And like this, little by little, one makes progress.

It is a question of training — educating oneself. The sooner one begins, the easier it is. When one begins very young, it becomes very easy, for one gets accustomed to one's inner reactions and so can act with wisdom and discernment — whereas for those who are accustomed from their childhood to take all their desires for needs or necessities, and have rushed into them with passionate zeal, the road is much more difficult, because first they must acquire discernment and distinguish a desire from what it is not; and sometimes this is very difficult, it is so mixed up that it can hardly be perceived.

But after all, I believe one doesn't need much. Once, I remember, four of us had gone on a walking tour across the mountains of France. We had started from one town and had to reach another. It was about an eight or ten days' journey across the mountain. Naturally, each of us carried a bag slung across our back, for one needs a few things. But then, before starting we had a little discussion to find out what things we really needed, what was quite indispensable. And always we came to this: "Let us see, that thing we can manage in this way" and everything

was reduced to so little.... I knew a Danish painter who used to say, "Do you know, when I travel, I need only one thing, a tooth-brush." But somebody replied, "But no, if you don't have a brush, you can rub with your finger!"

Before undertaking any action one tries to know whether the impulse comes from the Mother or not, but generally one doesn't have enough discernment to know it and yet one acts. Can one know from the result of the action whether it came from the Mother or not?

One does not have the discernment because one does not care to have it! Listen, I don't think there is a single instance in which one does not find within oneself something very clear, but you must sincerely want to know—we always come back to the same thing—you must sincerely want it. The first condition is not to begin thinking about the subject and building all sorts of ideas: opposing ideas, possibilities, and entering into a formidable mental activity. First of all, you must put the problem as though you were putting it to someone else, then keep silent, remain like that, immobile. And then, after a little while you will see that at least three different things may happen, sometimes more. Take the case of an intellectual, one who acts in accordance with the indications of his head. He has put the problem and he waits. Well, if he is indeed attentive, he will notice that there is (the chronological order is not absolute, it may come in a different order) at first (what is most prominent in an intellectual) a certain idea: "If I do that in this way, it will be all right; it must be like that", that is to say, a mental construction. A second thing which is a kind of impulse: "That will have to be done. That is good, it must be done." Then a third which does not make any noise at all, does not try to impose itself on the others, but has the tranquillity of a certitude—not very active, not giving a shock, not pushing to action, but something that knows and is very quiet, very still. This will

not contradict the others, will not come and say, “No, that’s wrong”; it says simply, “See, it is like this”, that’s all, and then it does not insist. The majority of men are not silent enough or attentive enough to be aware of it, for it makes no noise. But I assure you it is there in everybody and if one is truly sincere and succeeds in being truly quiet, one will become aware of it. The thinking part begins to argue, “But after all, this thing will have this consequence and that thing will have that consequence, and if one does this...” and this, and that... and its noise begins again. The other (the vital) will say, “Yes, it *must* be done like that, it *must* be done, you don’t understand, it *must*, it is indispensable.” There! Then you will know. And according to your nature you will choose either the vital impulse or the mental leading, but very seldom do you say quite calmly, “Good, it is this I am going to do, whatever happens”, and even if you don’t like it very much. But it is always there. I am sure that it is there even in the murderer before he kills, you understand, but his outer being makes such a lot of noise that it never even occurs to him to listen. But it is always there, always there. In every circumstance, there is in the depth of every being, just this little (one can’t call it “voice”, for it makes no sound) this little indication of the divine Grace, and sometimes to obey it requires a tremendous effort, for all the rest of the being opposes it violently, one part with the conviction that what it thinks is true, another with all the power, the strength of its desire. But don’t tell me that one can’t know, for that is not true. One can know. But one does not always know what is necessary, and sometimes, if one knows what is to be done, well, one finds some excuse or other for not doing it. One tells oneself, “Oh! I am not so sure, after all, of this inner indication; it does not assert itself with sufficient force for me to trust it.” But if you were quite indifferent, that is, if you had no desire, either mental or vital or physical desire, you would know with certainty that it is that which must be done and nothing else. What comes and gets in the way is preference—preferences and desires. Every day one may have hundreds and

hundreds of examples. When people begin to say, "Truly I don't know what to do", it always means that they have a preference. But as here in the Ashram they know there is something else and as at times they have been a little attentive, they have a vague sensation that it is not quite that: "It is not quite that, I don't feel quite at ease." Besides, you were saying a while ago that it is the result which gives you the indication; it has even been said (it has been written in books) that one judges the divine Will by the results! All that succeeds has been willed by the Divine; all that doesn't, well, He has not willed it! This is yet again one of those stupidities big as a mountain. It is a mental simplification of the problem, which is quite comic. That's not it. If one can have an indication (in proportion to one's sincerity), it is uneasiness, a little uneasiness — not a great uneasiness, just a little uneasiness.

Here, you know, you have another means, quite simple (I don't know why you do not use it, because it is quite elementary); you imagine I am in front of you and then ask yourself, "Would I do this before Mother, without difficulty, without any effort, without something holding me back?" That will never deceive you. If you are sincere you will know immediately. That would stop many people on the verge of folly.

It sometimes happens that when one is playing one does not remember the Divine, then suddenly one remembers and has the feeling that something breaks and one no longer plays well. Why?

Because everything is upset. That's the problem! So you think that when you are playing and do not remember, you play well! No, it is not quite that. It is that you do something with a certain concentration — work or play — and you are concentrated, but you have not developed the habit of mixing the remembrance of the Divine with the concentration (which is not difficult, but anyway, you do not have the habit) and then, suddenly the remembrance comes; then two things may happen: either the

concentration is broken because you make an abrupt movement to seize the new attitude entering the consciousness, or else you feel a little remorse, a regret, a disquiet: "Oh! I did not remember"; that suffices, it upsets all you have done. For you change conditions completely. It is not the fact of remembering which makes you no longer play well, it is the fact of having disturbed your concentration. If you could remember without disturbing the concentration (which is not difficult), you would not only play well but would play better.

And then, you may also take another attitude. When you are playing and suddenly become aware that something is going wrong — you are making mistakes, are inattentive, sometimes opposing currents come across what you are doing — if you develop the habit, automatically at this moment, of calling as by a mantra, of repeating a word, that has an extraordinary effect. You choose your mantra; or rather, one day it comes to you spontaneously in a moment of difficulty. At a time when things are very difficult, when you have a sort of anguish, anxiety, when you don't know what is going to happen, suddenly this springs up in you, the word springs up in you. For each one it may be different. But if you mark this and each time you face a difficulty you repeat it, it becomes irresistible. For instance, if you feel you are about to fall ill, if you feel you are doing badly what you are doing, if you feel something evil is going to attack you, then.... But it must be a spontaneity in the being, it must spring up from you without your needing to think about it: you choose your mantra because it is a spontaneous expression of your aspiration; it may be one word, two or three words, a sentence, that depends on each one, but it must be a sound which awakens in you a certain condition. Then, when you have that, I assure you that you can pass through everything without difficulty. Even in the face of a real, veritable danger, an attack, for instance, by someone who wants to kill you, if, without getting excited, without being perturbed, you quietly repeat your mantra, one can do nothing to you. Naturally, you must

truly be master of yourself; one part of the being must not be trembling there like a leaf; no, you must do it entirely, sincerely, then it is all-powerful. The best is when the word comes to you spontaneously: you call in a moment of great difficulty (mental, vital, physical, emotional, whatever it may be) and suddenly that springs up in you, two or three words, like magical words. You must remember these and form the habit of repeating them in moments when difficulties come. If you form the habit, one day it will come to you spontaneously: when the difficulty comes, at the same time the mantra will come. Then you will see that the results are wonderful. But it must not be an artificial thing or something you arbitrarily decide: "I shall use those words"; nor should somebody else tell you, "Oh! You know, this is very good" — it is perhaps very good for him but not for everyone.

"Your only object in action shall be to serve, to receive, to fulfil, to become a manifesting instrument of the Divine Shakti in her works."

Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 15

When you act your only object is to serve, that is, instead of acting for your personal good, you act with the feeling of serving, of receiving the Divine Force, not from outside (you must not at all believe in that) but from within you, of opening yourself to the Divine Force which will use you for its action, and of fulfilling what that Force wants you to fulfil. There is no place there for egoism. It is not a matter of giving one thing and receiving another in exchange, it is not that; it is not a question of receiving from outside.

There are disciplines which make it a rule (we don't like rules, for they are always arbitrary and artificial) that one should receive absolutely nothing from anybody except the Divine or the Guru who represents the Divine. Some people would not receive even a fruit from anybody because it does not come from the Guru. That is an exaggeration — this depends on

circumstances, on conditions, and it also depends very much on the attitude one takes oneself, it depends on many things, it would take very long to explain—but there is one thing you must learn, never to rely on anyone or anything whatever except the Divine. For if you lean upon anyone for support, that support will break, you may be sure of that. From the minute you start doing yoga (I always speak of those who do yoga, I do not speak about ordinary life), for those who do yoga, to depend upon someone else is like wanting to transform that person into a representative of the Divine Force; now you may be sure there is not one in a hundred millions who can carry the weight: he will break immediately. So never take the attitude of hoping for support, help, comfort from anyone except the Divine. That is absolute; I have never, not once, met anyone who tried to cling to something to find a support there (someone doing yoga or who has been put into touch with yoga) and who was not deceived—it breaks, it stops, one loses one's support. Then one says, "Life is difficult"—it is not difficult but one must know what one is doing. Never seek a support elsewhere than in the Divine. Never seek satisfaction elsewhere than in the Divine. Never seek the satisfaction of your needs in anyone else except the Divine—never, for anything at all. All your needs can be satisfied only by the Divine. All your weaknesses can be borne and healed only by the Divine. He alone is capable of giving you what you need in everything, always, and if you try to find any satisfaction or support or help or joy or... heaven knows what, in anyone else, you will always fall on your nose one day, and that always hurts, sometimes even hurts very much.

7 May 1951

Mother reads the first part of Chapter 6 of *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo.

What is a “hierarchy”?

It is a grouping organised in order of merit. For instance, you have a chief at the centre and you may have four persons around him, and around these four, 8, then 12, 24, 36, 48, 124, and so on, each with his special mission, his special work, his particular authority, and all referring in an ascending order to the centre. That is a hierarchy. In governments they try to form hierarchies, but these are untrue, they are arbitrary and not worth anything. But in all ancient initiations there were hierarchies which were expressions of individual merit — individual powers and merits — having always at their centre the representative of the Supreme and the Shakti; sometimes having only the Supreme, depending on the religions. But the groups were always organised in that way, that is, with a growing number of individuals, each one having to refer to the officer immediately above him. For instance, the 124 had to refer to the 48, the 48 had to refer to the 24, the 24 refer to the 12, the 12 to the 8, and so on. That is a hierarchy. The word is used in a very imprecise and vague way. They speak of a hierarchy and think it is the men who govern and have subordinates. But the true hierarchy is an occult hierarchy, and this occult hierarchy had as its purpose the manifesting, the expressing of a more profound hierarchy which is a hierarchy of the invisible worlds.

What is the “transcendent Mother”?

Don't you know that there are three principles: the transcendent, the universal and the individual or personal? No? — the

transcendent which is above creation, at the origin of creation; the universal which is the creation, and the individual which is self-explanatory. There is a transcendent Divine, a universal Divine and an individual Divine. That is, one may put oneself in contact with the divine Consciousness within oneself, in the universe and, beyond all forms, in the transcendent. So these three aspects are also the three aspects of the divine Mother: transcendent, universal and individual.... Do you know the flower I have called “Transformation”?¹ Yes. You know it has four petals. Well, these four petals are arranged like a cross: one at the top which represents the transcendent; two on each side, the universal; and one at the bottom, the individual.

The petal at the top is divided into two.

Exactly, the transcendent is one and two (or dual) at the same time. This flower is almost perfect in its form. This was the original meaning of the cross also, but that was not as perfect as the flower, for it was one, two, and three. It was not so good — the flower is perfect.

The divine Mother is the divine Shakti, that is, the creative Force. She is identified with the cosmos. How can she have a transcendent aspect?

But perhaps the divine Mother was there before the creation! She must certainly have existed before the creation, for she cannot be her own product. If it is she who has created, she must have existed before the creation, otherwise she could never have created.

She existed in the Supreme, then, before the creation?

“In” the Supreme.... It is a little difficult to speak of “within”

¹ The flower of the cork-oak of India (*millingtonia hortensis*).

and “without” when one is outside all forms! If you like, say that she is a movement of the Supreme (if that makes you understand better) or an action of the Supreme or a state of the Supreme, a mode... You may say what you like, what most gives you an understanding of the thing. You see, the human mind likes to cut things into little bits.... I am going to tell you a little story meant for children. The Supreme, having decided to create a universe, took a certain inner attitude which corresponded with the inner manifestation (unexpressed) of the divine Mother, the supreme Shakti. At the same time, he did this with the intention that it may be the mode of creation of the universe he wanted to create, the creative power of the universe. Hence, first of all, he had to conceive the possibility of the divine Mother in order that this divine Mother could conceive the possibility of the universe. You are following? I tell you once again that it is not quite like that, but after all, it is meant for childish minds. So, we may very well say that there is a transcendent Divine Mother, that is, independent of her creation. She may have been conceived, formed (whatever you like) for the creation, with the purpose of creation, but she had to exist before the creation to be able to create, else how could she have created? That is the transcendent aspect, and note that this transcendent aspect is permanent. We speak as though things had unfolded in time at a date which could be fixed: the first of January 0000, for the beginning of the world, but it is not quite like that! There is constantly a transcendent, constantly a universal, constantly an individual, and the transcendent, universal and individual are co-existent. That is, if you enter into a certain state of consciousness, you can at any moment be in contact with the transcendent Shakti, and you can also, with another movement, be in contact with the universal Shakti, and be in contact with the individual Shakti, and all this simultaneously — that does not unfold itself in time, it is we who move in time as we speak, otherwise we cannot express ourselves. We may experience it but we can express it only by saying one word after another. (Unfortunately, one

cannot say all the words at the same time; if one could say them all at the same time, that would be a little more like the truth.)

Finally, all that is said, all that has been said, all that will be said, is always only an extremely clumsy and limited way of expressing something which may be lived but which cannot be described. And there is a moment, when one lives the thing, in which one sees that the same thing can be expressed almost with the same exactness or the same truth in religious language, mystical language, philosophic language and materialistic language and that from the point of view of the lived truth, it makes very little difference. It is only when one is in the mental consciousness that one thing seems true to you and another does not seem true; but all these are only ways of expression. The experience carries in itself its absolute, but words cannot describe it — one may choose one language or another to express oneself, and with just a very little precaution, one can always say something approaching the Truth in all instances.

I am telling you this not to throw you into confusion but simply to let you understand that there is a considerable difference between the truth of experience and the way of expressing it, whatever it may be, even the best.

11 May 1951

Mother reads the passage about Mahakali (pp. 28-30) from *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo.

Are the stories told about the image of Mahakali true?

What stories? Hundreds of stories are told, my child. Which stories are you speaking of? Which Mahakali? The images made of her, the statues? This is the human way of seeing things. She is not like that.

I believe I have already told you once that there are the original beings in their higher reality and these are of a particular kind; then, as they manifest in more and more material regions, nearer and nearer the earth, they assume different forms and also multiply in a strange way. If you like, the beings Sri Aurobindo speaks of here belong to regions quite close to the Supermind, they are still in quite a clear and conscious contact with the supramental origin. These beings manifest also in what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind and there the form becomes as it were more marked, a little more precise and at the same time reduced in power and capacity. Then, from the Overmind they come down into the human mind, the terrestrial mind and there... Take for instance this poor Mahakali; you have a multitude of Kalis, one more horrible than another; some are absolutely terrifying and horrifying, and they sometimes become quite repulsive beings who are exclusively human formations, that is, the outer form is given by human imagination, by the human mind's capacity of formation. There may be within that a vague reflection of the force of Mahakali, but it is so diminished, deformed, dwarfed, brought within the range of human consciousness, that truly she can very well deny that it is she! I have seen all possible horrors by way of images representing

Mahakali. Of the images we won't speak. If great artists have made them perhaps some beauty is still left, but as they are generally daubers, nothing remains. As for the images (statues or pictures) which have to be installed in a temple, a religious ceremony is performed, and if the priest or the assistant is a man with occult powers, even limited ones, he can, with his aspiration and through the ritual, bring a supraterrestrial consciousness into these forms. That is the principle; you are told, "This is not a piece of wood, this is not a stone, this is not a picture; there is within it a force which the religious ritual has brought down and to this you may speak." This is right, but the nature of the priest must be known, his occult knowledge and also the forces with which he has an affinity. So, there may be many things in there.... There is "something" (unless it is a stupid ignoramus who has performed the ceremony, one who has no power at all, has brought down nothing, made only a show — but this is rather rare; I can't say it happens frequently, it is quite rare), generally there is something, but then the nature, the quality of this something, you know... this varies infinitely and it is sometimes a little disturbing. I gave the example of Mahakali, because the conception of Mahakali in the human consciousness is especially horrible. When one goes to other divinities like Mahasaraswati, for instance, to whom all kinds of artistic, literary and other capacities are ascribed, it is no longer so terrible. But Mahakali particularly... Their conception of power, force, warlike energy is so terrible that what they bring down is indeed a little dangerous for those who worship it. I have heard innumerable stories since my coming to India. I have been put in touch with innumerable images and have known many people who had in their homes a Kali they worshipped and to whom, sometimes, quite dreadful things had happened. I always put them on their guard, I told them, "Don't think at all that Mahakali is responsible for your misfortunes, for she is not responsible for them. But it is likely that the Kali you have in your home must be harbouring some vindictive being, probably one very jealous, extremely wilful and

with a very strong spirit of vengeance, and as you have faith and as it is generally a vital power, there may be truly dangerous consequences." I have known people who, after having had all kinds of unfortunate experiences, have taken the statue of Mahakali and thrown it into the Ganges. If at the same time they could acquire a certain freedom of spirit, all the damage would disappear, but some of them are so frightened of what they have done that the bad effects continue.

These things should never be touched unless one has at least the first elements of occult knowledge. Unfortunately, in religions — all religions, not only here but everywhere — knowledge is never given to the faithful. Sometimes the priests have it (I don't say always), but when they have it they take good care not to give it to the faithful, for that would deprive them of their authority and power, and that really is the evil behind all religious institutions.

Anyway, this is a digression. Let us come back to our subject. In the earth atmosphere there is indeed a Kali who deals with earthly things and is somewhat, one cannot say independent, yet not quite the expression of Mahakali; but she is altogether obedient to her and has her major qualities. They are diminished in power and efficacy, but they exist, and the beauty of her nature is there. Perhaps some of you have had relations with that Mahakali. She does not avenge herself, she never does harm to those who love her, she does not strike with epidemics the countries which do not show her sufficient respect and consideration. But she likes violence, she likes war and her justice is crushing.

Now, another question.

What is the difference between an Avatar and a Vibhuti?

We said the other day that "Vibhutis" are aspects, qualities (what are called in occultism emanations) of a being. They are like certain forces, powers, qualities, attributes which are put in contact with an outer form — a physical form, for instance

— and which manifest themselves through this form. This may be a human form. The Avatar (at least when understood in the true sense) is the incarnation upon earth of the supreme Truth. Now, many meanings are given to this word. There is even a word *avatar* in French which has a very special meaning! It is said that an adventurer has many *avatars*, that is, he changes his appearance, personality, occupation.... But originally (as it is said in the Gita, for example) when the Supreme decides to manifest himself upon earth for a particular reason and takes an earthly body, it is said that he is an Avatar. He may take many successive bodies according to the needs and circumstances, but it is always what could be called the “central being” which takes an earthly body. That is what is called an Avatar. I thought you knew that. Sri Aurobindo has explained this in many places.

“Imperial Maheshwari is seated in the wideness above the thinking mind and will....”¹ Is there a plane of will, as there is a mental plane, a vital plane, etc.?

I have explained that to you in connection with Sachchidananda. Sachchidananda exists at the very origin of the worlds, but there is a Sachchidananda behind all the other states of being. You could make a diagram (though that does not explain much, it is quite an erroneous idea, but it makes things more easily understandable), you arrange the states of being according to a scale. Then, you have the earth below and the Supreme above (it is not at all like that, I hasten to tell you! But anyway, it is easy to understand), you put the earth at the bottom and the Supreme at the top, and you divide that into lots of little parts each of which represents a state of being; that makes a kind of ladder. And then, you have as though behind it, behind your ladder, something which supports it, against which it leans. It

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 26.

is not a wall but it is something which supports your ladder. And that is precisely the first principle of the universal form. In Hindu terminology it is called "Sachchidananda". It is there, everything leans upon that; without that nothing could exist. It is that which upholds and allows existence. Then, if you enter a certain state of consciousness and find yourself, for instance, in the higher mind (for generally it is more easily there that this happens; you have started from the physical and climbed slowly, rung by rung, as far as the higher mind), but instead of continuing your ascent on the ladder you enter into a kind of interiorisation and try to go out of the form, you pass into a kind of silence outside the form. You pass in between the bars of your ladder and enter straight into Sachchidananda which supports everything from behind. And then you can have mentally the experience of Sachchidananda. I have known people who had it and thought they had reached the heights of the Supreme. For there is a similarity in the experience, a very great likeness, only it is limited to the mind, the mind alone participates in it. Well, for the will it is the same thing. Instead of being the support of the ladder it is a kind of force, a very powerful current which passes through all these states, starting from above—it is the supreme Will—and coming down into the physical manifestation. Hence, if you get into affinity with this vibration or this force, you can enter "the state of will"; that is, whatever state of being you may find yourself in—physical, vital, mental, etc.—if you enter a certain state of consciousness and force, you come into contact with this power of will: it penetrates into you and you can use it for any purpose. If your reception is free from all egoism, if you are pure, completely surrendered and accept only what comes from the Divine, and if you don't mix anything with it, egoism or desires or limitations... well, it is a state a bit difficult to attain, but if you attain it, you receive this force of will in its original state, pure (for it comes down pure, it is only in its reception that it gets deformed), then, instead of being your will

it becomes an expression of the divine Will. And this happens *without your leaving the physical body*—you can receive the force of the divine Will without leaving the physical. Only, you see, you must not change it and deform it, spoil it in the receiving. When you feel within you a kind of indomitable energy to realise something, when you tell yourself, “I shall do this whatever the cost, I shall go to the end and shall use all *my will*” (for you always say *my will*), well, you cannot be in that state unless you have come into contact with this current of will-force. Only, with your little personal reaction, naturally you deform it and use it all wrongly, and then you come into conflict with other elements. But if you are truly a yogi, you receive the current and nothing can stop the *élan* of your action, even physically.

There are other things like that, other states, other forces, there are many of these. Fundamentally, if one studies very attentively, one perceives that there is nothing in the individual being which is not the expression or the deformation or diminution, reduction and lessening of something which has its origin in the Supreme and is of a universal nature. So, you see, all these ideas of “pulling”, “calling”, are not quite right. Essentially, the only thing one should do is to prepare oneself, make oneself worthy of this contact and, when one has had it, not deform it. And this excludes nobody. Even a very small child can, at certain moments in his life, come into touch with one of these great universal forces of divine origin, and use it for its childish needs. Unfortunately, there are added to it so many limitations, so much egoism, ignorance, stupidity, that it is often completely disfigured. It cannot be recognised, it is unrecognisable. But the origin of the force is the same, and that is why when one attains a certain state of consciousness, one perceives that if these forces were not there, one would be nothing, would not exist. And instead of saying with the usual self-complacency, “I do this, I do not do that, I have decided that, I want that thing, I shall succeed...”, all this goes away from you in such a way that you

can never again think like that; it seems to you so ridiculous — so ridiculous. As soon as the little "I" comes in, that means a deformation, a limitation, a degradation. In fact, all that you do not value comes with your "I" — you remove the "I" and all that disappears at the same time.

12 May 1951

“Harmony and beauty of the mind and soul, harmony and beauty of the thoughts and feelings, harmony and beauty in every outward act and movement, harmony and beauty of the life and surroundings, this is the demand of Mahalakshmi.... Where love and beauty are not or are reluctant to be born, she does not come.”

Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 31

When the surroundings, circumstances, atmosphere, the way of living and above all the inner attitude are altogether of a low kind, vulgar, gross, egoistic, sordid, love is reluctant to come, that is, it always hesitates to manifest itself and generally does not stay long. A home of beauty must be given for Beauty to stay. I am not speaking of external things — a real house, real furniture and all that — I am speaking of an inner attitude, of something within which is beautiful, noble, harmonious, unselfish. There Love has a chance to come and stay. But when, as soon as it tries to manifest, it is immediately mixed with such low and ugly things, it does not remain, it goes away. This is what Sri Aurobindo says: it is “reluctant to be born” — it could be said that it immediately regrets being born. Men always complain that love does not stay with them but it is entirely their fault. They give this love such a sordid life, mixed with a heap of horrors and such vulgarity, things so base, so selfish, so dirty, that the poor thing cannot stay. If they don't succeed in killing it altogether, they make it utterly sick. So the only thing it can do is to take flight. People always complain that love is impermanent and passing. To tell the truth, they should be very grateful that it manifested in them in spite of the sordidness of the house they gave it.

“Mahasaraswati is the Mother's Power of Work and her

spirit of perfection and order. The youngest of the Four, she is the most skilful in executive faculty and the nearest to physical Nature.... Always she holds in her nature and can give to those whom she has chosen the intimate and precise knowledge, the subtlety and patience, the accuracy of intuitive mind and conscious hand and discerning eye of the perfect worker.”

Ibid., p. 33

In the order of manifestation, she was the last. And in her special nature, in the quality of her vibration, she is very close to... even a little child. She likes young people, children, things in the making, which have a long way before them to be transformed and perfected. She likes the activities of the young. She is the youngest in nature and the last to manifest.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of a “conscious hand”; what does that mean?

What! I have told you this I don't know how many times, I have explained it hundreds of times and you still ask this question? I have told you that no matter what you want to do, the first thing is to put consciousness in the cells of your hand. If you want to play, if you want to work, if you want to do anything at all with your hand, unless you push consciousness into the cells of your hand you will never do anything good — how many times have I told you that? And this is felt. You feel it. You can acquire it. All sorts of exercises may be done to make the hand conscious and there comes a moment when it becomes so conscious that you can leave it to do things; it does them by itself without your little mind having to intervene.

Sri Aurobindo says here about Mahalakshmi: “All that is poor... repels her advent”?

Ibid., p. 31

Questions and Answers

Yes, poor, without generosity, without ardour, without amplitude, without inner richness; all that is dry, cold, coiled up, prevents the coming of Mahalakshmi. It is not a question of big money, you know! An extremely rich man may be terribly poor from Mahalakshmi's point of view. And a very poor man may be very rich if his heart is generous.

When we say “a poor man — un pauvre homme”, what is the exact meaning of “poor man”?

A poor man is a man having no qualities, no force, no strength, no generosity. He is also a miserable, unhappy man. Moreover, one is unhappy only when one is not generous—if one has a generous nature which gives of itself without reckoning, one is never unhappy. It is those who are coiled up on themselves and who always want to draw things towards themselves, who see things and the world only through themselves—it is these who are unhappy. But when one gives oneself generously, without reckoning, one is never unhappy, never. It is he who wants to take who is unhappy; he who gives himself is never so.

14 May 1951

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

“Chance”, Questions and Answers 1929-31

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We are here then by chance?

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

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

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

You have found that all by yourself!

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

“Chance”, *Questions and Answers* 1929-31

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

But divine peace is always there, isn’t it? It is not “given”?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

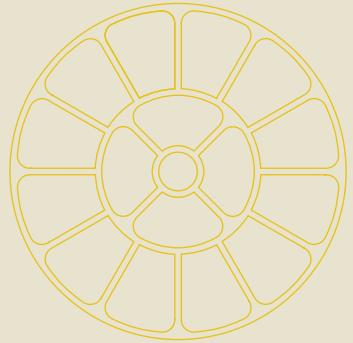
Instead of giving peace, why doesn't the Divine abolish all at once the ego?

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

Note on the Text

The talks in this volume were given between December 1950 and May 1951. The earliest ones were noted down by hand, but most were recorded on a dictating machine and then transcribed. They were first published in an incomplete form in French and English in the quarterly *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*. Extracts from ten talks appeared in various issues between 1957 and 1959; the rest, with four exceptions, were serialised in chronological order in the issues between November 1963 and February 1967.

The first complete edition of the original French text was published in 1967 under the title *Entretiens 1950–51*. A complete English translation, entitled *Questions and Answers 1950–51*, was brought out in 1972. That translation, with a few minor revisions, was reprinted in the same year as Volume 4 of the Collected Works of the Mother (first edition). The present text is the same as that of the first edition, with the exception of a few minor revisions of the translation. The quoted passages from the texts of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are taken from the Centenary editions of their works.



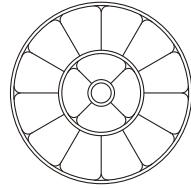
THE MOTHER

Questions and Answers

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The Mother

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Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry

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The Mother taking a class at the Playground, 1954

Publisher's Note

This volume is made up of talks given by the Mother in 1953 to the members of her French class. Held on Wednesday evenings at the Ashram Playground, the class was composed of sadhaks of the Ashram and students of its school. The Mother usually began by reading out a passage from one of her works and then invited questions. For most of the year she discussed her talks of 1929. She spoke only in French. Further information on these talks and their publication is provided in the Note on the Text.

The Mother's French classes cover the eight-year period from 1950 to 1958. The Wednesday classes of 1950-51 and 1953-58 comprise the "Questions and Answers" talks. Between June 1951 and March 1953 these classes were replaced by "translation classes" in which the Mother translated into French several of Sri Aurobindo's works, including *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *The Human Cycle*, part of *The Synthesis of Yoga* and the last six chapters of *The Life Divine*. During this period, she continued to speak informally with the students, but what she said was not tape-recorded.

Passages from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are sometimes quoted in the text and footnotes. The sources of these works are the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, (SABCL) and the Collected Works of the Mother (CWM), second edition.

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"We are conscious of only an insignificant portion of our being."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (7 April 1929)

What are these insignificant parts of our being?

Almost all of them.

There are very few things which are not insignificant; all your ordinary reactions, ordinary thoughts, sensations, actions, movements,—all this is very insignificant. It is only at times, when there is a flash of the higher consciousness through the psychic, an opening into something else, a contact with the psychic being (which may last for a second), at that moment, it is not insignificant. Otherwise, all the rest is repeated in millions and millions of copies. Your way of seeing, acting, all your reactions, thoughts, feelings, all that is ordinary. And you believe you are extraordinary, particularly when you are seized by extraordinary sensations and feelings, those that you consider extraordinary—you believe you are lifted higher, nearing something superhuman; but you are quite mistaken. It is nothing but an ordinary state, deplorably ordinary. You must enter deeper, try to see within yourself if you want to find something which is not insignificant.

*You have said that in a previous life we were together;
but if we had not done Yoga, couldn't we have met all
the same?*

Not necessarily.

I remember the circumstances in which I said that; it was to a lady who had come here and asked me how it was that she

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had come here.... This is true in a general way; when those born scattered over the world at great distances from one another are driven by circumstances or by an impulsion to come and gather here, it is almost always because they have met in one life or another (not all in the same life) and because their psychic being has felt that they belonged to the same family; so they have taken an inner vow to continue to act together and collaborate. That is why even though they are born far from one another, there is something which compels them to come together; it is the psychic being, the psychic consciousness that is behind. And only to the extent the psychic consciousness is strong enough to order and organise the circumstances or the life, that is, strong enough not to allow itself to be opposed by outside forces, outside life movements, can people meet.

It is profoundly true in reality; there are large “families of beings” who work for the same cause, who have gathered in more or less large numbers and who come in groups as it were. It is as though at certain times there were awakenings in the psychic world, as though lots of little sleeping children were being called to wake up: “It is time, quick, quick, go down!” And they hurry down. And sometimes they do not drop at the same place, they are dispersed, yet there is something within which troubles them, pushes them; for one reason or another they are drawn close and that brings them together. But it is something deep in the being, something that is not at all on the surface; otherwise, even if people met they would not perhaps become aware of the bond. People meet and recognise each other only to the extent they become conscious of their psychic being, obey their psychic being, are guided by it; otherwise there is all that comes in to oppose it, all that veils, all that stupefies, all those obstacles to prevent you from finding yourself in your depths and being able to collaborate truly in the work. You are tossed about by the forces of Nature.

There is only one solution, to find your psychic being and

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once it is found to cling to it desperately, to let it guide you step by step whatever be the obstacle. That is the only solution.

All this I did not write but I explained it to that lady. She had put to me the question: "How did I happen to come here?" I told her that it was certainly not for reasons of the external consciousness, it was something in her inner being that had pushed her. Only the awakening was not strong enough to overcome all the rest and she returned to the ordinary life for very ordinary reasons of living.

Outwardly, it was a funny thing that had made her come here. She was a young woman like others, she had been betrothed but not married; the man had broken off. She was very unhappy, had wept much and that had spoiled her pretty face, dug wrinkles there. And when the heavy grief had gone, she was no longer so pretty. So she was extremely vexed; she consulted people whose profession it is to make you look pretty. They advised her paraffin injections in the face: "After that, you don't have wrinkles any longer!" She was injected with grease; and instead of the desired effect, she had greasy lumps here and there. She was in despair, for she was uglier than ever. Then she met a charlatan who told her that in England there was no means of restoring her pretty face: "Go to India, there are great Yogis there who will do it for you!" That is why she had come here. The very first thing she told me was: "You see how my face is ruined, can you restore my pretty looks?" I said no! Then she started putting me questions on Yoga and she was moved. That day she told me: "I came to India to get rid of my wrinkles; now what you tell me interests me. But then why did I come? This is not the true motive that made me come here." I explained to her that there was something other than her external being and that it was her psychic being which had led her here. External motives are simply pretexts used by the psychic to realise itself.

But she was quite a wonderful person! In the beginning she had taken an attitude of benevolence and goodwill towards everything and everybody, even the worst scamp; she saw only the

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good side. Then as she stayed on, her consciousness developed; after a time, she began to see people as they were. So, one day she told me: "Formerly, when I was unconscious, I thought that everybody was good, people seemed to be so nice! Why did you make me conscious?" I answered her: "Do not stop on the way. Go a little further."

Once one has begun Yoga, it is better to go to the end.

25 March 1953

You have said: “You must be vigilant and see that you do not use the Divine as a cloak for the satisfaction of your desires.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (14 April 1929)

Many people accept certain theories, some of which are very convenient, and they say, “Everything is the result of the divine Will”; others say, “The Divine is everywhere and in everything and does everything”; yet others say, “My will is one with the divine Will, it is He who inspires me.” Indeed, there are many theories and they say that. Naturally, their ego is as alive. They do all that they want to do, saying, “It is the Divine who is doing it in me.” Whatever is supplied by their brain is the “divine Will”. It is not a personal inspiration: “Everything is the result of the divine Will.” “It is not I who am acting, it is the Divine who is acting through me.” They do all that they wish to do. There are many people like that. Therefore I said, “Do not use the Divine as a pretty cloak to hide your desires.”

“The question is to be sincere. If you are not sincere, do not begin Yoga.”

Ibid.

Sincerity is perhaps the most difficult of all things and perhaps it is also the most effective.

If you have perfect sincerity, you are sure of victory. It is infinitely difficult. Sincerity consists in making all the elements of the being, all the movements (whether outer or inner), all the parts of the being, all of them, have one single will to belong to the Divine, to live only for the Divine, to will only what the Divine wills, to express only the divine Will, to have no other source of energy than that of the Divine.

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And you find that there is not a day, not an hour, not a minute when you do not need to intensify, rectify your sincerity — a total refusal to deceive the Divine. The first thing is not to deceive oneself. One knows one cannot deceive the Divine; even the cleverest of the Asuras cannot deceive the Divine. But even when one has understood that, one sees that quite often in one's life, in the course of the day, one tries to deceive oneself without even knowing it, spontaneously and almost automatically. One always gives favourable explanations for all that one does, for one's words, for one's acts. That is what happens first. I am not speaking of obvious things like quarrelling and saying, "It is the other one's fault", I am speaking of the very tiny things of daily life.

I know a child who knocked against a door and he gave a good kick to the door! It is the same thing. It is always the other one who is in the wrong, who has committed the mistake. Even when you have passed the stage of the child, when you have a little reason, you still give the stupidest of all excuses: "If he had not done that, I wouldn't have done this." But it should be just the other way round!

This is what I call being sincere. When you are with someone, if you are sincere, instantaneously your way of reacting should be to do the right thing, even when you are with someone who does not do it. Take the most common example of someone who gets angry: instead of saying things that hurt, you say nothing, you keep calm and quiet, you do not catch the contagion of the anger. You have only to look at yourself to see if this is easy. It is quite an elementary thing, a very small beginning to know whether you are sincere. And I am not speaking of those who catch every contagion, even that of coarse joking nor of those who commit the same stupidity as the others.

I tell you: if you look at yourself with sharp eyes, you will catch in yourself insincerities by the hundred, even though you are trying to be sincere in your general attitude. You will see how difficult it is.

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I tell you: If you are sincere in all the elements of your being, to the very cells of your body and if your whole being integrally wants the Divine, you are sure of victory but for nothing less than that. That is what I call being sincere.

I am not speaking of glaring things like obeying your impulses, your caprices and then saying: "I do not belong to myself any more, I belong to the Divine; it is the Divine who is doing everything in me, who is acting in me", that indeed is crude enough. I am speaking of more refined people, a little more noble, who put on a pretty cloak to cover their desires.

How many things in the course of the day, how many thoughts, sensations, gestures are turned exclusively towards the Divine in an aspiration? How many? I believe if you have a single one in the whole day, you may mark that in red letters.

When I say, "If you are sincere, you are sure of victory", I mean true sincerity: to be constantly the true flame that burns like an offering. That intense joy of existing only by the Divine and for the Divine and feeling that without Him nothing exists, that life has no longer any meaning, nothing has any purpose, nothing has any value, nothing has any interest, unless it is this call, this aspiration, this opening to the supreme Truth, to all that we call the Divine (because you must use some word or other), the only reason for the existence of the universe. Remove that and everything disappears.

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“Ambition has been the undoing of many Yogis. That canker can hide long. Many people start on the Path without any sense of it. But when they get powers, their ambition rises up, all the more violently because it had not been thrown out in the beginning.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (14 April 1929)

What do you call a “canker”?

It is an image, as of a fine mango, very beautiful to look at, and when one opens it, there is a worm inside. That is because the fly laid an egg before the fruit was formed; outside there is no trace. Everything seems candid, disinterested. But within, right at the bottom, there is a great ambition, the desire to have an exceptional position, to be respected by everybody... that is, the ego. This is the canker, it remains very quiet, but it is there. When the power comes, instead of realising that one is nothing, does not deserve anything and that all that one has to do is to remain as passive as possible, one deceives oneself, feels the need of others taking note of it also. It is this I call the canker. It eats up all that is inside and leaves the appearance intact.

You say that it is necessary to establish “homogeneity in our being”?

Ibid.

Don't you know what a homogeneous thing is, made up of all similar parts? That means the whole being must be under the same influence, same consciousness, same tendency, same will. We are formed of all kinds of different pieces. They become active one after another. According to the part that is active, one

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is quite another person, becomes almost another personality. For instance, one had an aspiration at first, felt that everything existed only for the Divine, then something happens, somebody comes along, one has to do something, and everything disappears. One tries to recall the experience, not even the memory of the experience remains. One is completely under another influence, one wonders how this could have happened. There are examples of double, triple, quadruple personalities, altogether unconscious of themselves.... But it is not about this I am speaking; I am speaking about something which has happened to all of you: you have had an experience, and for some time you have felt, understood that this experience was the only thing that was important, that had an absolute value — half an hour later you try to recall it, it is like a smoke that vanishes. The experience has disappeared. And yet half an hour ago it was there and so powerful.... It is because one is made of all kinds of different things. The body is like a bag with pebbles and pearls all mixed up, and it is only the bag which keeps all that together. This is not a homogeneous, uniform consciousness but a heterogeneous one.

You can be a different person at different moments in your life. I know people who took decisions, had a strong will, knew what they wanted and prepared to do it. Then there was a little reversal in the being; another part came up and spoilt all the work in ten minutes. What had been accomplished in two months was all undone. When the first part comes back it is in dismay, it says: "What!..." Then the whole work has to be started again, slowly. Hence it is evident that it is very important to become aware of the psychic being; one must have a kind of signpost or a mirror in which all things are reflected and show themselves as they truly are. And then, according to what they are, one puts them in one place or another; one begins to explain, to organise. That takes time. The same part comes back three or four times and every part that comes up says: "Put me in the first place; what the others do is not important, not at all

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important, it is I who will decide, for I am the most important.” I am sure that if you look at yourself, you will see that there’s not one among you who has not had the experience. You want to become conscious, to have goodwill, you have understood, your aspiration is shining — all is brilliant, illuminated; but all of a sudden something happens, a useless conversation, some unfortunate reading, and that upsets everything. Then one thinks that it was an illusion one lived in, that all things were seen from a certain angle.

This is life. One stumbles and falls at the first occasion. One tells oneself: “Oh! One can’t always be so serious”, and when the other part returns, once again, one repents bitterly: “I was a fool, I have wasted my time, now I must begin again....” At times there is one part that’s ill-humoured, in revolt, full of worries, and another which is progressive, full of surrender. All that, one after the other.

There is but one remedy: that signpost must always be there, a mirror well placed in one’s feelings, impulses, all one’s sensations. One sees them in this mirror. There are some which are not very beautiful or pleasant to look at; there are others which are beautiful, pleasant, and must be kept. This one does a hundred times a day if necessary. And it is very interesting. One draws a kind of big circle around the psychic mirror and arranges all the elements around it. If there is something that is not all right, it casts a sort of grey shadow upon the mirror: this element must be shifted, organised. It must be spoken to, made to understand, one must come out of that darkness. If you do that, you never get bored. When people are not kind, when one has a cold in the head, when one doesn’t know one’s lessons, and so on, one begins to look into this mirror. It is very interesting, one sees the canker. “I thought I was sincere!” — not at all.

Not a thing happens in life which is not interesting. This mirror is very, very well made. Do that for two years, three, four years, at times one must do it for twenty years. Then at the end of a few years, look back, turn your gaze upon what you were

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three years ago: “How I have changed!... Was I like that?...” It is very entertaining. “I could speak like that? I could talk like that, think like that?... But I was indeed stupid! How I have changed!” It’s very interesting, isn’t it?

8 April 1953

"One of the commonest forms of ambition is the idea of service to humanity. All attachment to such service or work is a sign of personal ambition."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (14 April 1929)

Why do you say that this is ambition?

Why do you want to serve humanity, what is your idea? It is ambition, it is in order to become a great man among men. It is difficult to understand?... I can see that!

The Divine is everywhere. So if one serves humanity, one serves the Divine, isn't that so?

That's marvellous! The clearest thing in this matter is to say: "The Divine is in me. If I serve myself, I am also serving the Divine!" (*Laughter*) In fact, the Divine is everywhere. The Divine will do His own work very well without you.

I see quite well that you do not understand. But truly, if you do understand that the Divine is there, in all things, with what are you meddling in serving humanity? To serve humanity you must know better than the Divine what must be done for it. Do you know better than the Divine how to serve it?

The Divine is everywhere. Yes. Things don't seem to be divine.... As for me, I see only one solution: if you want to help humanity, there is only one thing to do, it is to take yourself as completely as possible and offer yourself to the Divine. That is the solution. Because in this way, at least the material reality which you represent will be able to grow a little more like the Divine.

We are told that the Divine is in all things. Why don't things change? Because the Divine does not get a response, everything

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does not respond to the Divine. One must search the depths of the consciousness to see this. What do you want to do to serve humanity? Give food to the poor? — You can feed millions of them. That will not be a solution, this problem will remain the same. Give new and better living conditions to men? — The Divine is in them, how is it that things don't change? The Divine must know better than you the condition of humanity. What are you? You represent only a little bit of consciousness and a little bit of matter, it is that you call "myself". If you want to help humanity, the world or the universe, the only thing to do is to give that little bit entirely to the Divine. Why is the world not divine?... It is evident that the world is not in order. So the only solution to the problem is to give what belongs to you. Give it totally, entirely to the Divine; not only for yourself but for humanity, for the universe. There is no better solution. How do you want to help humanity? You don't even know what it needs. Perhaps you know still less what power you are serving. How can you change anything without indeed having changed yourself?

In any case, you are not powerful enough to do it. How do you expect to help another if you do not have a higher consciousness than he? It is such a childish idea! It is children who say: "I am opening a boarding-house, I am going to build a crèche, give soup to the poor, preach this knowledge, spread this religion...." It is only because you consider yourself better than others, think you know better than they what they should be or do. That's what it is, serving humanity. You want to continue all that? It has not changed things much. It is not to help humanity that one opens a hospital or a school.

All the same it has helped, hasn't it? If all the schools were abolished...

I don't think that humanity is happier than it was before nor that there has been a great improvement. All this mostly gives

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you the feeling “I am something.” That’s what I call ambition.

If these very people who are ready to give money for schools were told that there was a divine Work to be done, that the Divine has decided to do it in this particular way, even if they are convinced that it is indeed the Divine’s Work, they refuse to give anything, for this is not a recognised form of beneficence — one doesn’t have the satisfaction of having done something good! This is what I call ambition. I had instances of people who could give lakhs of rupees to open a hospital, for that gives them the satisfaction of doing something great, noble, generous. They glorify themselves, that’s what I call ambition.

I knew a humorist who used to say: “It won’t be so soon that the kingdom of God will come, for those poor philanthropists — what would remain for them? If humanity suffered no longer, the philanthropists would be without work.” It is difficult to come out of that. However, it is a fact that never will the world come out of the state in which it is unless it gives itself up to the Divine. All the virtues — you may glorify them — increase your self-satisfaction, that is, your ego; they do not help you truly to become aware of the Divine. It is the generous and wise people of this world who are the most difficult to convert. They are very satisfied with their life. A poor fellow who has done all sorts of stupid things all his life feels immediately sorry and says: “I am nothing, can do nothing. Make of me what You want.” Such a one is more right and much closer to the Divine than one who is wise and full of his wisdom and vanity. He sees himself as he is.

The generous and wise man who has done much for humanity is too self-satisfied to have the least idea of changing. It is usually these people who say: “If indeed I had created the world, I wouldn’t have made it like this, I would have created it much better than that”, and they try to set right what the Divine has done badly! According to their picture, all this is stupid and useless.... It is not with that attitude that you can belong to the Divine. There will always be between you and Him the conscious ego of one’s own intellectual superiority which judges

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the Divine and is sure of never being mistaken. For they are convinced that if they had made the world, they would not have committed all the stupidities that God has perpetrated. And all this comes from pride, vanity, self-conceit; and there is exactly the seed of that in people who want to serve humanity.

What are they going to give to humanity? Nothing at all! Even if they gave every drop of their blood, all the ideas in their head, all the money in their pocket, that could not change one individual, who is but a second of time in eternity. They believe they can serve eternity? There are even beings higher than man who have come, have brought the light, given their life, and that has not changed things much. So how can a little man, a microscopic being, truly help? It is pride. The argument given is: "If everyone did his best, all would go well." I don't think so and, even, it is impossible. In a certain way, each thing in the universe does its best. But that best doesn't come to anything at all. Unless everything changes, nothing will change. It is this best that must change. In the place of ignorance must be born knowledge and power and consciousness, otherwise we shall always turn in a circle around the same stupidity.

You may open millions of hospitals, that will not prevent people getting ill. On the contrary, they will have every facility and encouragement to fall ill. We are steeped in ideas of this kind. This puts your conscience at rest: "I have come to the world, I must help others." One tells oneself: "How disinterested I am! I am going to help humanity." All this is nothing but egoism.

In fact, the first human being that concerns you is yourself. You want to diminish suffering, but unless you can change the capacity of suffering into a certitude of being happy, the world will not change. It will always be the same, we turn in a circle — one civilisation follows another, one catastrophe another; but the thing does not change, for there is something missing, something not there, that is the consciousness. That's all.

At least, that's my opinion. I am giving it to you for what it is worth. If you want to build hospitals, schools, you may do

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so; if that makes you happy, so much the better for you. It has not much importance. When I saw the film *Monsieur Vincent*, I was very interested. He found out that when he fed ten poor men, a thousand came along. That was what Colbert told him: "It seems you create them, your poor ones, by feeding them!" And it is not altogether false. However! If it is your destiny to found schools and give instruction, to care for the sick, to open hospitals, it is good, do it. But you must not take that very seriously. It is something grandiose you are doing for your own pleasure. Say: "I am doing it because it gives me pleasure." But do not speak of yoga. It is not yoga you are doing. You believe you are doing something great, that's all, and it is for your personal satisfaction.

It is said that the Rishi Vishvamitra also created a new world.

What did he do? Tell me. He was not happy with this world and created another, did he? Where is this world?

Naturally, the first idea is to be greater than the one who has created the world. For one thinks that it is badly done. It is possible, you may say it is done badly. If you believe that you can do better than the Divine, I am not saying that you will be wrong. I am saying that you cannot say that you are not ambitious. I do not say they were wrong; I say they are ambitious. It is nothing else but that. The proof is that these are people who do good, these are the generous, good, disinterested ones who are the most difficult to convert; their ego is formidable. Their idea of justice, generosity, etc. is so big that there is no place for anything else, for the Divine.

Before being capable of doing good, one must go deep within oneself and make a very important discovery. It is that one does not exist. There is *one* thing which exists, that is the Divine, and so long as you have not made that discovery, you cannot advance on the path. But it is so hard a carapace!... If you have

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the philosophic mind, you will ask yourself: "What do I call 'myself'? Is it my body? — it changes all the time, it is never the same thing. Is it my feelings? — they change so often. Is it my thoughts? — they are built and destroyed continuously. That is not myself. Where is the self? What is it that gives me this sense of continuity?" If you continue sincerely, you go back a few years. The problem becomes more and more perplexing. You continue to observe, you tell yourself: "It is my memory." But even if one loses one's memory, one would be oneself. If one sincerely continues this profound search, there comes a moment when everything disappears and one single thing exists, that is the Divine, the divine Presence. Everything disappears, dissolves, everything melts away like butter in the sunlight.... When one has made this discovery, one becomes aware that one was nothing but a bundle of habits. It is always that which does not know the Divine and is not conscious of the Divine which speaks. In everyone there are these hundreds and hundreds of "selves" who speak and in hundreds of completely different ways — "selves" unconscious, changing, fluid. The self which speaks today is not the same as yesterday's; and if you look further, the self has disappeared. There is only one who remains. That is the Divine. It is the only one that may be seen always the same. And unless you have gone so far...

If everything comes from Him, why are there so many errors?

You must not believe that everything that happens to you in life comes to you naturally from the Divine, that is, that it is the Truth-Consciousness which is directing your life. For if everything came from Him, it would be impossible for you to make a mistake.

How does it happen that there's error everywhere? Why do things go in opposition to the Divine and to what they ought to be?... Because there are numerous elements which cross each

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other and intervene. Wills cross each other, the strongest gets the best of it. It is this complexity of norms that has created a determinism. The divine Will is completely veiled by this host of things. So I have said here (*Mother takes her book*): “You must accept all things — and only those things — that come from the Divine. Because things can come from concealed desires. The desires work in the subconscious and attract things to you of which possibly you may not recognise the origin, but which do not come from the Divine but from disguised desires.”

If you have a strong desire for something you cannot get, you project your desire outside yourself. It goes off like a tiny personality separated from you and roams about in the world. It will take a little round, more or less large, and return to you, perhaps when you have forgotten it. People who have a kind of passion, who want something, — that goes out from them like a little being, like a little flame into the surroundings. This little being has its destiny. It roams about in the world, tossed around by other things perhaps. You have forgotten it, but it will never forget that it must bring about that particular result.... For days you tell yourself: “How much I would like to go to that place, to Japan, for instance, and see so many things”, and your desire goes out from you; but because desires are very fugitive things, you have forgotten completely this desire you had thrown out with such a force. There are many reasons for your thinking about something else. And after ten years or more, or less, it comes back to you like a dish served up piping hot. Yes, like a piping-hot dish, well arranged. You say: “This does not interest me any longer.” It does not interest you ten or twenty years *later*. It was a small formation and it has gone and done its work as it could.... It is impossible to have desires without their being realised, even if it be quite a tiny desire. The formation has done what it could; it took a lot of trouble, it has worked hard, and after years it returns. It is like a servant you have sent out and who has done his best. When he returns you tell him: “What have you done?” — “Why? But, sir, it was because you wanted it!”

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You cannot put forth a strong thought without its going out from you like a little balloon, as it were. We have certain stories which are not unbelievable, like the one about that miser who thought of nothing but his money; he had hidden his hoard somewhere and always used to go to see it. After his death he continued to come as a ghost (that is to say, his vital being), to watch over his money. Nobody could go near the place without meeting with a catastrophe. It is like that, if you have worked to bring out something, it is always realised. It may be realised even after your death! Yes, for when your body ceases to exist, none of the vibrations stops existing. They are realised somewhere. That was what the Buddha said: the vibrations continue to exist, to be perpetuated. They are contagious. They continue in others, pass into others, and everyone adds a little to them.

Can one help the world with a vibration of goodwill?

With good wishes one can change many things, only it must be an extremely pure and unmixed goodwill. It is quite obvious that a thought, a perfectly pure and true prayer, if it is sent forth into the world, does its work. But where is this perfectly pure and true thought when it passes into the human brain? There are degradations. If through an effort of inner consciousness and knowledge, you can truly overcome in yourself a desire, that is to say, dissolve and abolish it, and if through inner goodwill, through consciousness, light, knowledge, you are able to dissolve the desire, you will be, first of all in yourself personally, a hundred times happier than if you had satisfied this desire, and then it will have a marvellous effect. It will have a repercussion in the world of which you have no idea. It will spread forth. For the vibrations you have created will continue to spread. These things grow larger like the snowball. The victory you win in your character, however small it be, is one which can be gained in the whole world. And it is this I meant just now: all things which are done outwardly without changing the inner nature —

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hospitals, schools, etc. — are done through vanity, for the feeling of being great, whilst these small unnoticed things overcome in oneself gain an infinitely greater victory, though the effects are hidden. Every movement in you which is false and opposed to the truth is a negation of the divine life. Your small efforts have considerable results which you don't even have the satisfaction of knowing, but which are true and have precisely an impersonal and general effect.

If you really want to do something good, the best thing you can do is to win your small victories in all sincerity, one after another, and thus you will do for the world the maximum you are able to.

Will our victory act for the whole world?

It will not change the whole world. For your victory is too small for the whole world. Millions of such victories are needed. It is a very small victory if compared with the whole. But it gets mingled with other things.... It could be said that it is like bringing into the world the *capacity* of doing a thing. But for this to act effectively, at times centuries are necessary; it is a question of proportion. You can try it out (and it is much more difficult) even with those around you. You must be absolutely sincere, not do it with the idea of getting a result, but because you want to gain a victory. If you gain it, it will necessarily have an effect on those around you. But if a bargaining element is mixed up in it, if you do this thing because you want to get that other: "I want to overcome my defects, but that person must also overcome his", then that doesn't work. It is a merchant's attitude: "I give this, but I shall take that." That spoils everything. There is neither sincerity nor purity. It is bargaining.

Nothing must be mixed with your sincerity, your aspiration, your motive. You do things for love of the Divine, for truth, for perfection, without any other motive, any other idea. And that brings results.

15 April 1953

You have written: “Do not try to pull at the forces of the Divine.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (14 April 1929)

Can one pull the divine forces by violence?

Yes, if you call very strongly, if you aspire very strongly, you may pull down a large number of forces into you, but you will not be able to digest them, assimilate them. It is the same thing as with food; when you swallow all that you have at hand in one gulp, that causes indigestion, it chokes you. You cannot bear it. So if you want to go fast, if you hurry, you send a kind of call and pull towards you too great a number of forces, forces which otherwise would have come less quickly.

Just a little hidden ambition is enough to... There are people who do not do Yoga for the sake of Yoga but to obtain a result, to have powers, to know one thing or another.

But then that means they are not sincere? How is it then that the Divine responds?

You think that the Divine has a small human judgment! You must not project human ideas upon the Divine.

If you are not sincere, what happens is that your own consciousness is veiled. Take, for example, a man who tells lies; his consciousness gets veiled and after a while, he can no longer distinguish falsehood from truth. He sees images and calls them truth. One who is wicked loses his aspiration, loses his capacity of realisation, loses all possibility of understanding, feeling and realising. That is the punishment.

One puts veils, obstacles between oneself and the Divine.

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That is how one punishes oneself. The Divine does not withdraw; one makes oneself incapable of receiving him. The Divine does not distribute in this way rewards and punishments, it is not at all like that.

When one is insincere, when one has bad will, when one is a traitor, one punishes oneself instantaneously. Insincere people lose even the little bit of consciousness that would make them know that they are wicked; they become as though unconscious. They end up by not knowing anything at all any longer.

What is it that you call “the basis of equanimity in the external being”?

Ibid.

It is good health, a solid body, well poised; when one does not have the nerves of a little girl that are shaken by the least thing; when one sleeps well, eats well.... When one is quite calm, well balanced, very quiet, one has a solid basis and can receive a large number of forces.

If anyone among you has received spiritual forces, forces of the Divine Ananda, for example, he knows from experience that unless he is in good health he cannot contain them, keep them. He begins to weep and cry, gets restless to expend what he has received. He must laugh and talk and gesticulate, otherwise he cannot keep them, he feels stifled. And so by laughing, weeping, moving about he throws out what he has received.

To be well balanced, to be able to absorb what one receives, one must be very quiet, very calm. One must have a solid basis, good health. One must have a very solid basis. That is very important.

What is the difference between outer equality and the equality of the soul?

The equality of the soul is a psychological thing. It is the power

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to bear all happenings, good or bad, without being sad, discouraged, desperate, upset. Whatever happens, you remain serene, peaceful.

The other is the equality in the body. It is not psychological, it is something material; to have a physical poise, to receive forces without being troubled.

The two are equally necessary if one wants to progress on the path. And other things still. For example, a mental poise; such that all possible ideas, even the most contradictory, may come from all sides without one's being troubled. One can see them and put each in its place. That is mental poise.

22 April 1953

The following brief passage about sleep and dreams, is part of a longer, incompletely recorded talk.

When one sleeps, how can one distinguish the nature of the visions?

They do not leave the same impression at all.

In order to know things well, one must educate oneself, develop the conscious being. But there are all kinds of different things, there are mental and vital projections exactly as in the cinema; then there are visions you may have if you are exteriorised in the mental and vital regions; the great difference is that these dreams are imposed upon you, you are taken in...¹ Then there are countless dreams without any connection which have no interest. For your brain is like a recording instrument: something comes and strikes hundreds of cells, each thing must strike a small note. Things will strike the brain convolutions — a remembrance, an impression, all kinds of tiny memories — it depends on your condition. But you have the control, ideas follow each other in accordance with a certain logic; there is also a mechanism which puts memories into movement through contagion, and the movement through contagion is made according to logic (what you call logic). But when you sleep, that faculty usually goes to sleep, so all those little cells are left to themselves and the connections — like the connections of electric wires — don't work any longer, things come the wrong way round or in any direction at all. You must not look for a meaning. It was a contagion: because this one was vibrating, that other also vibrated, one vibration gives rise to another. Your logic works no longer. And you have fantastic dreams, absurd dreams.

¹ Here a whole passage is missing.

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It is very difficult to put one's mind into repose. The majority of men get up very tired, more tired than when they went to sleep. One must learn how to quieten one's mind, make it completely blank, and then when one wakes up, one feels refreshed. One must relax the whole mind in the pure white silence, then one has the least number of dreams.

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Sweet Mother, you have said that one can exercise one's conscious will and change the course of one's dreams.

Ah, yes, I have already told you that once. If you are in the middle of a dream and something happens which you don't like (for instance, somebody shouts that he wants to kill you), you say: "That won't do at all, I don't want my dream to be like that", and you can change the action or the ending. You can organise your dream as you want. One can arrange one's dreams. But for this you must be conscious that you are dreaming, you must know you are dreaming.

But these dreams are not of much importance, are they?

Yes, they are, and one must be conscious of what can happen. Suppose that you have gone for a stroll in the vital world; there you meet beings who attack you (that's what happens usually), if you know that it is a dream, you can very easily gather your vital forces and conquer. That's a true fact; you can with a certain attitude, a certain word, a certain way of being do things you would not do if you were just dreaming.

If in the dream someone kills you it doesn't matter, for it is just a dream!

I beg your pardon! Usually, the next day you are ill, or may be a little later. That's a warning. I know someone whose eye was thus hurt in a dream, and who really lost his eye a few days later. As for me, once I happened to dream getting blows on my face. Well, when I woke up the next morning, I had a red mark in the same place, on the forehead and the cheek.... Inevitably,

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a wound received in the vital being is translated in the physical body.

But how does it happen? There must be some intermediary?

It was in the vital that I was beaten. It is from within that this comes. Nothing, nobody touched anything from outside. If you receive a blow in the vital, the body suffers the consequence. More than half of our illnesses are the result of blows of this kind, and this happens much more often than one believes. Only, men are not conscious of their vital, and as they are not conscious they don't know that fifty per cent of their illnesses are the result of what happens in the vital: shocks, accidents, fighting, ill-will.... Externally this is translated by an illness. If one knows how it reacts on the physical, one goes to its source and can cure oneself in a few hours.

How is it that the symbolism of dreams varies according to traditions, races, religions?

Because the form given to the dream is mental. If you have learnt that such and such a form represents such and such a mythological person, you see that form and say: "It is that." In your mind there is an association between certain ideas and certain forms, and this is continued in the dream. When you translate your dream you give it an explanation corresponding to what you have learnt, what you have been taught, and it is with the mental image you have in your head that you know. Moreover, I have explained this to you a little later in the vision of Joan of Arc (*Mother takes her book and reads*):

"The beings who were always appearing and speaking to Jeanne d'Arc would, if seen by an Indian, have quite a different appearance; for when one sees, one projects the

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forms of one's mind.... You have the vision of one in India whom you call the Divine Mother; the Catholics say it is the Virgin Mary, and the Japanese call it Kwannon, the Goddess of Mercy; and others would give other names. It is the same force, the same power, but the images made of it are different in different faiths."

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And then? You are not very talkative today! Is that all?

You say that "each person has his own world of dream-imagery peculiar to himself."

Ibid.

Each individual has his own way of expressing, thinking, speaking, feeling, understanding. It is the combination of all these ways of being that makes the individual. That is why everyone can understand only according to his own nature. As long as you are shut up in your own nature, you can know only what is in your consciousness. All depends upon the height of the nature of your consciousness. Your world is limited to what you have in your consciousness. If you have a very small consciousness, you will understand only a few things. When your consciousness is very vast, universal, only then will you understand the world. If the consciousness is limited to your little ego, all the rest will escape you.... There are people whose brain and consciousness are smaller than a walnut. You know that a walnut resembles the brain; well these people look at things and don't understand them. They can understand nothing else except what is in direct contact with their senses. For them only what they taste, what they see, hear, touch has a reality, and all the rest simply does not exist, and they accuse us of speaking fancifully! "What I cannot touch does not exist", they say. But the only answer to give them is: "It does not exist *for you*, but there's no reason why it shouldn't exist for others." You must not insist with these

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people, and you must not forget that the smaller they are the greater is the audacity in their assertions.

One's cocksureness is in proportion to one's unconsciousness; the more unconscious one is, the more is one sure of oneself. The most foolish are always the most vain. Your stupidity is in proportion to your vanity. The more one knows... In fact, there is a time when one is quite convinced that one knows nothing at all. There's not a moment in the world which does not bring something new, for the world is perpetually growing. If one is conscious of that, one has always something new to learn. But one can become conscious of it only gradually. One's conviction that one knows is in direct proportion to one's ignorance and stupidity.

Mother, have the scientists, then, a very small consciousness?

Why? All scientists are not like that. If you meet a true scientist who has worked hard, he will tell you: "We know nothing. What we know today is nothing beside what we shall know tomorrow. This year's discoveries will be left behind next year." A real scientist knows very well that there are many more things he doesn't know than those he knows. And this is true of all branches of human activity. I have never met a scientist worthy of the name who was proud. I have never met a man of some worth who has told me: "I know everything." Those I have seen have always confessed: "In short, I know nothing." After having spoken of all that he has done, all that he has achieved, he tells you very quietly: "After all, I know nothing."

There are people who say at times that they know nothing, just to appear modest, but they don't believe what they say!

There are insincere and hypocritical people everywhere in the

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world. So much the worse for them. These shut the door completely to all progress. That is all.

For us who attend classes, is it dangerous then to study?

No, quite the contrary! For if you begin to study well, your consciousness awakens, and you can become more aware of what you still lack. This reminds me of the lady who, having gradually become conscious, told me: "Before I heard you, I had trust in men, everybody was very kind, I was happy. Now that I have begun to see clearly and become conscious, I have lost all my serenity! It is awful to become conscious!"

What is to be done? — Become still more conscious. It is very bad to learn just a little. One must learn more until one comes to the point where one sees that one knows nothing.... I spoke to you about the novice who wants to pass on to others what he has learnt—until the day he sees he has not much to pass on. Usually all religious teaching is based on that. A very little knowledge, with precise formulas which are well written (often quite well written) and crystallise in the brain, and assert: "That is indeed the truth." You have only to study what is there in the book. How easy it is! In every religion there is a book —whether it be the Catechism, the Hindu texts, the Koran, in short, all the sacred books—you learn it by heart. You are told that this-is-the-truth, and you are sure it is the truth and remain comfortable. It is very convenient, you don't need to try to understand. Those who don't know the same thing as you, are in the falsehood, and you even pray for those who are outside the "Truth"! This is a common fact in all religions. But in all religions there are people who know better and don't believe in these things. I had met one of these particularly, one belonging to the Catholic faith. He was a big man. I spoke to him about what I knew and asked him: "Why do you use this method? Why do you perpetuate ignorance?" He answered: "It is a policy of peace of mind. If we didn't do that, people wouldn't listen to

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us. This, indeed, is the secret of religions." He told me: "There are in our religion, as in the ancient initiations, people who know. There are schools where the old tradition is taught. But we are forbidden to speak about it. All these religious images are symbols representing something other than what is taught. But that is not taught outside."

The reason for this is very generous and kind (according to them): "People who have a tiny brain—and there are plenty—if we tell them something that's too high, too great, it troubles them, disturbs them, and they become unhappy. They will never be able to understand. Why worry them uselessly? They don't have the capacity to find the truth. Whilst, if you tell them: 'If you have faith in this, you will go to heaven', they are quite happy." There, you see. It is very convenient. That is why it is perpetuated, otherwise there would be no religions.

I am not telling you this to encourage one particular religion rather than another. But this is a procedure that *seems* generous.... Otherwise there would be no religions; there would be masters and disciples, people who have a higher teaching and an exceptional experience. That would be a very good thing. But as soon as the master is gone, what happens is that the knowledge he gave is changed into a religion. Rigid dogmas are established, religious rules come into being and one cannot but bow down before the Tables of the Law. Yet at the beginning it was not like that. You are told: "This is true, this is false, the Master has said...." Some time later the master becomes a god, and you are told: "God has said this."

Note that I am telling you this because I know that here you are all liberated from religions. If I had before me someone having a religion he believed in, I would tell him: "It is very good, keep your religion, continue." Happily for all of you, you don't have one. And I hope you will never have one, for it means a door shut upon all progress.

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“People often meet in these planes, before they meet upon earth. They may join there, speak to each other and have all the relations you can have upon earth. Some know of these relationships, some do not know. Some, as are indeed most, are unconscious of the inner being and the inner intercourse, and yet it happens that when they meet the new face in the outer world, they find it very familiar, quite well known.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (21 April 1929)

That depends very much upon the level of consciousness in one's inner being. For most people, all that is a mixture in the mental, vital and physical planes; they are not at all conscious of what is happening. Some are conscious and usually they have a similar feeling when they are told: “Why, it was like that that I knew you, yes, I know you already intimately, and I have a feeling, but the impression is very vague.” Very few people are developed enough to say: “Well, I saw you under such and such circumstances.” Yet this has happened.

And then there are those who have learnt a little, who are more or less occultists or believe in rebirth in a childish way, believe that it is a tiny person who has put on a physical robe, that is, a body, and when this garment falls off, it goes away and puts on another and then another... like a doll whose dress is changed. For them it is like that: one changes one's body, as one changes one's clothes. Some people have even written books very seriously telling you about all their lives since they were monkeys! That indeed is absolute childishness. For in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, it is just the tiny psychic formation at the centre of the being that continues after death; all the rest is dissolved, goes to pieces, scattered here and there, the

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individuality exists no longer. Now, how often in the physical life does the psychic being take part consciously in what the physical being does?... I am not speaking of people who do yoga and are a little disciplined; I am speaking of average people who have a psychic capacity in the sense that their psychic is already sufficiently developed to be able to intervene in life and guide it — some pass years and years without the psychic intervening. And they come and tell you in which country they were born and what their father and mother were like and the house they lived in, the roof of the church and the forest that was by the side and all the most casual events of their life! It is absolutely idiotic, for it is all rubbed off, these things don't exist any longer; whilst the memory that one may still have is that of the particular moment in life when there is a special circumstance, "vital" moments, so to say, in which the psychic suddenly takes part, through an inner call or an absolute necessity — all of a sudden the psychic intervenes — and that then is engraved in the psychic memory. When you have the psychic memory you remember a set of circumstances at one *moment* of life, particularly of the inner emotion, of the consciousness that acted at that moment. And then that passes into the consciousness along with some associations, with all that was around you, perhaps a word spoken, a phrase heard; but what was most important was the state of the soul in which you were: for that indeed remains very clearly engraved. These are the landmarks of the psychic life, things that have left a deep impression and taken part in its formation. Hence when you find your psychic being in you again constantly, continuously, clearly, it is things like these that you remember. There may be quite a few, but they are flashes in one's life, and one cannot say: "I was such and such a person, I did such and such a thing, I was called by this name and I was doing this or that." Or otherwise it would mean that at that moment (a rare one) there was a combination of circumstances good enough for one to be able to fix the date or the place, the country and the age. That can happen.

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Naturally the psychic takes a greater and greater part, and the larger does the set of memories grow. And then one can retrace one's life, but not in all its details. One can say that at certain moments, "it was like this," or "I was that." Certain moments, yes, very important moments of a life.... What's necessary is a being wholly identified with the psychic, one that has organised its whole existence around it, unified its whole being — all the tiniest parts, all the elements, all the movements of the being around the psychic centre — that has made of itself a single being, solely turned to the Divine; then, if the body falls off, that remains. It is only a completely formed conscious being that can remember exactly in another life all that has happened before. It can even pass consciously from one life to another without losing anything of its consciousness. How many people upon earth have reached that state?... Not many, I believe. And usually they are not in the least inclined to narrate their adventures.

There are people who tell the life of others.

Yes, I know. I know many things, I have heard all that one can hear. They tell stories after stories.... They look at you and say: "You were so-and-so in that life, you did such and such a thing." Well I guarantee, it is not true. For I know how one can find out where one has seen a person and what he was and how it is — it is not just a little story that you can write in a book. When you look within a person, when you have the perception, precisely of the psychic world, which enables you to recognise the psychic there where it was, then all of a sudden you can see a scene, an image, a form, a word; there is a sort of association due to which even in the present being of this person there still remain certain sympathies and attractions which come from previous lives. But, as I was saying, these are "moments" of life. And so one sees, one can see these various moments, but one cannot narrate a whole life.

I believe Sri Aurobindo has written something very amusing

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about this, the number of Caesars one knew, the number of all the great beings, the Napoleons and all the important personages, the Shakespeares, all the people whose names have survived in history! How many are there! There are hundreds of them! And you hear their stories: "I was this, I was that, I did this", or in séances the so-called spirits come and speak to you. A large number of people indulge in this playing with "spirits", practising automatic writing and particularly in communicating with spirits. Now, there are garrulous spirits. They come to many places at the same time, especially people like Napoleon (I do not know why they have a partiality for Napoleon), everywhere Napoleon arrives and tells you extraordinary stories of his life and usually very contradictory stories and perhaps all at the same time! These are really very active people. Well, it is extremely comic—and it is impossible.

The truth is that these are small vital entities, a class of beings formed by the decomposition of desires that have persisted after a man's death and retained their form; of imaginations that have remained coagulated and try to manifest and reappear. Sometimes they are small beings of the vital world, not very well-disposed; as soon as they see people playing at such things—automatic writing, spirit-communication—they come and play. And as they are in a domain from where it is easy to read human thought, they tell you very well what you have in your head. They respond to what you expect. You wish to have a particular answer: they give you the answer even before you have put the question! They can give you precise details, they can tell you that such and such a thing happened to you, that such and such a member of your family... They know quite well. They do excellent thought-reading and tell you things altogether convincingly. "I did not say that I was married and had three sons and four daughters, how did he know all that?" — Because it was in your head.

Psychic memories have a very special character and a wonderful intensity. But that cannot be narrated in this way.... They

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are unforgettable moments of life when the consciousness is intense, luminous, strong, active, powerful, and sometimes turning-points in life that have changed the direction of one's life. But one will never be able to say what dress one was wearing or the gentleman with whom one spoke and the neighbours and the kind of field where one was.

Why do we forget our dreams?

Because you do not dream always at the same place. It is not always the same part of your being that dreams and it is not at the same place that you dream. If you were in conscious, direct, continuous communication with all the parts of your being, you would remember all your dreams. But very few parts of the being are in communication.

For example, you have a dream in the subtle physical, that is to say, quite close to the physical. Generally, these dreams occur in the early hours of the morning, that is between four and five o'clock, at the end of the sleep. If you do not make a sudden movement when you wake up, if you remain very quiet, very still and a little attentive—quietly attentive—and concentrated, you will remember them, for the communication between the subtle physical and the physical is established—very rarely is there no communication.

Now, dreams are mostly forgotten because you have a dream while in a certain state and then pass into another. For instance, when you sleep, your body is asleep, your vital is asleep, but your mind is still active. So your mind begins to have dreams, that is, its activity is more or less coordinated, the imagination is very active and you see all kinds of things, take part in extraordinary happenings.... After some time, all that calms down and the mind also begins to doze. The vital that was resting wakes up; it comes out of the body, walks about, goes here and there, does all kinds of things, reacts, sometimes fights, and finally eats. It does all kinds of things. The vital is very adventurous. It watches.

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When it is heroic it rushes to save people who are in prison or to destroy enemies or it makes wonderful discoveries. But this pushes back the whole mental dream very far behind. It is rubbed off, forgotten: naturally you cannot remember it because the vital dream takes its place. But if you wake up suddenly at that moment, you remember it. There are people who have made the experiment, who have got up at certain fixed hours of the night and when they wake up suddenly, they do remember. You must not move brusquely, but awake in the natural course, then you remember.

After a time, the vital having taken a good stroll, needs to rest also, and so it goes into repose and quietness, quite tired at the end of all kinds of adventures. Then something else wakes up. Let us suppose that it is the subtle physical that goes for a walk. It starts moving and begins wandering, seeing the rooms and... why, this thing that was there, but it has come here and that other thing which was in that room is now in this one, and so on. If you wake up without stirring, you remember. But this has pushed away far to the back of the consciousness all the stories of the vital. They are forgotten and so you cannot recollect your dreams. But if at the time of waking up you are not in a hurry, you are not obliged to leave your bed, on the contrary you can remain there as long as you wish, you need not even open your eyes; you keep your head exactly where it was and you make yourself like a tranquil mirror within and concentrate there. You catch just a tiny end of the tail of your dream. You catch it and start pulling gently, without stirring in the least. You begin pulling quite gently, and then first one part comes, a little later another. You go backward; the last comes up first. Everything goes backward, slowly, and suddenly the whole dream reappears: "Ah, there! it was like that." Above all, do not jump up, do not stir; you repeat the dream to yourself several times — once, twice — until it becomes clear in all its details. Once that dream is settled, you continue not to stir, you try to go further in, and suddenly you catch the tail of something

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else. It is more distant, more vague, but you can still seize it. And here also you hang on, get hold of it and pull, and you see that everything changes and you enter another world; all of a sudden you have an extraordinary adventure — it is another dream. You follow the same process. You repeat the dream to yourself once, twice, until you are sure of it. You remain very quiet all the time. Then you begin to penetrate still more deeply into yourself, as though you were going in very far, very far; and again suddenly you see a vague form, you have a feeling, a sensation... like a current of air, a slight breeze, a little breath; and you say, "Well, well...." It takes a form, it becomes clear — and the third category comes. You must have a lot of time, a lot of patience, you must be very quiet in your mind and body, very quiet, and you can tell the story of your whole night from the end right up to the beginning.

Even without doing this exercise which is very long and difficult, in order to recollect a dream, whether it be the last one or the one in the middle that has made a violent impression on your being, you must do what I have said when you wake up: take particular care not even to move your head on the pillow, remain absolutely still and let the dream return.

Some people do not have a passage between one state and another, there is a little gap and so they leap from one to the other; there is no highway passing through all the states of being with no break of the consciousness. A small dark hole, and you do not remember. It is like a precipice across which one has to extend the consciousness. To build a bridge takes a very long time; it takes much longer than building a physical bridge.... Very few people want to and know how to do it. They may have had magnificent activities, they do not remember them or sometimes only the last, the nearest, the most physical activity, with an uncoordinated movement — dreams having no sense.

But there are as many different kinds of nights and sleep as there are different days and activities. There are not many days that are alike, each day is different. The days are not the same,

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the nights are not the same. You and your friends are doing apparently the same thing, but for each one it is very different. And each one must have his own procedure.

Why are two dreams never alike?

Because all things are different. No two minutes are alike in the universe and it will be so till the end of the universe, no two minutes will ever be alike. And men obstinately want to make rules! One must do this and not that.... Well! we must let people please themselves.

You could have put to me a very interesting question: "Why am I fourteen years old today?" Intelligent people will say: "It is because it is the fourteenth year since you were born." That is the answer of someone who believes himself to be very intelligent. But there is another reason. I shall tell this to you alone.... I have drowned you all sufficiently well! Now you must begin to learn swimming!

If one finds the truth in things, does it mean that one has found the Divine?

Surely! In everything, whatever it is that is the only way. There is not a thing that does not carry in itself an eternal truth, otherwise it could not exist. The universe could not exist for even a thousandth part of a second if it did not contain a truth in itself.

If one were in contact with the Divine, what would be its effect?

For each one a different effect. Because we are in the presence of a fact: there is a universe, at least there is an earth, of that we are almost sure, you cannot dispute that, granted?... Have you ever asked yourself why there is an earth? No! Probably it was quite wise. Once I spoke to you of that occultist whom I knew.

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He was a wise man in his own way. People used to come and ask him:

First of all, why is there a universe? Answer: What is that to you?

Secondly, then why is it as it is? Reply: It is as it is. What does it matter to you?

Thirdly, I do not find it satisfactory.

That's very good. We begin to touch the practical. To those who do not find it satisfactory, I would say: There is only one thing to do, start working for its change, find a way for it to be otherwise and to be good. Things are as they are. Why are they so?... Perhaps one might know—it is not certain. In any case they are so. The most remarkable thing is that if you are sincere you will find out why they are so and how they are so: the cause, the origin and the process. For it is one single thing. There is what we call the Truth, the basis of everything; because if this were not there, there would be nothing. Once you have found the Truth, you find the origin, you find the means of changing the cause—how it is so, why it is so and the means of changing it. If you are in contact with the Divine, you have the key to everything. You know the how, the why and the process to change.

There is something to do: to work, it is so interesting. You represent a small agglomerated mass of substance that makes up yourself. Enter within and find the key. You have only to go down inside there. You cannot say: "That is beyond me, it is too big for me." Go within your little person and you will find the key which opens all the doors.

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"There are some who, when they are sitting in meditation, get into a state which they think very fine and delightful."

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What is this state?

Whatever it may be, they think their state is delightful and remarkable. They have a very high opinion of themselves. They believe they are remarkable people because they are able to sit quietly without moving; and if they don't think of anything, that is remarkable. But usually it is a kind of kaleidoscope that is going on in their head, they do not even notice it. Still, those who can remain for a moment without moving, without speaking and thinking, have certainly a very high opinion of themselves. Only, as I have said, if they are pulled out of it, if someone comes and knocks at the door and they are told, "There is somebody waiting for you", or "Madam, your child is crying", they immediately get furious and say: "There, my meditation is spoilt! Completely spoilt." I am telling you things I have seen with my own eyes. People who were very serious in their meditation, and could not be interrupted in their meditation without their getting violently angry.... Naturally this is not a sign of great spiritual progress. They stormed against everybody because they had been pulled out of their beatific meditation.

Among people who meditate there are some who know how to meditate, who concentrate not on an idea, but in silence, in an inner contemplation in which they say they reach even a union with the Divine; and that is perfectly all right. There are others, just a few, who can follow an idea closely and try to find exactly what it means; that too is all right. Most of the time

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people try to concentrate and enter into a kind of half sleepy and, in any case, very tamasic state. They become some kind of inert thing; the mind is inert, the feeling is inert, the body is immobile. They can remain like that for hours, for there is nothing more durable than inertia! All this that I am telling you now—these are experiences of people I have met. And these people, when they come out of their meditation, sincerely believe they have done something very great. But they have simply gone down into inertia and unconsciousness. People who know how to meditate are very few in number. Besides, admitting that through much discipline and years of effort you have in your meditation succeeded in coming into conscious relation with the divine Presence, evidently this is a result, and this result should necessarily have an effect upon your character and your life. But this effect is very different according to individuals. There are cases in which the person is split into two in so radical a way that while in meditation such people can enter into contact with the Divine and obtain this supreme felicity of identification, but when they come out of this and lead their normal life, begin to live and act, they can be the most ordinary men with the most ordinary and sometimes even the most vulgar reactions. Indeed, I know people who become altogether ordinary men, and then they do, for example, all the things one should not do, like passing their time in gossiping about others, thinking of themselves only, having all selfish reactions and wanting to organise their life for their petty personal well-being; they do not think of others at all and never do anything for anybody, have no large idea. And yet, in their meditation, they have had this contact. And that is why people who have discovered how very difficult it is to change this petty outer nature that one takes up along with the body, how difficult it is to transcend oneself, to transform one's movements, say: "It is not possible, it is no use trying; in coming to the world, you have taken a body of dust, you have only to let it fall off and prepare to go away, leaving the world as it is; and the only thing to do is to run away as

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quickly as one can; and if everybody runs away, there will no longer be a world and therefore no more misery." That's logical. If they are told: "But perhaps what you propose to do is very selfish, to go away and leave others floundering?" — "Well, they have only to do what I do. If everybody did what I am doing, they would get out of it, there would be no longer any world, no longer any misery." As though it depended upon the will of individuals who have not even taken any part in the making of the world! How can they hope to stop it? At least if it was they who had made it, they could know how it was made and could try to undo it (although it is not always easy to undo what one has done), but it is not they who have made it, they do not even know how it has been made and they have the presumption to want to undo it, because they imagine that they themselves can run away from it.... I do not think it is possible. One cannot run away, even if one tries. That however is another subject. In any case, for me, my experience (which is sufficiently long, for it is now almost fifty-three years since I have been dealing with people, with their yoga, their inner efforts; I have seen much here and there, a little everywhere in the world); well, I do not believe that it is by meditation that you can transform yourself. I am absolutely convinced of the contrary.

If while doing what you have to do — whatever it may be, whatever work it is — if you do it and while doing it are careful not to forget the Divine, to offer to Him what you do and try so to give yourself to Him that He may change all your reactions — instead of their being selfish, petty, stupid and ignorant, making them luminous, generous — then in that way you will make progress. Not only will you have made some progress but you will have helped in the general progress. I have never seen people who have left everything in order to go and sit down in a more or less empty contemplation (for it is more or less empty), I have never seen such people making any progress, or in any case their progress is very trifling. I have seen persons who had no pretensions of doing yoga, who were simply filled with enthusiasm by

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the idea of terrestrial transformation and of the descent of the Divine into the world and who did their little bit of work with that enthusiasm in the heart, giving themselves wholly, without reserve, without any selfish idea of a personal salvation; these I have seen making magnificent progress, truly magnificent. And sometimes they are wonderful. I have seen sannyasis, I have seen people who live in monasteries, I have seen people who professed to be yogis, well, I would not exchange one of the others for a dozen such people (I mean, from the standpoint of terrestrial transformation and world progress, that is to say, from the standpoint of what we want to do, to try that this world may no longer be what it is and may become truly the instrument of the divine Will, with the divine Consciousness). It is not by running away from the world that you will change it. It is by working there, modestly, humbly but with a fire in the heart, something that burns like an offering. *Voilà.*

So meditation is of no use?

No, and to the extent it is necessary, it will come spontaneously. All of a sudden, you will be seized by something that makes you still, makes you concentrate in the vision of an idea or of a psychological state. That captures you. You must not resist. Then you make the needed progress. At such a moment you see, you understand something; and then the next minute you start your work again with that something gained in you, but without any pretension. What I most fear are those who believe themselves very exceptional because they sit down and meditate. Of all things this is the most dangerous, because they become so vain and so full of self-satisfaction that they close up in this way all avenues of progress.... There is one thing that has always been said, but always misunderstood, it is the necessity of humility. It is taken in the wrong way, wrongly understood and wrongly used. Be humble, if you can be so in the right way; above all, do not be so in the wrong way, for that leads you nowhere.

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But there is one thing: if you can pull out from yourself this weed called vanity, then indeed you will have done something. But if you knew how difficult it is! You cannot do a thing well, cannot have a fine idea, cannot have a right movement, cannot make a little progress without getting puffed up inside (even without being aware of it), with a self-satisfaction full of vanity. And you are obliged then to hammer it hard to break it. And still broken bits remain and these begin to germinate. One must work the whole of one's life and never forget to work in order to uproot this weed that springs up again and again and again so insidiously that you believe it is gone and you feel very modest and say: "It is not I who have done it, I feel it is the Divine, I am nothing if He is not there", and then the next minute, you are so satisfied with yourself simply for having thought that!

What is the right and the wrong way of being humble?

It is very simple, when people are told "be humble", they think immediately of "being humble before other men" and that humility is wrong. True humility is humility before the Divine, that is, a precise, exact, *living* sense that one is nothing, one can do nothing, understand nothing without the Divine, that even if one is exceptionally intelligent and capable, this is nothing in comparison with the divine Consciousness, and this sense one must always keep, because then one always has the true attitude of receptivity — a humble receptivity that does not put personal pretensions in opposition to the Divine.

You have said: "If you surrender you have to give up effort, but that does not mean that you have to abandon also all willed action."

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But if one wants to do something, it means personal

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effort, doesn't it? What then is the will?

There is a difference between the will and this feeling of tension, effort, of counting only on oneself, having recourse to oneself alone which personal effort means; this kind of tension, of something very acute and at times very painful; you count only on yourself and you have the feeling that if you do not make an effort every minute, all will be lost. That is personal effort.

But the will is something altogether different. It is the capacity to concentrate on everything one does, do it as best one can and not stop doing it unless one receives a very precise intimation that it is finished. It is difficult to explain it to you. But suppose, for example, through a concurrence of circumstances, a work comes into your hands. Take an artist who has in one way or another got an inspiration and resolved to paint a picture. He knows very well that if he has no inspiration and is not sustained by forces other than his own, he will do nothing much. It will look more like a daub than a painting. He knows this. But it has been settled, the painting is to be done; there may be many reasons for that, but the painting has to be done. Then if he had the passive attitude, well, he would place his palette, his colours, his brushes, his canvas and then sit down in front of it and say to the Divine: "Now you are going to paint." But the Divine does not do things this way. The painter himself must take up everything and arrange everything, concentrate on his subject, find the forms, the colours that will express it and put his whole will for a more and more perfect execution. His will must be there all the time. But he has to keep the sense that he must be open to the inspiration, he will not forget that in spite of all his knowledge of the technique, in spite of the care he takes to arrange, organise and prepare his colours, his forms, his design, in spite of all that, if he has no inspiration, it will be one picture among a million others and it will not be very interesting. He does not forget. He attempts, he tries to see, to feel what he wants his painting to express and in what way it should be expressed.

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He has his colours, he has his brushes, he has his model, he has made his sketch which he will enlarge and make into a picture, he calls his inspiration. There are even some who manage to have a clear, precise vision of what is to be done. But then, day after day, hour after hour, they have this will to work, to study, to do with care all that must be done until they reproduce as perfectly as they can the first inspiration.... That person has worked for the Divine, in communion with Him, but not in a passive way, not with a passive surrender; it is with an active surrender, a dynamic will. The result generally is something very good. Well, the example of the painter is interesting, because a painter who is truly an artist is able to see what he is going to do, he is able to connect himself to the divine Power that is beyond all expression and inspires all expression. For the poet, the writer, it is the same thing and for all people who do something, it is the same.

If you tried that for your lessons, don't you think it would succeed?

Two days later the Mother took up the subject again in the "Friday Class".

If you said to yourself, my children, "We want to be as perfect instruments as possible to express the divine Will in the world", then for this instrument to be perfect, it must be cultivated, educated, trained. It must not be left like a shapeless piece of stone. When you want to build with a stone you chisel it; when you want to make a formless block into a beautiful diamond, you chisel it. Well, it is the same thing. When with your brain and body you want to make a beautiful instrument for the Divine, you must cultivate it, sharpen it, refine it, complete what is missing, perfect what is there.

For example, you go to your class. If you are not in a very good mood, you say, "Oh, how tedious it is going to be!" Supposing it is a professor who does not know how to entertain you (one can be a very good professor without knowing how to

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amuse you, for it is not always easy... there are days when one does not like to be amusing), one would like to be somewhere else rather than at the school. Still, you go to your class, in that way, you go because you have to go, for if you go about according to your whims, you will never have control over yourself, it will be your whims that will control you, it won't be you who will control yourself. You go to your class. But then, on your way there, instead of saying, "Oh, how bored I am going to be, oh, dear! it is not going to be at all interesting", etc., if you say, "There is not a minute in life, there is not a circumstance in one's existence that cannot bring an opportunity for progress; what then is the progress that I am going to make today?... I offer all my little person to the Divine. I want it to be a good instrument for Him to express Himself, that I may be ready one day for the transformation. What am I going to do today? I am going to that class, it is a subject that does not enthuse me; but if I do not know how to take interest in this work, it is perhaps because there is something lacking in me, because somewhere in my brain some cells are missing. But then, if that is so, I am going to try to find out; I am going to listen properly, concentrate properly and above all drive away from my mind this kind of frivolity, this outward levity which makes me feel bored when there's something I do not grasp. Why do I get bored?... Because I do not progress." When one does not progress, one gets bored — old and young, everybody — because we are here upon earth to progress. If we do not progress every minute, well, it is indeed boring, monotonous; it is not always pleasant, it is far from being fine. "So I am going to find out today what progress I can make in this class; there is something I do not know and which I can learn."

If you want to learn, you can learn at every moment. As for me I have learnt even by listening to little children's chatter. Every moment something may happen; someone may say a word to you, even an idiot may say a word that opens you to something enabling you to make some progress. And then,

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if you knew, how life becomes interesting! You can no longer get bored, that is gone, everything is interesting, everything is wonderful — because every minute you can learn, at each step make progress. For example, when you are in the street, instead of being simply there and not knowing what you are doing, if you look around, if you observe... I remember having been thus obliged to be in the street on a shopping errand or going to see someone or to purchase something, that's not important; indeed, it is not always pleasant to be in the street, but if you begin to observe and to see how this person walks, how that one moves, how this light plays upon that object, how this little bit of a tree there suddenly makes the landscape pretty, how hundreds of things shine... then every minute you can learn something. Not only can you learn, but I remember to have once had—I was just walking in the street—to have had a kind of illumination, because there was a woman walking in front of me and truly she knew how to walk. How lovely it was! Her movement was magnificent! I saw that and suddenly I saw the whole origin of Greek culture, how all these forms descend towards the world to express Beauty — simply because here was a woman who knew how to walk! You understand, this is how all things become interesting. And so, instead of going to the class and doing stupid things there (I hope none of you does that, I am sure all who come here to my class will never go and do stupid things at school, that it is exceptions that prove the rule; however, I know that unfortunately too many go there and do all the idiotic things one might invent), so, instead of that, if you could go to the class in order to make progress, every day a new little progress — even if it be the understanding why your professor bores you — it would be wonderful, for all of a sudden he will no longer be boring to you, all of a sudden you will discover that he is very interesting! It is like that. If you look at life in this way, life becomes something wonderful. That is the only way of making it interesting, because life upon earth is made to be a field for progress and if we progress to

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the maximum we draw the maximum benefit from our life upon earth. And then one feels happy. When one does the best one can, one is happy.

When one is bored, Mother, does that mean one does not progress?

At that time, yes, certainly without a doubt; not only does one not progress, but one misses an opportunity for progressing. There was a concurrence of circumstances which seemed to you dull, boring, stupid and you were in their midst; well, if you get bored, it means that you yourself are as boring as the circumstances! And that is a clear proof that you are simply not in a state of progress. There is nothing more contrary to the very reason of existence than this passing wave of boredom. If you make a little effort within yourself at that time, if you tell yourself: "Wait a bit, what is it that I should learn? What does all that bring to me so that I may learn something? What progress should I make in overcoming myself? What is the weakness that I must overcome? What is the inertia that I must conquer?" If you say that to yourself, you will see the next minute you are no longer bored. You will immediately get interested and you will make progress! This is a commonplace of consciousness.

And then, you know, most people when they get bored, instead of trying to rise a step higher, descend a step lower, they become still worse than what they were, and they do all the stupid things that others do, go in for all the vulgarities, all the meannesses, everything, in order to amuse themselves. They get intoxicated, take poison, ruin their health, ruin their brain, they utter crudities. They do all that because they are bored. Well, if instead of going down, one had risen up, one would have profited by the circumstances. Instead of profiting, one falls a little lower yet than where one was. When people get a big blow in their life, some misfortune (what men call "misfortune", there are people who do have misfortunes), the first thing they

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try to do is to forget it — as though one did not forget quickly enough! And to forget, they do anything whatsoever. When there is something painful, they want to distract themselves — what they call distraction, that is, doing stupid things, that is to say, going down in their consciousness, going down a little instead of rising up.... Has something extremely painful happened to you, something very grievous? Do not become stupefied, do not seek forgetfulness, do not go down into the unconscious; you must go to the end and find the light that is behind, the truth, the force and the joy; and for that you must be strong and refuse to slide down. But that we shall see a little later, my children, when you will be a little older.

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You have said: “And as for those who have the will of running away, even they, when they go over to the other side, may find that the flight was not of much use after all.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (28 April 1929)

What do you call “the other side”?

We speak of the other side of the veil, the other side of existence.

It is being no longer in the physical: being in the vital, for example, or in the conscious part of the vital. One becomes conscious of two sides and so knows what is happening. There are people who go out of their body methodically to have the experience of the separation between the two. But as for that, one must know how to do it, and one must not do it all alone. Someone should be there to look after and watch the body.

Are not offering and surrender to the Divine the same thing?

They are two aspects of the same thing, but not altogether the same. One is more active than the other. They do not belong to quite the same plane of existence.

For example, you have decided to offer your life to the Divine, you take that decision. But all of a sudden, something altogether unpleasant, unexpected happens to you and your first movement is to react and protest. Yet you have made the offering, you have said once for all: “My life belongs to the Divine”, and then suddenly an extremely unpleasant incident happens (that can happen) and there is something in you that reacts, that does not want it. But here, if you want to be truly logical with

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your offering, you must bring forward this unpleasant incident, make an offering of it to the Divine, telling him very sincerely: "Let Your will be done; if You have decided it that way, it will be that way." And this must be a willing and spontaneous adhesion. So it is very difficult.

Even for the smallest thing, something that is not in keeping with what you expected, what you have worked for, instead of an opposite reaction coming in — spontaneously, irresistibly, you draw back: "No, not that" — if you have made a complete surrender, a total surrender, well, it does not happen like that: you are as quiet, as peaceful, as calm in one case as in the other. And perhaps you had the notion that it would be better if it happened in a certain way, but if it happens differently, you find that this also is all right. You might have, for example, worked very hard to do a certain thing, so that something might happen, you might have given much time, much of your energy, much of your will, and all that not for your own sake, but, say, for the divine work (that is the offering); now suppose that after having taken all this trouble, done all this work, made all these efforts, it all goes just the other way round, it does not succeed. If you are truly surrendered, you say: "It is good, it is all good, it is all right; I did what I could, as well as I could, now it is not my decision, it is the decision of the Divine, I accept entirely what He decides." On the other hand, if you do not have this deep and spontaneous surrender, you tell yourself: "How is it? I took so much trouble to do a thing which is not for a selfish purpose, which is for the Divine Work, and this is the result, it is not successful!" Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, it is like that.

True surrender is a very difficult thing.

For self-surrender, should one continue to do what one ought to do?

Continue to do what one *ought* to, what is clearly shown as

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the thing that ought to be done, what is to be done — whether one succeeds or does not succeed, whether the result is what one thinks or expects or isn't — that has no importance; one continues.

But when one tries, if one makes a mistake unconsciously, how can one know?

If you are quite sincere, you know. Not to know one's fault is always the sign of an insincerity somewhere. And generally, it is hidden in the vital. When the vital consents to collaborate (which is already a big step), when it decides that it too is going to work, to devote all its effort and all its energy to accomplish the work, even then there is underneath, well hidden somewhere, a sort of — how shall we call it? — an expectation that things will turn out well and the result will be favourable. And that veils the complete sincerity. For this expectation is an egoistic, personal thing, and this veils the full sincerity. Then you do not know.

But if one is altogether, absolutely sincere, as soon as what one is doing is not exactly what should be done, one feels it very clearly — not violently but very clearly, very precisely: "No, not this." And then if one has no attachment, immediately it stops, instantaneously it stops.

But one has attachment, even for a disinterested work. That's what you must understand. You have given your life for a cause that is not egoistic, but the ego is there all the same. And you have a way of doing the thing which is special, personal to you; and you have within you a hope (not to speak of a desire) that the result will be like this, that you will get this and it will be done. Even a work that is not done for yourself but which you have undertaken, you expect that it will succeed, that you will have success — not personally — for the thing you have undertaken, the work that you are doing. Well, that brings in just a little bit of something like that, down below, quite hidden,

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quite a tiny thing which is a little... not very straight, a little bent, twisted. And then you do not know. But if that were not there, as soon as you failed to do exactly what should be done, you would know. You would know it absolutely precisely. It is as delicate a movement as the thousandth part of a millimetre would be. Yes, it is there, and that is sufficient, you know: "I was mistaken." But you must have that absolute sincerity which precisely does not want at any cost to blunder, which will do anything, give up everything, everything, rather than live in any kind of illusion. But it is very difficult; it takes time and much labour. When you are doing a thing, always those two, the mind and the vital are there, trying to draw some benefit or other out of what you are doing: the benefit of personal satisfaction, the benefit of happiness, the benefit of a good opinion that you have of yourself. It is difficult not to deceive oneself.

What is the exact way of feeling that we belong to the Divine and that the Divine is acting in us?

You must not feel with your head (because you may think so, but that's something vague); you must feel with your sense-feeling. Naturally one begins by wanting it with the mind, because that is the first thing that understands. And then one has an aspiration here (*pointing to the heart*), with a flame which pushes you to realise it. But if you want it to be truly *the* thing, well, you must feel it.

You are doing something, suppose, for example, you are doing exercises, weight-lifting. Now suddenly without your knowing how it happened, suddenly you have the feeling that there is a force infinitely greater than you, greater, more powerful, a force that does the lifting for you. Your body becomes something almost non-existent and there is this Something that lifts. And then you will see; when that happens to you, you will no longer ask how it should be done, you will know. That does happen.

It depends upon people, depends upon what dominates in

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their being. Those who think have suddenly the feeling that it is no longer they who think, that there is something which knows much better, sees much more clearly, which is infinitely more luminous, more conscious in them, which organises the thoughts and words; and then they write. But if the experience is complete, it is even no longer they who write, it is that same Thing that takes hold of their hand and makes it write. Well, one knows at that moment that the little physical person is just a tiny insignificant tool trying to remain as quiet as possible in order not to disturb the experience.

Yes, at no cost must the experience be disturbed. If suddenly you say: "Oh, look, how strange it is!"...

How can we reach that state?

Aspire for it, want it. Try to be less and less selfish, but not in the sense of becoming nice to other people or forgetting yourself, not that: have less and less the feeling that you are a person, a separate entity, something existing in itself, isolated from the rest.

And then, above all, above all, it is that inner flame, that aspiration, that need for the light. It is a kind of — how to put it? — luminous enthusiasm that seizes you. It is an irresistible need to melt away, to give oneself, to exist only in the Divine.

At that moment you have the experience of your aspiration.

But that moment should be absolutely sincere and as integral as possible; and all this must occur not only in the head, not only here, but must take place everywhere, in all the cells of the body. The consciousness integrally must have this irresistible need.... The thing lasts for some time, then diminishes, gets extinguished. You cannot keep these things for very long. But then it so happens that a moment later or the next day or some time later, suddenly you have the opposite experience. Instead of feeling this ascent, and all that, this is no longer there and you have the feeling of the Descent, the Answer. And nothing but the

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Answer exists. Nothing but the divine thought, the divine will, the divine energy, the divine action exists any longer. And you too, you are no longer there.

That is to say, it is the answer to our aspiration. It may happen immediately afterwards — that is very rare but may happen. If you have both simultaneously, then the state is perfect; usually they alternate; they alternate more and more closely until the moment there is a total fusion. Then there is no more distinction. I heard a Sufi mystic, who was besides a great musician, an Indian, saying that for the Sufis there was a state higher than that of adoration and surrender to the Divine, than that of devotion, that this was not the last stage; the last stage of the progress is when there is no longer any distinction; you have no longer this kind of adoration or surrender or consecration; it is a very simple state in which one makes no distinction between the Divine and oneself. They know this. It is even written in their books. It is a commonly known condition in which everything becomes quite simple. There is no longer any difference. There is no longer that kind of ecstatic surrender to "Something" which is beyond you in every way, which you do not understand, which is merely the result of your aspiration, your devotion. There is no difference any longer. When the union is perfect, there is no longer any difference.

Is this the end of self-progress?

There is never any end to progress — never any end, you can never put a full stop there.

Can that happen before the transformation of the body?

Before the transformation of the body?... This is a phenomenon of consciousness. For instance, the physical consciousness may have this experience even for years before the cells change. There is a great difference between the physical consciousness (the

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body consciousness) and the material body. This takes a long time, because it is a thing that has never been done. That state, as I have already told you, is a commonly known state which has been realised by some people, the most advanced, the highest among the mystics; but the transformation of the body has never been done by anyone.

And it takes a terribly long time. Sri Aurobindo said — one day I asked him: “How long will it take to transform the body?” He did not hesitate, he said: “Oh! something like three hundred years.”

Three hundred years from when?

Three hundred years from the time one has the consciousness I was just speaking about. (*Laughter*)

No, the conclusion, what you must succeed in doing, is to be able to prolong life at will: not to leave the body until one wants to.

So, if one has resolved to transform the body, well, one must wait with all the necessary patience — three hundred years, five hundred years, a thousand years, it does not matter — the time needed for the change. As for me, I see that three hundred years is a minimum. To tell you the truth, with the experience I have of things, I think it is truly a minimum.

Just imagine. You have never thought about what it means, have you? How is your body built? In a purely animal way, with all the organs and all the functions. You are absolutely dependent: if your heart stops for even the thousandth part of a second, you are gone and that's the end. The whole thing works and works automatically without your conscious will (happily for you, for if you had to supervise the functioning, it would have gone the wrong way long ago). All that is there. Everything is necessary, because it was organised in that manner. You cannot do without an organ, at least totally; there must be something in you representing it.

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Transformation implies that all this purely material arrangement is replaced by an arrangement of concentrations of force having certain types of different vibrations substituting each organ by a centre of conscious energy moved by a conscious will and directed by a movement coming from above, from higher regions. No stomach, no heart any longer, no circulation, no lungs, no... All this disappears. But it is replaced by a whole set of vibrations representing what those organs are symbolically. For the organs are only the material symbols of centres of energy; they are not the essential reality; they simply give it a form or a support in certain given circumstances. The transformed body will then function through its *real* centres of energy and not any longer through their symbolic representatives such as were developed in the animal body. Therefore, first of all you must know what your heart represents in the cosmic energy and what the circulation represents and what the stomach and the brain represent. To begin with, you must first be conscious of all that. And then, you must have at your disposal the original vibrations of that which is symbolised by these organs. And you must slowly gather together all these energies in your body and change each organ into a centre of conscious energy which will replace the symbolic movement by the real one.... You believe it will take only three hundred years to do that? I believe it will take much more time to have a form with qualities which will not be exactly those we know, but will be much superior; a form that one naturally dreams to see plastic: as the expression of your face changes with your feelings, so the body will change (not the form but within the same form) in accordance with what you want to express with your body. It can become very concentrated, very developed, very luminous, very quiet, with a perfect plasticity, with a perfect elasticity and then a lightness at will... Have you never dreamt of giving a kick to the ground and then soaring into the air, flying away? You move about. You push a little with your shoulder, you go this way; you push again, you go that way; and you go wherever you like, quite

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easily; and finally when you have finished you come back, enter your body. Well, you must be able to do that with your body, and also certain things related to respiration—but there will no longer be lungs; there's a true movement behind a symbolic movement which gives you this capacity of lightness; you do not belong any longer to the system of gravitation, you escape it.¹ And so for each organ.

There is no end to imagination: to be luminous whenever one wants it, to be transparent whenever one wants it. Naturally there is no longer any need of any bones also in the system; it is not a skeleton with skin and viscera, it is another thing. It is concentrated energy obeying the will. This does not mean that there will no longer be any definite and recognisable forms; the form will be built by qualities rather than by solid particles. It will be, if one may say so, a practical or pragmatic form; it will be supple, mobile, light at will, in contrast to the fixity of the gross material form.

So, to change this into what I have just described, I believe three hundred years are truly very little. It seems many more than that are needed. Perhaps with a very, very, very concentrated work...

Three hundred years with the same body?

Well, there is change, it is no longer the same body.

But, you see, when our little humanity says three hundred years with the same body, you say: “Why! when I am fifty it

¹ According to Sri Aurobindo, this true movement behind respiration is the same as the one governing electrical and magnetic fields; it is what the ancient yogis used to call Vayu, the Life-Energy. The breathing exercises (*prāṇāyāma*) are simply one system (among others) for acquiring mastery over Vayu which eventually enables you to be free from gravitation and gives certain powers known to the ancients: the power to be extremely light or extremely heavy, very big or very tiny (*garimā*, *laghimā*, *mahimā*, *aṇimā*). As an appendix to this talk we publish an extract from a conversation of Sri Aurobindo with a French scientist-disciple, dealing with some of these “true movements” behind the external movements of Matter.

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already begins to decompose, so at three hundred it will be a horrible thing!" But it is not like that. If it is three hundred years with a body that goes on perfecting itself from year to year, perhaps when the three hundredth year is reached one will say: "Oh! I still need three or four hundred more to be what I want to be." If each year that passes represents a progress, a transformation, one would like to have more and more years in order to be able to transform oneself more and more. When something is not exactly as you want it to be — take, for example, simply one of the things I have just described, say, plasticity or lightness or elasticity or luminosity, and none of them is exactly as you want it, then you will still need at least two hundred years more so that it may be accomplished, but you never think: "How is it? It is still going to last two hundred years more!" On the contrary, you say: "Two hundred years more are *absolutely* necessary so that it may be truly done." And then, when all is done, when all is perfect, then there is no longer any question of years, for you are immortal.

But there are many objections that may be raised. It may be said that it would be impossible for the body to change unless something changes in the surroundings also. What would be your relation with other objects if you have changed so much? With other beings also? It seems necessary that a whole set of things changes, at least in relative proportions, so that one can exist, continue to exist. This then brings much complication, for it is no longer one individual consciousness that has to do the work, it becomes a collective consciousness. And so it is much more difficult still.

(*Silence*)

If we are not conscious of all that the Divine is doing for us, do we not progress?

You progress, but you are not conscious of your progress; and

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so it is not a willed progress. That is, it is a progress that the Divine brings about in you without your collaboration. That takes much more time. It does occur, but it takes much more time. When you are conscious and collaborate and indeed do consciously what you should do, it is done much more quickly.

There are many people who are not even conscious, the immense majority of people are not even conscious of the action of the divine Force in them. If you speak to them about it, they look at you in round-eyed wonder, they think you are half mad, they don't know what you are talking about. That is the vast majority of human beings. And yet the Consciousness is at work, working all the time. It moulds them from within whether they want it or not. But then, when they become conscious of this, there are people who are shocked by it, who are so stupid as to revolt and say: "Ah! no, I want it to be *myself!*" Myself, that is, an imbecile who knows nothing. And then, that stage too passes. At last there comes a moment when one collaborates and says: "Oh! What joy!" And you give yourself, you want to be as passive and receptive as possible so as not to stand in the way of this divine Will, this divine Consciousness that is acting. You become more and more attentive, and exactly to the extent you become more attentive and more sincere, you feel in what direction, in what movement this divine Consciousness is working, and you give yourself to it wholly. The thing ripens more quickly. And in this way you are truly able to do in a few minutes the work that would otherwise take years. And that is the goal of yoga: one can do the work in a few hours, in a concentrated, shortened time; one can do in another way what Nature is doing — Nature will do it, Nature will succeed in transforming all this, but when one sees the time she has taken to do what she has done till now, if one wants to do all that in another way.... Evidently, for the divine Consciousness time means very little, but for the consciousness here, it is very long. There is a point of view from which you say: "Bah! That will be done, it is sure to come about, so it is all right, one has

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only to let things go on.” But then it is not the external human consciousness, it does not take part, for this tiny consciousness which has been formed by the body (this body that’s at present made in this way), well, it will have gone away long before the thing is done. Because after all the progress of Nature is not accomplished from one century to another. If we look back, we do not see that there has been really much progress in comparison with what man was some three thousand years ago—just a little, something; something that happens particularly in the head which understands a little better; and then a kind of control over what Nature does, an understanding of her processes; one begins to understand her tricks. Then as one begins to learn her tricks, one begins to intervene. But as one does not have the true knowledge, when one intervenes one may very easily make a lot of blunders.... Indeed, I do not know what will happen when men will know all the secrets of the formation of matter, for example. They have already invented a very fine way of destroying themselves. We shall see what is going to happen. But this is just a very small step; it happens particularly here (*pointing to the head*), with very relative material results.

How should one practise this consciousness?

You must establish this will to be conscious constantly and then change the mental will into an aspiration. You must have this movement. And then never to forget. You must look, look at yourself, and look at your life with the sincerity not to make a mistake, never to deceive yourself. Oh! how difficult it is!

Did you ever have spontaneously — spontaneously without effort — the perception that you had made a mistake? I am not speaking of an external reaction that gives you a knock, wakes you up suddenly and you say: “Oh my God, what have I done?” I am not speaking of that. When you do a thing, feel a thing, when you say a thing — take simply the petty quarrels like those I hear about at least a dozen of them a day (at least), idiotic, (I

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wonder how, having one's reason, one can quarrel about such things), well, at the time you utter those words that should not be uttered, that are simply silly, do you see that you are truly stupid — not to say anything worse — spontaneously?... You always give an excuse. You have always the feeling that the other person is wrong, and that you are right and that, indeed, he must be told that he is wrong, yes? Otherwise he would never know it! Isn't that so? I am putting the thing rather glaringly, as though under a small microscope, so that it may look a little bigger. But it is like that. And so long as it is like that, you are a million miles away from the true consciousness. When you are unable immediately, instantaneously to step back, put yourself in the place of the other person, understand why he has this feeling, have a glimpse of your own weakness, compare the two and come to the conclusion: "Well, it is that, that's the true thing", it means that you are still very far behind. When you are able to do it spontaneously, instantaneously, when it does not take time, when it is a natural movement, then you may feel satisfied that you have made a little progress.... How many times do you have the experience during the day? Even if you do not come to an open quarrel, how many times is the reaction there in the head, there, something that leaps up in the head, instead of this wisdom of equanimity which, at the very moment things are happening and it is observing them, understands how they are happening and why all this occurs — and that impersonally enough to be able to smile always and never have a violent reaction, never.

And even if you perceive the Truth, which is far beyond and far above, and the Truth that is not realised and you want to realise, if you have its clear vision and can see constantly the difference between what is true and what should be and what is false and deformed and must give place to the other, see it so clearly, there is no reaction any longer, and even things that seem to you most stupid, most idiotic, most obscure, most ignorant, most vulgar, most crude can make you smile, for you are able

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to see the whole length of the way you have to cover so that That which is up there may come down here. And if you had had violent reactions, long ago there would have been no world any more. Because, in truth, if the world could exist only on condition of its being true, then long ago it would have ceased to exist! For it has never been true even to this very day.

But if you remain in that consciousness and look from there, then you begin to understand something of the truth. And this consciousness has to be so total, that even if things come directly against you, even the physical movement of someone coming to beat you (you must not allow him to kill you, no; you have perhaps to do what is necessary not to get killed), but if you are yourself in this perfect consciousness and have no personal reaction, well, I give you the guarantee the other cannot kill you. He will not be able to, even if he tries. He will not be able to beat you, even if he tries. Only, you must not have a single violent or wrong vibration, you understand? Even if there is just a little false vibration, that opens the door and the thing enters and all goes wrong. You must be fully conscious, have the full knowledge, the perfect mastery over everything, the clear vision of the Truth — and perfect peace.

You must make an effort all the time.

Voilà.

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APPENDIX

*(Extract from a talk of Sri Aurobindo with
a French scientist-disciple)*

8 May 1926

In the West the highest minds are turned not towards spiritual truth but towards material science. The scope of science is very narrow, it touches only the most exterior part of the physical plane.

And even there, what does science know really? It studies the functioning of the laws, builds theories ever renewed and each time held up as the last word of truth! We had recently the atomic theory, now comes the electronic.

There are, for instance, two statements of modern science that would stir up deeper ranges for an occultist:

1. Atoms are whirling systems like the solar system.
2. The atoms of all the elements are made out of the same constituents. Different arrangement is the only cause of different properties.

If these statements were considered under their true aspect, they could lead science to new discoveries of which there is no idea at present and in comparison with which the present knowledge is poor.

According to the experience of ancient Yogis, sensible matter was made out of five elements, Bhutani: Prithivi, Apas, Agni (Tejas), Vayu, Akasha.

Agni is threefold:

1. Ordinary fire, Jada Agni,
2. Electric fire, Vaidyuta Agni,
3. Solar fire, Saura Agni.

Science has only entered upon the first and the second of these fires. The fact that the atom is like the solar system could

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lead it to the knowledge of the third.²

Beyond Agni is Vayu of which science knows nothing. It is the support of all contact and exchange, the cause of gravitation and of the fields (magnetic and electric). By it, the action of Agni, the formal element, the builder of forms, is made possible.

And beyond Vayu is the ether: Akasha.

But these five constitute only the grossest part of the physical plane. Immediately behind is the physical-vital, the element of life buried in matter. J. C. Bose is contacting this element in his experiments. Beyond is the mind in matter. This mind has a far different form than the human mind, still it is a manifestation of the same principle of organisation. And deep below there are two more hidden layers....

That is the occult knowledge concerning the physical plane only. Science is far behind this knowledge.

The Hindu Yogis who had realised these truths did not elaborate them and turn them into scientific knowledge. Other fields of action and knowledge having been open before them, they neglected what for them was the most exterior aspect of the manifestation.

There is a difference between the scientific mind and the cast of mind of an occultist. There is little doubt that one who could unite these two groups of faculties would lead science towards great progress.

² It is remarkable to observe that since then (1926) we have indeed discovered a third "fire", that which accompanies nuclear reactions—and that this fire is in fact that of the sun, the enormous radiation of which is liberated in course of the fusion of hydrogen nuclei into helium (Bethe cycle). The first fire is that of chemical reactions wherein molecules get destroyed and reconstituted without the constituent atoms being changed. The second fire comes from the modifications of the peripheral levels of the electrons in the atom, modifications which are at the origin of all electro-magnetic phenomena.

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"There is a state of consciousness in union with the Divine in which you can enjoy all you read, as you can all you observe, even the most indifferent books or the most uninteresting things. You can hear poor music, even music from which one would like to run away, and yet you can, not for its outward self but because of what is behind, enjoy it. You do not lose the distinction between good music and bad music, but you pass through either into that which it expresses. For there is nothing in the world which has not its ultimate truth and support in the Divine."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (28 April 1929)

What is there “behind” the external form of music?

Music is a means of expressing certain thoughts, feelings, emotions, aspirations. There is even a region where all these movements exist and from there, as they are brought down, they take a musical form. One who is a very good composer, with some inspiration, will produce very beautiful music, for he is a good musician. A bad musician may also have a very high inspiration; he may receive something which is good, but as he possesses no musical capacity, what he produces is terribly commonplace, ordinary, uninteresting. But if you go beyond, if you reach just the place where there is this origin of music — of the idea and emotion and inspiration — if you reach there, you can taste these things without being in the least troubled by the forms; the commonplace musical form can be linked up again with that, because that was the inspiration of the writer of the music. Naturally, there are cases where there is no inspiration, where the origin is merely a kind of mechanical music. It is not

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always interesting in every case. But what I mean is that there is an inner condition in which the external form is not the most important thing; it is the origin of the music, the inspiration from beyond, which is important; it is not purely the sounds, it is what the sounds express.

So the expression cannot be better than the inspiration?

There are musical pieces which have no inspiration, they are like mechanical works. There are musicians who possess a great virtuosity, that is, who have thoroughly mastered the technique and who, for example, can execute without making a mistake the fastest and most difficult things. They can play music but it expresses nothing: it is like a machine. It means nothing, except that they have great skill. For what is most important is the inspiration, in everything that one does; in all human creations the most important thing is inspiration. Naturally, the execution must be on the same level as the inspiration; to be able to express truly well the highest things one must have a very good technique. I do not say that technique is not necessary; it is even indispensable, but it is not the only indispensable thing, it is less important than inspiration.

The essential quality of music depends upon where the music comes from, upon its origin.

What does "its origin" mean?

Its starting point. Just as the spring is the source of the river.

Are there many sources for everything?

All physical life has the vital and mental life as its origin. The mental and the vital reality have themselves another origin, and so on. Nothing can be manifested physically upon earth that has not a higher truth at its origin, otherwise the world would not

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exist. If it were a flat thing having its origin in itself, it would very soon cease to exist. It is because there is a force which pushes, an energy which pushes towards manifestation, that life continues to exist. Otherwise it would exhaust itself very soon.

If everything that is manifested in the physical world has its origin in the higher Truth, what is it that makes it ugly when it expresses itself? Why are there ugly things at all?

Because there are forces that intervene between the origin and the manifestation.

If I ask you, “Do you know the truth of your being?” What will you say?... Do you know it? Well, the same holds for everything. And yet you are already a sufficiently evolved thinking being who has passed through all kinds of refinements. You are no longer quite like, let us say, a lizard that runs on the wall; and yet you would not be able to say what the truth of your being is. That is just the secret of all deformations in the world. It is because there is all the unconsciousness created by the fact of separation from the Origin. It is due to this unconsciousness that the Origin, though always there, is not able to manifest itself. It is there, that is why the world exists. But in its expression it is deformed because it manifests itself through the unconsciousness, ignorance and obscurity.

It is something I shall try to explain in the next issue of the *Bulletin*.¹ But still, very briefly summed up, it is this:

In creating the universe as it was, the Will was an individual projection — individual, you understand, a scattering: instead of being a unity containing all, it was a unity made of innumerable small unities which are individualisations, that is, things that feel themselves separated. And the very fact of being separated from all others is what gives you the feeling that you are an

¹ See *On Education*, CWM, Vol. 12, pp. 64–71.

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individual. Otherwise you would have the feeling that you were a fluid mass. For example, instead of being conscious of your external form and of everything in your being which makes of you a separate individuality, if you were conscious of the vital forces which move everywhere or of the inconscient that is at the base of all, you would have the feeling of a mass moving with all kinds of contradictory movements but which could not be separated from each other; you would not have the feeling of being an individual at all: you would have the feeling of something like a vibration in the midst of a whole. Well, the original Will was to form individual beings capable of becoming conscious once again of their divine origin. Because of the process of individualisation one must feel separate if one is to be an individual. The moment you are separated, you are cut off from the original consciousness, at least apparently, and you fall into the inconscient. For the only thing which is the Life of life is the Origin, if you cut yourself off from that, consciousness naturally is changed into unconsciousness. And then it is due to this very unconsciousness that you are no longer aware of the truth of your being.... It is a process. You cannot argue whether it is inevitable or evitable; the fact is it is like that. This process of formation and creation is the reason why purity no longer manifests in its essence and in its purity but through the deformation of unconsciousness and ignorance.... If you had answered immediately: "Yes, of course, I know the truth of my being!" it would have finished there, there wouldn't have been any problem.

That is why there is all this ugliness, there is death; that is why there is illness; that is why there is wickedness; that is why there is suffering. There is no remedy, there is only one way for all these things. All this is there in different domains and with different vibrations, but the cause of all is the same. It is inconscience produced because of the necessity of individual formation. Once again I do not say that it was indispensable. That is another problem which perhaps later on we shall be

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ready to solve; but for the moment we are obliged to state that that's how it is.

And so, the remedy? Since such is the cause, the only way of putting everything right is to become conscious once again. And this is very simple, very simple.

Suppose that there are in the universe two opposing and contradictory forces, as some religions have preached: there was good and evil, and there always will be good and evil, there will be a conflict, a battle, a struggle. The one that is stronger, whether it be the good or the evil, will win; if there is more of the good, the good will win and if there is more of the evil, the evil will win; but the two will always exist. If it were like that, it would be hopeless; one wouldn't have to say then that it is either difficult or easy, it would be impossible. One would not be able to get out of it. But actually that is not so.

Actually there is but one Origin and this origin is the perfection of Truth, for that is the only thing which truly exists; and by exteriorising, projecting, scattering itself, it brings forth what we see, and a crowd of tiny brains, very gentle, very brilliant, in search of something they have not yet seized but which they can seize, because what they are in search of is within them. That is a certainty. It may take more or less time, but it is sure to come. The remedy is at the very core of the evil. *Voilà*.

It has been called by various names, each one has presented it in his own way. According to the angle of seeing, one's experience differs. All those who have found the Divine within themselves have found Him in a certain way, following a certain experience and from a certain angle, and this angle was self-evident to them. But then, if they are not well on their guard, they begin to say: "To find the Divine, one must do this and do that. And it is like that and it is that path one should follow", because for them that was the path of success. When one goes a little further, has a little more experience, one becomes aware that it is not necessarily like that, it can be done through millions of ways.... There is only one thing that is certain, it is that what is

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found is always the same. And that's remarkable, that whatever the path followed, whatever the form given to it, the result is always the same. Their experience and everyone's is the same. When they have touched the Thing, it is for all the same thing. And this is just the proof that they have touched That, because it is the same thing for all. If it is not the same thing, it means that they have not yet touched That. When they have touched That, it is the same thing. And to That, you may give all the names you like, it makes no difference.

Words are words. After all, they mean nothing, unless there is something behind. Have you never noticed that when you speak to certain people, you may express yourself quite clearly and yet they understand nothing; and to others you say just two words and they understand immediately? You have not had this experience? No? I have had it often. Therefore, it does not depend upon the external form, the words one speaks, but on the force of the thought one puts into them; and the greater, stronger, more precise and clear the thought-force, the more the chance of what you say being understood by people who are able to receive that force. But if one speaks without thinking, usually it is impossible to understand what he says. It makes a kind of noise, that is all. For example, when you have the habit of speaking with someone, exchanging ideas with him, when between the two of you there is a certain mental adjustment, that is, when you have taken the precaution of saying, "When I use this word, I mean this", and the other person has said, "When I use that word, I mean that", and so on; when you are used to an interchange, when you have established a kind of contact between brain and brain — even if it be only that — you understand each other quite easily. But with people who come altogether from elsewhere, with whom you have never spoken, you need a little time to adjust and adapt yourself to understand what they mean by the words they use.... What is it that makes you understand? It is just the kind of mental sense that is behind the words. When the thought is strongly thought out, there is

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a powerful vibration and it is that which is sensed; the word is only an intermediary means. You can develop this sense to the point of having a direct mental contact with a minimum of words or even without any words at all; but then you must have a very great force of thought-concentration. And for everything one does, it is like that. When there is a developed consciousness behind, when one has the power to concentrate it, one can do anything at all — this consciousness will act.² Certainly it is not the bodily mechanism that makes you act; the mechanism is simply an instrument, nothing more. The day you catch that (it is invisible, but you can catch it), and when you catch it and put it into your movement, this movement becomes conscious and you do well whatever you do. The day you do not catch it, it slips from you like water through your fingers; and then you are clumsy, you do not understand, you do not know what to do. Hence, it is not the physical mechanism that counts, it is what is behind.

From what plane does music generally come?

There are different levels. There is a whole category of music that comes from the higher vital, which is very catching, somewhat (not to put it exactly) vulgar, it is something that twists your nerves. This music is not necessarily unpleasant, but generally it seizes you there in the nervous centres. So there is one type of music which has a vital origin. There is music which has a psychic origin — it is altogether different. And then there is music which has a spiritual origin: it is very bright and it carries you away, captures you entirely. But if you want to execute this music correctly you must be able to make it come through the vital passage. Your music coming from above may become

² At the time of the first publication of this talk, in 1968, Mother added the following commentary: "What is important is to keep the consciousness of the Presence, that is, the Presence must be concrete, and then all that one does and all that one says — whatever one may do and whatever one may say — it is this Presence that expresses itself."

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externally quite flat if you do not possess that intensity of vital vibration which gives it its splendour and strength. I knew people who had truly a very high inspiration and it became quite flat, because the vital did not stir. I must admit that by their spiritual practices they had put to sleep their vital completely — it was literally asleep, it did not act at all — and the music came straight into the physical, and if one were connected with the origin of that music, one could see that it was something wonderful, but externally it had no force, it was a little melody, very poor, very thin; there was none of the strength of harmony. When you can bring the vital into play, then all the strength of vibration is there. If you draw into it this higher origin, it becomes the music of a genius.

For music it is very special; it is difficult, it needs an intermediary. And it is like that for all other things, for literature also, for poetry, for painting, for everything one does. The true value of one's creation depends on the origin of one's inspiration, on the level, the height where one finds it. But the value of the execution depends on the vital strength which expresses it. To complete the genius both must be there. This is very rare. Generally it is the one or the other, more often the vital. And then there are those other kinds of music we have — the music of the *café-concert*, of the cinema — it has an extraordinary skill, and at the same time an exceptional platitude, an extraordinary vulgarity. But as it has an extraordinary skill, it seizes you in the solar plexus and it is this music that you remember; it grasps you at once and holds you and it is very difficult to free yourself from it, for it is well-made music, music very well made. It is made vitally with vital vibrations, but what is behind is frightful.

But imagine this same vital power of expression, with the inspiration coming from far above — the highest inspiration possible, when all the heavens open before us — then that becomes wonderful. There are certain passages of César Franck, certain passages of Beethoven, certain passages of Bach, there are pieces by others also which have this inspiration and power. But it is

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only a moment, it comes as a moment, it does not last. You cannot take the entire work of an artist as being on that level. Inspiration comes like a flash; sometimes it lasts sufficiently long, when the work is sustained; and when that is there, the *same effect* is produced, that is, if you are attentive and concentrated, suddenly that lifts you up, lifts up all your energies, it is as though someone opened out your head and you were flung into the air to tremendous heights and magnificent lights. It produces in a few seconds results that are obtained with so much difficulty through so many years of yoga. Only, in general, one may fall down afterwards, because the consciousness is not there as the basis; one has the experience and afterwards does not even know what has happened. But if you are prepared, if you have indeed prepared your consciousness by yoga and then the thing happens, it is almost definitive.

What is the cause of the great difference between European and Indian music? Is it the origin or the expression?

It is both but in an inverse sense.

This very high inspiration comes only rarely in European music; rare also is a psychic origin, very rare. Either it comes from high above or it is vital. The expression is almost always, except in a few rare cases, a vital expression — interesting, powerful. Most often, the origin is purely vital. Sometimes it comes from the very heights, then it is wonderful. Sometimes it is psychic, particularly in what has been religious music, but this is not very frequent.

Indian music, when there are good musicians, has almost always a psychic origin; for example, the *rāgas* have a psychic origin, they come from the psychic. The inspiration does not often come from above. But Indian music is very rarely embodied in a strong vital. It has rather an inner and intimate origin. I have heard a great deal of Indian music, a great deal; I have rarely heard Indian music having vital strength, very rarely; perhaps

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not more than four or five times. But very often I have heard Indian music having a psychic origin, it translates itself almost directly into the physical. And truly one must then concentrate, and as it is — how to put it? — very tenuous, very subtle, as there are none of those intense vital vibrations, one can easily glide within it and climb back to the psychic origin of the music. It has that effect upon you, it is a kind of ecstatic trance, as from an intoxication. It makes you enter a little into trance. Then if you listen well and let yourself go, you move on and glide, glide into a psychic consciousness. But if you remain only in the external consciousness, the music is so tenuous that there is no response from the vital, it leaves you altogether flat. Sometimes, there was a vital force, then it became quite good.... I myself like this music very much, this kind of theme developing into a play. The theme is essentially very musical: and then it is developed with variations, innumerable variations, and it is always the same theme which is developed in one way or another. In Europe there were musicians who were truly musicians and they too had the thing: Bach had it, he used to do the same sort of thing, Mozart had it, his music was purely musical, he had no intention of expressing any other thing, it was music for music's sake. But this manner of taking a certain number of notes in a certain relation (they are like almost infinite variations), personally I find it wonderful to put you in repose, and you enter deep within yourself. And then, if you are ready, it gives you the psychic consciousness: something that makes you withdraw from the external consciousness, which makes you enter elsewhere, enter within.

*In what form does music come to the great composers?
That is, is it only the melody that comes or is it what we
hear?*

But that depends upon the musician. This is just what I was saying. For example, here in India, the science of harmony does

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not exist much, so the thing is translated by melody. As soon as the vital intervenes, there comes a kind of harmonic complexity in the music. That gives it a richness, a plenitude which it did not have.

But is it the melody that comes?

No, it is the music, and music is not necessarily melody. It is a relation of sounds which is not necessarily melodic. Melody is a part of this relation of sounds.

"When the resolution has been taken, when you have decided that the whole of your life shall be given to the Divine, you have still at every moment to remember it and carry it out in all the details of your existence. You must feel at every step that you belong to the Divine; you must have the constant experience that, in whatever you think or do, it is always the Divine Consciousness that is acting through you."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (28 April 1929)

When one is conscious does one perceive the Divine in His form in everything?

Oh! that is, you expect to see a divine form in everything!... I do not know, that may happen. But I have the feeling that a great deal of imagination enters into it, for it is not like that. You change consciousness, you change the state of consciousness and change the states of perception.

If I understand well what you mean, you expect to see a form, like the form of Krishna for example, or the form of Christ, of Buddha, in every person? That seems to me childishness. But still I do not say that it cannot happen; I think it may happen. But there is in it much human consciousness added to the perception, for that would no longer be exactly

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what I have just told you: for those who have the consciousness of the Divine, when they are in contact with the Divine, whoever they may be, whatever age, whatever country they may belong to, the experience is the same. Whereas if it were as you say, then Indians would see one of their divinities, Europeans one of theirs, the Japanese one of their own, and so on. Then it would no longer be a pure perception, there would already be an addition of their own mental formation. It is no longer the Thing in its essence and purity, which is beyond all form.

But one may have a perception, and a very concrete perception of the Divine Presence, yes. One may have a very personal contact with the Divine, yes. But not in this way. And it is inexpressible, except for those who have had the experience. If you do not have an experience, I could speak to you for hours about it, you would understand nothing; it escapes all explanation. It is only when one has the experience that one can understand. And what do you expect? When you speak or write about things, there is necessarily a mental addition, otherwise you would not be able to speak, you would not be able to write. Well, it is this mental addition that has made people try to give an explanation of their experience, and then they have said or written things like this: "I see images of God." These are ways of speaking. It is possible that the thing you are speaking about may happen: to be suddenly in a particular state and see a Divine Presence and this Presence taking a form that's familiar to you — one is accustomed to associate certain forms with the Divine, due to one's education, tradition, and that takes an external form. But it is not the supreme essence of the experience, it is the form, and this gives a sort of limitation to the experience, it must take away from it its universality and a great deal of its power.

"Obviously, what has happened had to happen; it would not have happened, if it had not been intended. Even the mistakes that we have committed and the adversities

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that fell upon us had to be, because there was some necessity in them, some utility for our lives. But in truth these things cannot be explained mentally and should not be. For all that happened was necessary, not for any mental reason, but to lead us to something beyond what the mind imagines. But is there any need to explain after all? The whole universe explains everything at every moment and a particular thing happens because the whole universe is what it is.”

Ibid.

How does the universe explain at every moment the universe?

That is not what I have said. If you want an explanation of something, it is the universe that explains this something. And each thing is explained by everything; and you can explain nothing except by the whole universe and the entire universe is explained by everything.... Just see: if you read all the explanations given in all the sciences, all the branches of human knowledge, always one thing is explained by another, and if you want to explain this other you explain it by yet another and if you want to explain this other one too, you explain it by yet another. So you continue in this way and go round the universe in order to explain one thing. Only, usually people get tired after a time, they accept the last explanation and stick to it. Otherwise, if they continued to find an explanation, they would have to make the full round of all things and would come back always to the same point. Things are so because they are so, because they had to be so, otherwise they would not be. Things are so, because they are as they are. There's no doubt about it. And that indeed is supreme wisdom.

Is there not a physical law that is able to explain everything in the universe?

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Find it out, I shall be very glad.

Can it be found by science?

Yes, if it moves in a very definite direction, if it progresses sufficiently, if it does not stop on the way, scientists will find the same thing the mystics have found, and all religious people, everybody, because there is only one thing to find, there are not two. There is only one. So one can go a long way, one can turn round and round and round, and if one turns and turns long enough without stopping, one is bound to come to the same spot. Once there, one feels as though there is nothing at all to find. As I have just told you, there is nothing to find. It is That, the Power.³ It is That, that is all. It is so. Still another question?

Can the Divine withdraw from us?

That is an impossibility. Because if the Divine withdrew from a thing, immediately it would collapse, for it would not exist. To put it more clearly: The Divine is the only existence.⁴

³ Later on, a disciple asked Mother what she meant by, "It is That, the Power." Mother answered, "Yes, they will find the same thing the mystics have found and—religious people have found, as everybody has found—it is That, the Power. What one finds is the Power. And to That, essentially, you can give neither a name nor a definition.... That is now the big quarrel about Auroville: in the 'Charter' I put the 'Divine Consciousness' (to live in Auroville one must be a 'willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness', so they say: it makes you think of God. I said (*laughing*), as for me, it does not make me think of God! So some translate it as 'the highest consciousness', others put other things. I agreed with the Russians to put 'Perfect Consciousness', but that is an approximation.... And it is That—which you can neither name nor define—which is the supreme Power. It is Power that one finds. And the supreme Power is only an aspect: the aspect concerning the creation.)"

See *Notes on the Way* (13 and 16 March 1968).

⁴ At the time of the publication of this talk, Mother added: "Now I would have answered: it is as if you asked whether the Divine would withdraw from Himself! (Mother laughs.) Well, that is the trouble: when you say 'Divine', they understand 'God'.... There is *only* That, That alone exists. That, what is it? That alone exists."

See *Notes on the Way* (13 March 1968).

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If the Divine withdrew, it would mean that He would withdraw from the universe; there would no longer be any universe (this is an image to make you understand the thing, I speak of an impossibility). Human beings may withdraw from the Divine and they do it very often. But the Divine withdrawing from human beings, that's an impossibility.

By following the way of music or art or any other thing, why can't one arrive at the divine realisation and the transformation?

Who has told you that? Do you know all that is happening in you? Don't you think that there are many people who have realised the Divine, who have never said anything about it, known nothing about it?⁵ There are people who have spoken about it — philosophers, whose very profession necessarily is to express what happened to them. But there are people who have had experiences but never said anything. And I know there are artists who purely by their art attained the divine realisation.

As for transformation, I would be glad if you could show me an instance; I would be glad to see it. One example. Whatever the way one follows, whether it be the religious way, the philosophical way, the yogic ways, the mystic way, no one has realised transformation.

Since art does not arrive at transformation, it is not of much value!

But who has ever reached there till now, will you tell me? Neither philosophy, nor religion, nor yoga. If you put the value in realisation and in the transformation of the world, for example one

⁵ A disciple asked the Mother how one could realise the Divine and know nothing about it? The Mother answered: "It is once more the same thing. One might add: 'and know nothing about it mentally.' They did not say: 'I have realised the Divine', because that did not correspond to any mental conception."

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single individual transformation, admitting that it is possible, and I do not believe it, then nothing has any value, because nothing has ever reached there till today. Don't you understand?

Yes, I understand that.

Then why do you suddenly say that art has no value? Nothing has any value, because nothing has led to that? But everything helps. The whole universe is helping the transformation.

But it may happen that the artist after having reached a certain height where he is master of his art, has to stop his work to proceed towards the transformation of his life.

Why? For the transformation of his life? Who has told you that? If you were doing manual work, there are any number of artisans who have had a wonderful conversion. There is the example of a shoe-maker who became one of the greatest Yogis of the world. It does not depend on what one does, happily! You have to sit in meditation, like that, with an orange robe on, under a tree, to be able to realise the Divine?

So I do not understand anything of what you say.

There may come a time when one must change one's activity?

But by any path whatever, if you follow it sincerely enough and fairly constantly you arrive, by any path whatsoever — I tell you, you may make shoes and find the Divine. There are illuminating examples that are indisputable. It matters little what one does. There are numerous examples of people who were doing gardening, or cultivating, and who found the Divine even while they were working physically; they had no need to stop their

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work to do this. You do not understand? You believe one must have what? — a philosophical knowledge?

No, it is not that, but I do not know how to express myself....

No, I understand very well what you mean to say, but, excuse me, it is something foolish.

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“Freedom and fatality, liberty and determinism are truths that obtain on different levels of consciousness.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (28 April 1929)

What are these different levels of consciousness?

But I have explained it later on. All that follows is the explanation.

I have already spoken to you of the different planes of consciousness. Well, on the material plane, purely material (when separated from the vital plane), it is an absolute mechanism where consequently all things are linked together; and as I was saying the other day, if you want to find the cause of one thing or what is the result of a thing, you will find another and yet another and you will make an entire tour round the universe. And it is like that, everything is absolutely mechanised. Only, in this purely material plane, there can intervene the vital plane, and it already does intervene in the vegetable kingdom. The vital plane has an altogether different determinism, its own particular determinism. But when you introduce the vital determinism into the determinism of the physical, that produces a kind of combination that changes everything. And above the vital plane there is the mental plane. The mental plane also has its own determinism where all things are linked together rigorously.

But that is the movement which could be called “horizontal”. If you take a vertical movement, the mind descending into the vital and the vital descending into the physical, you have there three determinisms that intervene and naturally produce something altogether different. And where the mind has intervened the determinism will necessarily be different from the one where it does not intervene; that is, in the higher animal life

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there is already a mental determinism which intervenes that is altogether different from the determinism of the vegetable plane.

Above these planes there are others — above each plane there are others, following one another right up to the highest plane. The highest plane is the plane of absolute freedom. If in your consciousness you are capable of passing through all these planes, so to say in a vertical line, and reaching the highest plane and, by means of this connection, of bringing down this plane of perfect freedom into the material determinisms, you change everything. And all the intermediaries change everything. Then because of the very changes from level to level, it gives altogether the appearance of complete freedom; for the intervention or descent of one plane into another has unforeseen consequences for the other plane, the lower plane. The higher plane can foresee, but the lower ones cannot. So, as these consequences are unforeseen, that gives altogether the impression of the unexpected and of freedom. And it is only if you remain consciously and constantly on the highest level, that is, in the supreme Consciousness, that there you can see that, at the same time, all is absolutely determined but also, because of the complexity of the interlinking of these determinisms, all is absolutely free. It is the Plane where there are no more contradictions, where all things *are* and are in harmony without contradicting one another.

In the lower planes can't one say what will happen at a particular moment?

That depends. On certain planes there are consciousnesses that form, that make formations and try to send them down to earth and manifest them. These are planes where the great forces are at play, forces struggling with each other to organise things in one way or another. On these planes all the possibilities are there, all the possibilities that present themselves but have not yet come to a decision as to which will come down.... Suppose a plane full of the imaginations of people who want certain things

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to be realised upon earth — they invent a novel, narrate stories, produce all kinds of phenomena; it amuses them very much. It is a plane of form-makers and they are there imagining all kinds of circumstances and events; they play with the forces; they are like the authors of a drama and they prepare everything there and see what is going to happen. All these formations are facing each other; and it is those which are the strongest, the most successful or the most persistent or those that have the advantage of a favourable set of circumstances which dominate. They meet and out of the conflict yet another thing results: you lose one thing and take up another, you make a new combination; and then all of a sudden, you find, pluff! it is coming down. Now, if it comes down with a sufficient force, it sets moving the earth atmosphere and things combine; as for instance, when with your fist you thump the saw-dust, you know surely what happens, don't you? You lift your hand, give a formidable blow: all the dust gets organised around your fist. Well, it is like that. These formations come down into matter with that force, and everything organises itself automatically, mechanically as around the striking fist. And there's your wished object about to be realised, sometimes with small deformations because of the resistance, but it will be realised finally, even as the person narrating the story up above wanted it more or less to be realised. If then you are for some reason or other in the secret of the person who has constructed the story and if you follow the way in which he creates his path to reach down to the earth and if you see how a blow with the fist acts on earthly matter, then you are able to tell what is going to happen, because you have seen it in the world above, and as it takes some time to make the whole journey, you see in advance. And the higher you rise, the more you foresee in advance what is going to happen. And if you pass far beyond, go still farther, then everything is possible.

It is an unfolding that follows a wide road which is for you unknowable; for all will be unfolded in the universe, but in what order and in what way? There are decisions that are taken

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up there which escape our ordinary consciousness, and so it is very difficult to foresee. But there also, if you enter consciously and if you can be present up there... How shall I explain that to you? All is there, absolute, static, eternal: but all that will be unfolded in the material world, naturally more or less one thing after another; for in the static existence all can be there, but in the becoming all becomes in time, that is, one thing after another. Well, what path will the unfolding follow? Up there is the domain of absolute freedom.... Who says that a sufficiently sincere aspiration, a sufficiently intense prayer is not capable of changing the path of the unfolding?

This means that all is possible.

Now, one must have a sufficient aspiration and a prayer that's sufficiently intense. But that has been given to human nature. It is one of the marvellous gifts of grace given to human nature; only, one does not know how to make use of it.

This comes to saying that in spite of the most absolute determinisms in the horizontal line, if one knows how to cross all these horizontal lines and reach the highest Point of consciousness, one is able to make things change, things apparently absolutely determined. So you may call it by any name you like, but it is a kind of combination of an absolute determinism with an absolute freedom. You may pull yourself out of it in any way you like, but it is like that.

I forgot to say in that book (perhaps I did not forget but just felt that it was useless to say it) that all these theories are only theories, that is, mental conceptions which are merely more or less imaged representations of the reality; but it is not the reality at all. When you say "determinism" and when you say "freedom", you say only words and all that is only a very incomplete, very approximate and very weak description of what is in reality within you, around you and everywhere; and to be able to begin to understand what the universe is, you must come out of your mental formulas, otherwise you will never understand anything.

To tell the truth, if you live only a moment, just a tiny

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moment, of this absolutely sincere aspiration or this sufficiently intense prayer, you will know more things than by meditating for hours.

"The Supreme Consciousness... gives to the individual in the active life of the world his sense of freedom and independence and initiative. These things in him are Her pragmatic tools or devices and it is through this machinery that the movements and issues planned and foreseen elsewhere are realised here."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (28 April 1929)

These "things in him", that is in the individual, are: the sense of freedom, independence and initiative. You know what independence is? It is precisely the freedom of choice. Independence means the freedom of choice and initiative means the fact of choosing. First of all, one feels that one is free; and then one feels that no one can prevent him from choosing; and finally one uses his freedom to choose and one decides. These are the three stages. So these three stages: the feeling that you are free, the idea that you are going to use your freedom for choosing and then the choice — these three things I call the pragmatic tools and devices.

I am sorry, my children, all this is said in a form a little too philosophical which I do not now approve of very much. I was obliged to speak a language which now appears to me a little too complicated. But what is to be done, it was like that. I was saying that these three things, the feeling of freedom, the will to choose and the choice made are the devices that Nature uses in us to make us act, otherwise we would not move.

If we did not have this illusion that we are free, this second illusion that we can use our freedom for choosing and the third illusion of choosing, well, we would not move. So Nature gives us these three illusions and makes us move, for she requires us to move.

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She, with a capital S, I said it was the Supreme Consciousness, but in fact it is Nature and it is the trick of Nature; for the Supreme Consciousness has no tricks, it is Nature that has tricks. The Supreme Consciousness quite simply enters into all things with all her consciousness, because it is *the* consciousness: and with that She tries to make all this unconscious move towards consciousness, simply, without any tricks. She has no need of tricks, She is everywhere. She is at work everywhere and She puts consciousness into the unconscious. When you light a lamp in a dark room, as soon as you turn on the electricity, the room is no longer dark. As soon as you put consciousness in, there is no longer any unconsciousness. So that is what She does. Wherever She sees unconsciousness, She tries to enter. Sometimes the doors are locked, then it takes a little more time, but sometimes the doors open, then She rushes in immediately, the unconsciousness disappears and consciousness comes — without needing any tricks or any intermediaries. She becomes conscious. But material Nature, physical Nature is not like that, she is full of tricks; she makes you move all the time, she pulls the puppet strings; for her you are so many little dolls: she pulls the strings and makes them move. She puts all kinds of illusions in your head so that you may do the things she wants, without even your wanting it. She does not require that you should want it: she pulls the thread and you do it.

That is why we quarrel at times, but don't tell anyone!

You have said here that we are “tied to the chain of Karma”, but then sometimes when the Divine Grace acts, that contradicts...

Completely, the Divine Grace completely contradicts Karma; you know, It makes it melt away like butter that's put in the sun.

That is what I was saying just now. What you have just told me is another way of speaking. I was putting myself in your place and asking: There you are, if you have an aspiration that's

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sincere enough or a prayer that's intense enough, you can bring down in you Something that will change everything, everything — truly it changes everything. An example may be given that is extremely limited, very small, but which makes you understand things very well: a stone falls quite mechanically; say, a tile falls; if it gets loose, it will fall, won't it? But if there comes, for example, a vital or mental determinism from someone who passes by and does not want it to fall and puts his hand out, it will fall on his hand, but it will not fall on the ground. So he has changed the destiny of this stone or tile. It is another determinism that has come in, and instead of the stone falling on the head of someone, it falls upon the hand and it will not kill anybody. This is an intervention from another plane, from a conscious will that enters into the more or less unconscious mechanism.

So the consequences of Karma are not rigorous?

No, not at all. In all religions there are people who have said that, who have given such absolute rules, but I believe it was in order to substitute themselves for Nature and pull the strings. There is always this kind of instinct that wants to take the place of Nature and pull the strings of people. So they are told: "There is an absolute consequence of all that you do...." It is a concept necessary at a given moment of evolution to prevent people from being in a completely unconscious egoism, in a total unconsciousness of the consequences of what they do. There is no lack of people who are still like that, I believe it is the majority; they follow their impulses and do not even ask themselves whether what they have done is going to have any consequences for them and for others. So it is good that someone tells you straight, with a severe look: "Take care, that has consequences which will last for a very long time!" And then there are others who come and tell you: "You will pay for it in another life." That, however, is one of those fantastic stories.... But it does not matter: this also

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can be for the good of people. There are other religions which tell you: "Oh! If you commit that sin, you will go to hell for eternity." You can imagine!... So people have such a fright that it stops them a little, it gives them just a moment for reflection before obeying an impulse — and not always; sometimes the reflection comes afterwards, a little late.

It is not absolute. These are still mental constructions, more or less sincere, which cut things into small bits like that, quite neatly cut, and tell you: "Do this or do that. If it is not this, it will be that." Oh! what a nuisance is this kind of life. And so people go mad, they are frightened! "Is it like that or rather this?" And they want it to be neither this nor that, what should they do?— They have only to climb to a higher storey. They must be given the key to open the door. There is a door to the staircase, a key is needed. The key, as I told you just now, is the sufficiently sincere aspiration or the sufficiently intense prayer. I said "or", but I do not think it is "or". There are people who like one better and others, the other. But in both there is a magical power, you must know how to make use of it.

There is something very beautiful in both, I shall speak to you about it one day, I shall tell you what there is in aspiration and what in prayer and why both of them are beautiful.... Some dislike prayer; if they entered deep into their heart, they would find it was pride — worse than that, vanity. And then there are those who have no aspiration, they try and they cannot aspire; it is because they do not have the flame of the will, it is because they do not have the flame of humility.

Both are needed. There must be a very great humility and a very great will to change one's Karma.

Voilà, au revoir, my children.

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"Attacks from adverse forces are inevitable: you have to take them as tests on your way and go courageously through the ordeal. The struggle may be hard, but when you come out of it, you have gained something, you have advanced a step. There is even a necessity for the existence of the hostile forces. They make your determination stronger, your aspiration clearer.

"It is true, however, that they exist because you gave them reason to exist. So long as there is something in you which answers to them, their intervention is perfectly legitimate. If nothing in you responded, if they had no hold upon any part of your nature, they would retire and leave you."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (5 May 1929)

Sometimes when an adverse force attacks us and we come out successful, why are we attacked once again by the same force?

Because something was left inside. We have said that the force can attack only when there is something which responds in the nature — however slight it may be. There is a kind of affinity, something corresponding, there is a disorder or an imperfection which attracts the adverse force by responding to it. So, if the attack comes, you must keep perfectly quiet and send it back, but it does not necessarily follow that you have got rid of that small part in you which allows the attack to come.

You have something in you which attracts this force; take, for example (it is one of the most frequent things), the force of depression, that kind of attack of a wave of depression that falls upon you: you lose confidence, you lose hope, you have the

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feeling you will never be able to do anything, you are cast down. It means there is in your vital being something which is naturally egoistic, surely a little vain, which needs encouragement to remain in a good state. So it is like a little signal for those forces which intimates to them: "You can come, the door is open." But there is another part in the being that was watching when these forces arrived; instead of allowing them to enter, the part which sees clearly, which knows, which has power, which resists, says: "No, I do not want that, it is not true, I do not want it", and sends them back. But you have not necessarily been cured of the little thing within you which permitted them to come. You must go very deep within, work within you persistently to be able to efface all possibility of calling. And so long as you have not completely effaced it, the attack will recur almost unexpectedly. You push it back — it is like a ball you throw against the wall, back it returns; you push it back once again and again it returns — until the moment there is no longer anything to attract it. Then it does not return again.

Therefore, the most important thing to do when you are attacked by an adverse force, is to say to yourself: "Yes, the force comes from outside and the attack is there, but there must certainly be a correspondence in my nature, otherwise it could not have attacked me. Well, I am going to look and find within me what allows this force to come and I am going to send it back or transform it or put the light of consciousness upon it so that it may be converted, or drive it away so that it remains no longer within me...." There is a way, you see? When the force comes, the adverse force, when it attacks, the part which corresponds rushes out to meet it, it goes forward. A kind of meeting takes place. If at that time, instead of being altogether overwhelmed or taken by surprise and off your guard, you observe very closely what it was within you that vibrated (it makes the sound tat, tat, tat: another thing has entered), then you can catch it. At that moment, you catch it and say to it: "Get out with your friends, I don't want you any longer!" You send away the two together,

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the part that attracted and the thing it attracted; they are sent away and you are absolutely clear.

For that, you must be very vigilant and have a little courage, in the sense that at times you have to grip it hard and then pull it out — it hurts a little — and then you throw it out along with the forces you send away. After that, it is finished. And so long as this is not done, it comes back and back again; and then if one is not in oneself sufficiently courageous or vigilant or persevering, the fourth or fifth time one falls flat and says: "That's too much, I have had enough!" So the force installs itself, contented, satisfied with its work; and then you can see it laughing, it enjoys itself immensely, it got what it wanted. Now to send it back again means a very considerable work. But if you follow the other method, if you look closely this way: "Well, I am going to catch the thing that has allowed it to come", you see somewhere within you something rising, wriggling, coming up in response to the evil force which is approaching. That is the moment to seize it and throw it out with all the rest.

But when we throw it out, it does not die. Then it can go elsewhere once more, for it remains in the world.

Exactly. It remains in the world and it will surely go elsewhere — until it meets someone who has sufficient spiritual and occult power to dissolve it, and that is very difficult.... One must be very strong, possess a very great knowledge and power to dissolve a movement that has (this can be said at least) its reason for existence in the world — I do not say it is legitimate, but still it has its reason for existence. There are things which can be dissolved; but if somewhere in the world it exists in someone, he can reconstitute it. It is the same thing when people are attacked by small beings of the vital world, hostile beings who attack them, install themselves in their atmosphere, trying to possess them, that is, enter into them and use their body and all the rest. These beings — it is very difficult for the individual to get

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rid of them: that needs a very, very hard yoga. But one who has the knowledge and the power and who sees them can very well get them out of the atmosphere and destroy them. But if one who is attacked keeps within himself this little affinity which allowed the thing to enter, then he will recall it. I have had several examples of the kind, several.

I had the example of a person who was three-fourths possessed and at the moment manifested a kind of power, a force that was not very good, but all the same it gave the impression of a force, a power, a capacity. Only he recognised that it was bad and was for evil, and prayed to be relieved of it. The opportunity comes: the being shows itself separately from the person it possesses, it can be seized, pulled out and dissolved. Then the one who had been possessed suddenly feels that he is becoming as commonplace as anybody else. That feeling of power he had is now lost and he feels he is becoming quite ordinary and says: "I have no special faculties, I have no special value, I have no special capacity, I am quite an ordinary person and less than ordinary, of a sickening commonness!" Now what does he do? He prays to have his possession back again. And so a few days later, I find him as possessed as ever.

Well, here it is truly not worth the trouble. One has only to leave them to their fate. This has happened many a time. In such people, you know, it is a kind of vanity which generally opens the door to those forces; they wished to be big, powerful, to play an important role, to be somebody; that attracts the force and so they become like that, possessed. The thing is taken away from them: all their remarkable capacity disappears at the same time and their self-satisfied vanity as well. They have the feeling they have become something quite ordinary and a tiny little thing within them says: "Oh! it was better before...." For one that is destroyed, there are always ten ready to come in. That's how it is, it is a strange task!

You know the story of Durga, don't you? Durga who every year has to destroy her asura; and always she is compelled to

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begin again. It goes on in this way till the end of the reign allotted to the titans. When they will be banished from this world, it will not be thus any longer. But till then, that is as long as they are useful (as I have said in this book) for intensifying the aspiration, clarifying the consciousness, for putting to the test the sincerity of people, they will be there. The day the test will not be needed, the day the sincerity will be pure and self-existent they will disappear. Then that day, Durga will no longer need to begin her battle over again every year.

Would it not be better to change them?

Ah! my child, certainly it would be better, much better. But then...

It is a domain of which I have a thorough experience. After forty years of sustained effort I have found out that it is absolutely impossible to change anyone unless in truth he wants it sincerely. If he does not set himself to the task with an absolute sincerity, well—I have tried for forty years, one can try it for a hundred and forty years, it will be the same thing—he won't stir. It is the very character of these beings to be perfectly satisfied with themselves, and they do not desire, they have not the least intention to change! Even now, among the beings who are concerned with the earth, the asuric beings, the greatest of the asuras who is still busy with the earth at present, who is the asura of falsehood and calls himself the “Lord of the Nations”—he has taken a beautiful name, he is Lord of the Nations—it is he, wherever there is something going wrong, you may be sure it is he or a representative of his who is there. It is also perfectly sure that very soon his hour will come and all will be over for him, that he will have to disappear. And he absolutely refuses to change. He has no intention to do it, for immediately he will lose all his power. It is impossible. And he knows that he will disappear. But he proclaims categorically that before disappearing he will destroy all he can.... At heart, he would

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not consent to disappear unless everything disappeared at the same time as he. Unfortunately for him, this is not possible. But he will do all that lies in his power to destroy, demolish, ruin, corrupt as many things as he can. That is certain. Afterwards it is the downfall. He accepts the downfall on this condition. It has never crossed his mind that he might be converted. It would no longer be he, don't you see, he would no longer be himself.

There is a great difference between a human being and these beings of the vital plane. I have told you this many times, I am going to repeat it:

In a human being, there is the divine Presence and the psychic being — at the beginning embryonic, but in the end a being wholly formed, conscious, independent, individualised. That does not exist in the vital world. It is a special grace given to human beings dwelling in matter and upon earth. And because of this, there is no human being who cannot be converted, if he wants it; that is, there is a possibility of his wanting it and the moment he wants it, he can do it. He is sure to succeed the moment he wants it, whereas those beings of the vital do not have a psychic being in them, they do not have the direct divine Presence (naturally, at the Origin, they descended directly from the Divine, but that was at the Origin, that is very far away). They are not in direct contact with the Divine within them, they have no psychic being. And if they were converted, there would remain nothing of them! For they are made up entirely of the opposite movement: they are entirely made up of personal self-assertion, despotic authority, separation from the Origin, and, of a great disdain for all that is pure, beautiful and noble. They do not have within them this psychic element which in man, even in the most debased, makes him respect what is beautiful and pure; even the basest man, in spite of himself, against his own will, respects what is pure, noble and beautiful. But those beings do not have that. They are wholly on the other side, totally on the other side. It disgusts them in every way. It is for them something which should not be touched, because it destroys; it is

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the thing that makes them disappear. Goodwill, sincerity, purity and beauty are things which make them disappear. So they hate these things.

Now I do not know on what grounds one could convert them. What would be the point of support? I do not find it. Even in the greatest. That is, some of these beings will not disappear until hatred disappears from the earth.... One might put it the other way round. One might say that hatred will disappear from the earth when those beings disappear; but, for the reason I have just given, the power to make light spring forth in the place of darkness, beauty in the place of ugliness, goodness instead of evil, that power man possesses, the Asura does not. Therefore it is man who will do that work, it is he who will change, it is he who will transform his earth and it is he who will compel the Asura to flee into other worlds or to dissolve. After that, all will be quiet. There you are.

Any questions?

You have said here, in reference to the mind: “Any part of the being that keeps to its proper place and plays its appointed role is helpful; but directly it steps beyond its sphere, it becomes twisted and perverted and therefore false. A power has the right movement when it is set into activity for the Divine purpose; it has the wrong movement when it is set into activity for its own satisfaction.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (5 May 1929)

When a part of the being steps beyond its sphere, why does it get deformed and perverted?

I use the word “sphere” in the sense of the place and the role one has to play. Each part of the being has its place in the whole and a definite role to play. If instead of playing that role, it wishes to play another, naturally it loses the qualities necessary for it to

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play its true role, and it cannot take up any others because they are foreign to it. So necessarily it gets deformed and perverted. For example, we say here that the true role of the mind is a formative role in relation to action. An idea enters the mind, the mind seizes it and gives it a form to realise it, changes it into a motive of action and sends it out towards the material field. The mind organises the idea so that it may be realised in action. This is its true role, and so long as it does that and does it with care, it fulfils its role, it abides in its place and is quite useful. But if the mind imagines that it knows, that it has no need of receiving knowledge and ideas from another part of the being — a higher part — if it imagines that it knows and, by the association of inner movements, believes it has found some knowledge, which can never be but a reflection of something else, and if it wants to impose this knowledge upon the physical life, then it leaves its role and becomes a tyrant — this happens quite often to it, it is then completely perverted and instead of helping the sadhana, it brings it down. You can easily make this observation. Naturally, one must be able to follow the true working, the activities within oneself.

It is the same thing with the vital. The vital is meant to put in the drive, the realising force, the enthusiasm, the energy necessary for the idea formed by the mind to be transmitted to the body and realised in action. Well, so long as the vital limits itself to this activity, that is, sets all its energy, enthusiasm, strength to work in order to collaborate with the idea, it is very good. But if instead of that, all of a sudden, it is seized by a desire — and this happens to it quite often — and it uses all its qualities to realise, not the higher idea which wanted to manifest, but its own desire, then it steps beyond its zone of action, it gets perverted, it deforms everything and succeeds in creating catastrophes.

Sometimes we do not notice that the adverse forces are attacking us; why don't we?

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You do not notice it! That happens when you are not alert, when you are not attentive, when you are busy with altogether external things, the tiny little things of daily practical life. Then the forces can attack you, enter into you, install themselves without even your noticing it. Most often, they do not attack you directly thus, because if they attack you directly, there is a chance of your feeling it (you may feel uneasy suddenly, that may awaken your attention). They go down into the unconscious and then come up, like that, quietly from below. So you do not know at all what is happening to you. When you are aware of it, it is already there, thoroughly installed, quite comfortably.

Sometimes one cannot distinguish adverse forces from other forces.

That happens when one is quite unconscious.

There are only two cases when this is possible: you are either very unconscious of the movements of your being — you have not studied, you have not observed, you do not know what is happening within you — or you are absolutely insincere, that is, you play the ostrich in order not to see the reality of things: you hide your head, you hide your observation, your knowledge and you say, "It is not there." But indeed the latter I hope is not in question here. Hence it is simply because one has not the habit of observing oneself that one is so unconscious of what is happening within.

Have you ever practised distinguishing what comes from your mind, what comes from your vital, what comes from your physical?... For it is mixed up; it is mixed up in the outward appearance. If you do not take care to distinguish, it makes a kind of soup, all that together. So it is indistinct and difficult to discover. But if you observe yourself, after some time you see certain things, you feel them to be there, like that, as though they were in your skin; for some other things you feel you would have to go within yourself to find out from where they come;

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for other things, you have to go still further inside, or otherwise you have to rise up a little: it comes from unconsciousness. And there are others; then you must go very deep, very deep to find out from where they come. This is just a beginning.

Simply observe. You are in a certain condition, a certain undefinable condition. Then look: "What! how is it I am like that?" You try to see first if you have fever or some other illness; but it is all right, everything is all right, there's neither headache nor fever, the stomach is not protesting, the heart is functioning as it should, indeed, all's well, you are normal. "Why then am I feeling so uneasy?"... So you go a little further within. It depends on cases. Sometimes you find out immediately: yes, there was a little incident which wasn't pleasant, someone said a word that was not happy or one had failed in his task or perhaps did not know one's lesson very well, the teacher had made a remark. At the time, one did not pay attention properly, but later on, it begins to work, leaves a painful impression. That is the second stage. Afterwards, if nothing happened: "All's well, everything is normal, everything usual, I have nothing to note down, nothing has happened: why then do I feel like that?" Now it begins to be interesting, because one must enter much more deeply within oneself. And then it can be all sorts of things: it may be precisely the expression of an attack that is preparing; it may be a little inner anxiety seeking the progress that has to be made; it may be a premonition that there is somewhere in contact with oneself something not altogether harmonious which one has to change: something one must see, discover, change, on which light is to be put, something that is still there, deep down, and which should no longer be there. Then if you look at yourself very carefully, you find out: "There! I am still like that; in that little corner, there is still something of that kind, not clear: a little selfishness, a little ill-will, something refusing to change." So you see it, you take it by the tip of its nose or by the ear and hold it up in full light: "So, you were hiding! you are hiding? But I don't want you any longer." And then it has to go away.

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This is a great progress.

If this sort of thing happens in the class, if one feels uneasy...

That happens to you in the class? It means you do not listen to your teacher, otherwise it would not happen. If you were very attentive in your class and paid attention to your lesson, that could not happen to you. When you came out of it, then you would feel that, but not in the class. This means that you were dreaming or living within you or following your imagination, but you were not listening to your lessons.... But it is this that's wonderful, my children: when you are learning something, when you are studying, when you are concentrated on your lesson, these things never happen to you. They may happen before, they may happen afterwards; but they won't happen at that time. For if you are quite concentrated, all your energies are concentrated on your study and there is nothing unpleasant there. You understand what you learn and you are interested in what you learn.

Sometimes, one tries to concentrate but one can't.

If truly you can't, then you have only to spend your time in seeking within yourself for the reason why it is so! Then if the teacher asks you a question, you have to tell him: "I am sorry, I was not listening."

You don't like to learn?

Yes

Then how can this happen?

But in some classes, I do not understand.

Then in some classes, you do not like to learn! You can say

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

Understand instead of learning.

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

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trate, concentrate, concentrate sufficiently until... suddenly you are on the other side, and then you emerge into the light and you understand: "Ah! that's wonderful! Now I understand." A very tiny thing gives you a great joy.

You see it is possible not to get bored at school.

At school one has to finish a course in a year. One must hasten a little at times. Before one has been able to understand a question well, one has to go to the next chapter.

There, my child, I fully agree with you, it is not quite right. But we shall try to change all that; because after all I don't see why one has to finish a book in a year. It is quite arbitrary. One should not leave a chapter until it has been fully grasped; only then take up the next one and so on. And if a chapter is finished, it is finished: and if it is not finished it is not finished.

The truth is that the teacher, instead of basing his course on a text-book, should take the trouble of preparing the course himself. He must know enough and take sufficient pains to prepare his course from day to day, and in this way he will close a subject only when—I do not say when everyone has understood, for that is impossible—but at least when those whom he considers the interesting elements of his class have understood. Then the next subject is taken up. And if that continues, if a particular type of subject extends over two years instead of one or for a year and a half instead of two, it matters little; because it is his own production, his own course written by him and he writes according to the need of his class. That is my conception of teaching. Now, it has indeed its difficulties. But that is the true way of working, because by taking a book and following it, particularly a book which may very well be not at all suited to the students.... I do not say that a particular course could suit all, it is impossible to satisfy everybody. But there are those who want to make an effort; it is these that you must consider. Those

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who are lazy, somnolent or indolent—well, you must leave them to their laziness or somnolence or indolence. If they want to sleep all their lives, let them sleep until something shakes them up sufficiently and awakens them! But what is interesting in a class is the section that wishes to learn, those who really want to learn and it is for them that the class should be taken. Don't you see, the present method of education is a kind of levelling; everyone must be at the same stage. So those who have their heads higher up have them cut off, and those who are too small are pushed up from below. But that doesn't do any good. One must be concerned only with those who come up, the others will take what they can. And indeed I do not see any necessity for everybody knowing the same thing—for that is not normal. But those who want to know and who can know, those who must work, these should be given all possible means for working, must be pushed up as much as possible, must always be given new food. They are the hungry ones, they must be fed.... Ah! If I had the time I would take a class. That would interest me much, to show how it must be done. Only one cannot be everywhere at the same time!

There you are, my children, now it is very late. Good night.

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"There is a true movement of the intellect and there is a wrong movement: one helps, the other hinders."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (5 May 1929)

What is the true movement of the intellect?

What exactly do you understand by intellect? Is it a function of the mind or is it a part of the human being? How do you understand it?

A function of the mind.

A function of the mind? Then it is that part of the mind which deals with ideas; is that what you mean?

Not ideas, Mother.

Not ideas? What else, then?

Ideas, but...

There is a part of the mind which receives ideas, ideas that are formed in a higher mind. Still, I don't know, it is a question of definition and one must know what exactly you mean to say.

It is intellect that puts ideas in the form of thoughts, gathering and organising the thoughts at the same time. There are great ideas which lie beyond the ordinary human mentality, which can put on all possible forms. These great ideas tend to descend, they want to manifest themselves in precise forms. These precise forms are the thoughts; and generally it is this, I believe, that is meant by intellect: it is this that gives thought-form to the ideas.

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And then, there is also the organisation of the thoughts among themselves. All that has to be put in a certain order, otherwise one becomes incoherent. And after that, there is the putting of these thoughts to use for action; that is still another movement.

To be able to say what the true movement is, one must know first of all which movement is being spoken about. You have a body, well, you don't expect your body to walk on its head or its hands nor to crawl flat on its belly nor indeed that the head should be down and the legs up in the air. You give to each limb a particular occupation which is its own. This appears to you quite natural because that is the habit; otherwise, the very little ones do not know what to do, neither with their legs nor with their hands nor with their heads; it is only little by little that they learn that. Well, it is the same thing with the mind's functions. You must know which part of the mind you are speaking about, what its own function is, and then only can you say what its true movement is and what is not its true movement. For example, for the part which has to receive the master ideas and change them into thought, its true movement is to be open to the master ideas, receive them and change them into as exact, as precise, as expressive a thought as possible. For the part of the mind which has the charge of organising all these thoughts among themselves so that they might form a coherent and classified whole, not a chaos, the true movement is just to make the classification according to a higher logic and in a thoroughly clear, precise and expressive order which may be serviceable each time a thought is referred to, so that one may know where to look for it and not put quite contradictory things together. There are people whose mind does not work like that; all the ideas that come into it, without their being even aware of what the idea is, are translated into confused thoughts which remain in a kind of inner chaos. I have known people who, from the philosophical point of view — although there is nothing philosophical in it — could put side by side the most contradictory things, like ideas

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of hierarchic order and at the same time ideas of the absolute independence of the individual and of anarchism, and both were accepted with equal sympathy, knocked against each other in the head in the midst of a wild disorder, and these people were not even aware of it!... You know the saying: "A question well put is three-fourths solved." So now, put your question. What do you want to speak about? I am stretching out a helping hand, you have only to catch it. What is it you are speaking about, what is it that you call intellect? Do you know the difference between an idea and a thought?

Not quite.

Ah! That is the first hurdle. Can anybody here tell me? (*To a child*) You, do you know the difference between an idea and a thought?

A thought is something vague, more vague than an idea.

No, it is not a question of a vague thought in a vague mind or a clear thought when the mind is clear. It is not like that.

You said just now that ideas came from above and were translated into thoughts.

Yes, but how do they come from above?

From the higher parts of the mind.

Yes, but could you give me an idea and the thoughts in which it can be expressed? That is what I am asking. Can anyone give me an example? (*Looking at a disciple*) He is longing to speak. Tell us something, we shall see.

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The manifestation of the Divine upon earth is an idea and the transformation is a thought.

Ah, you are a monist? If I am not mistaken, this is the principle of monism.

It is a thought of God that has made the universe, but now instead of a thought, we say an idea.

Has anyone something interesting to say?

(A teacher) *In logic, it is said: "Mortality" is an idea, and "man is mortal", is a thought.*

Now, have you understood the difference between idea and thought? It is clear. The idea is translated into all kinds of thoughts. They may be the most contradictory thoughts and the whole thing is to organise them in a coherent way. I think I have told you many times that contradictory thoughts may be found in union if one rises high enough, climbs towards the idea.... One could perhaps play at this little game, it would be very interesting. We have a thesis, we are going to find an antithesis, and then we shall find the synthesis.

Who will propose the thesis?... Ah! I am going to propose this immediately: "Man is mortal." The antithesis is: "Man is immortal." Now find the place where the two agree: the synthesis.

It is ignorance that prevents man from uniting with immortality.

It is a rather vague way of putting the thing. One could say it more intellectually. One could say: in his reality, man is immortal; and because of ignorance or of unconsciousness, he has become mortal. That's better? And then one can go a little further: Why is he immortal? Why is he mortal? And how being mortal can he become immortal?

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Whatever the part of the being, whether it be the intellect or any other part, whether it is in the mind or the vital or anywhere else, the true movement is a double movement: first, it must not intercept the divine Truth in its manifestation, and secondly, it must help in its manifestation. A negative side, consisting in not being a screen, not intercepting anything, not blocking the passage of the divine force seeking to express itself; on the other side, to be sufficiently clear and pure to be able to help this manifestation.

One can apply this everywhere, it is very convenient. *Voilà.*
Now, any other question?

If men did not die, with age their body would become useless?

Ah! No. You are looking from the wrong side. They could escape dying only if their body did not decay. It is just because their body decays that they die. It is because their body becomes useless that they die. If they are not to die, their body should not become useless. This is just the contrary. It is precisely because the body decays, declines and ends in a complete degradation that death becomes necessary. But if the body followed the progressive movement of the inner being, if it had the same sense of progress and perfection as the psychic being, there would be no necessity for it to die. One year added to another need not bring a deterioration. It is only a habit of Nature. It is only a habit of what is happening at *this* moment. And that is exactly the cause of death. One can foresee quite well, on the contrary, that the movement for perfection which is at the beginning of life might continue under another form. I have already told you that one does not foresee an uninterrupted growth, for that would need changing the height of the houses after some time! But this growth in height may be changed into a growth in perfection: the perfection of the form. All the imperfections of the form may be gradually corrected, all the weaknesses replaced by strength,

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all the incapacities by skill. Why should it not be like this? You do not think in that way because you have the habit of seeing things otherwise. But there is no reason why this should not happen.

Have you ever seen a tree growing, a palm tree? There is one in the Ashram courtyard, in the Samadhi courtyard, quite close to the door by which you come up every day, have you never seen how it grows? This tree, you know, is some forty, forty-five or fifty years old perhaps. You see how small it is. These trees can become even much taller than the building. They can live several hundred years, easily, in their natural state, if there is no accident. Have you never seen what it does? I see it from above. It is quite pretty. It happens once a year. At first, you see a kind of small brown ball. Then this small brown ball begins to grow and becomes slightly lighter in colour, less deep. Little by little, you see that it is made of a mass of somewhat complex small lines, with their tips bent inward, as though turned back upon themselves; and that begins to grow, it comes out, becomes more and more limpid, until it begins to turn green, a little pale yellowish green and it takes the form of the bishop's cross. Then you see it multiplying and separating; it is yet a little brown, a little queer (almost like you), something like a caterpillar. And suddenly, it is as though it sprang out, it leaps forth. It is pale green; it is frail. It has a delightful colour. It lengthens out. This lasts for a day or two; and then on the following day there are leaves. These leaves I have never counted, I do not know how many they are. Every time there is a new range of leaves. They remain very pale; they are exquisite. They are like a little child, with that something tender, pretty and graceful a child has. And you have still the feeling that it is fragile; and indeed, if it receives a blow, it is spoilt for life. It is very frail, but it is delightfully tender. It has its charm and you say: "But why does not Nature remain like that?" The following morning... pluff! they are separated, they are bright green, they look wonderful with all the strength and force of youth, a magnificent brilliant

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green. It should stop there — not at all. It continues. Then comes the dust, the deterioration from people who pass by. So it begins to fall, to become yellowish, another kind of yellow, the yellow of dryness until it is completely withered and falls away. It is replaced by the trunk. Every year the trunk increases a little. And it will take several hundred years to reach the end. But every year, it repeats the same thing, passes through all the stages of beauty, charm, attractiveness and you say: "But why does it not stop there?" And the next minute, it is something else. You cannot say it is better, but it is different. And so it passes from one thing to another through all the stages of flowering. Then the accidents begin; with the accidents comes deterioration, and with deterioration there is death.

It is like that. But accidents are not indispensable. And even what looks like death helps in the growth of the tree. One sheds off something, but it's in order to grow again and have something more. One must be able to keep the harmony and the beauty till the end. There is no reason why one should have a body which has no longer any purpose in being, in existing; because it would no longer be good for anything. To be no longer good for anything, that is exactly what makes it disappear. One could have a body that grows from perfection to perfection. There are many things in the body that make you say: "Ah, if it were like that! Ah, I would like it to be thus!" (I am not speaking of your character, for there are so many things that need changing; I am speaking only of your physical appearance). You see some disharmony somewhere and you say: "If this disharmony disappeared, how much better would it be!"... But why don't you think that it could be done? If you look at yourself in quite an objective way — not with that sort of attachment one has for one's little person, but quite objectively, — you look at yourself as you would look at another person and tell yourself: "But this thing is not altogether in harmony with that", and if you look yet more closely, it becomes very interesting: you discover that this disharmony is the expression

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of a defect in your character. It is because in your character there is something a bit twisted, not quite harmonious, and in your body this is reproduced somewhere. You try to arrange it in your body and you find out that to get back to the source of this physical disharmony, you have to find out the defect in your inner being. And then you begin to work and the result is obtained.

You don't know to what an extent the body is plastic! From another standpoint, I would say it is terribly rigid and that is why the body deteriorates. But that is because we do not know how to make use of it. We do not know, when we are still fresh like little leaves, how to will for a luxuriant, magnificent, faultless flowering. And instead of telling oneself with a somewhat miserable look: "It is a pity my arms are too thin or my legs are too long or my back is not straight or my head is not quite harmonious", if one said: "It must be otherwise, my arms must be proportionate, my body harmonious, every form in me must express a higher beauty", then one will succeed. And you will succeed if you know how to do it with the true will that is persistent, tranquil, that is not impatient, does not care for appearances of defeat, continues its work quietly, very quietly, continues to will that it be so, to look for the inner reason, to discover it, to work with energy. Immediately, as soon as you see a little black worm somewhere, which does not look pretty and makes a small rather unpleasant, disgusting stain, you pick it up, pull it out and throw it away and put a lovely light in its place. And after a time you discover: "Why! that disharmony I had in my face is disappearing; that sign of brutality, unconsciousness which was in my expression, it is going away." And then ten years later you don't recognise yourself any longer.

You are all, here, youthful matter; you must know how to profit by it—and not for petty, selfish and stupid reasons but for the love of beauty, for the need of harmony.

If the body is to last, it must not deteriorate. There must not

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be any decay. It must win on one side: it must be a transformation, it must not be a decay. With decay there is no possibility of immortality.

Where does one go after death?

Ah, my child, you need a book! It is not one question! Well, it will be for next time. Besides, I believe there is a chapter which speaks about it, if I remember well. We shall have occasion to speak about it.... I shall tell you one thing immediately: when you are born upon earth, do you know where you are going? And all the people on earth, do they all go to the same place? Tell me that!

Everyone follows his way. Everyone has a different destiny. Why should it be the same for all when they are dead? For each one it is a different thing.

Good night.

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"The beings of the vital world are powerful by their very nature; when to their power they add knowledge, they become doubly dangerous. There is nothing to be done with these creatures; you should avoid having any dealings with them unless you have the power to crush and destroy them. If you are forced into contact with them, beware of the spell they can cast. These vital beings, when they manifest on the physical plane, have always a great hypnotic power; for the centre of their consciousness is in the vital world and not in the material and they are not veiled or dwarfed by the material consciousness as human beings are."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (12 May 1929)

Mother, you say: "These beings are very powerful"; what kind of power have they?

The power that the vital has over Matter. And, in fact, you can do nothing without the vital power. If there were no vital power, Matter would be inert and unconscious. The vital power is what men usually call "power" in short.

Cannot the vital power be replaced by some other higher power?

No. The vital must be transformed. I have always said that nothing can be done without the vital, but the vital must be converted; that is, instead of being an instrument of those beings, it should become an instrument of the divine will. One can do nothing in the physical world without the vital. It is exactly here that the error of the ascetics lies; as they know it is

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a power full of desires and indeed full of the need of realising itself, they abolish it, so deaden it that it exists no longer. All ascetic methods are invented for abolishing and deadening the vital. For that evidently is the most convenient way of cutting off all connection with material life: one becomes worse than a vegetative kind of being.

What is needed is that the vital, instead of serving its own ends or being an instrument of anti-divine forces, should become an instrument of the Divine and put all its force at the service of the Divine. This is quite possible.

When we are afraid, is that due to the mischief of these beings?

Yes, my child. Fear is the prettiest gift these beings have given to the world. It is their first present, and the most powerful. It is through fear that they hold human beings. First of all, they create a movement of fear; the movement of fear weakens you, then hands you over little by little into their power. And it is not even a reasonable fear; it is a kind of fear which seizes you, you don't know why, something that makes you tremble, gives you anxiety. You do not know why, it has no apparent reason. It is their action.

When one feels frightened, what should one do?

That depends upon who you are. There are many ways of curing oneself of fear.

If you have some contact with your psychic being, you must call it immediately and in the psychic light put things back in order. This is the most powerful way.

When one does not have this psychic contact, but is still a reasonable being, that is, when one has a free movement of the reasoning mind, one can use it to reason with, to speak to oneself as one would to a child, explaining that this fear is a bad thing

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in itself and, even if there is a danger, to face the danger with fear is the greatest stupidity. If there is a real danger, it is only with the power of courage that you have a chance of coming out of it; if you have the least fear, you are done for. So with that kind of reasoning, manage to convince the part that fears that it must stop being afraid.

If you have faith and are consecrated to the Divine, there is a very simple way, it is to say: "Let Your will be done. Nothing can frighten me because it is You who are guiding my life. I belong to You and You are guiding my life." That acts immediately. Of all the means this is the most effective: indeed, it is. That is, one must be truly consecrated to the Divine. If one has that, it acts immediately; all fear vanishes immediately like a dream. And the being with the bad influence also disappears like a dream along with the fear. You should see it running away at full speed, prrt! *Voilà*.

Now, there are people having a strong vital power in them and they are fighters who immediately lift up their heads and say: "Ah! an enemy is here, we are going to knock him down." But for that one must have the knowledge and a very great vital power. One must be vitally a giant. That does not happen to everyone.

So there are many different ways. They are all good, if you know how to make use of the one that suits your own nature.

In gymnastics when I want to take a jump and feel frightened, why does this happen?

Ah! there, my children, it depends.... You must distinguish two very different things and you must deal with them very differently.

If it is a vital fear, you must reason with yourself and go about it all the same. But if it is a physical instinct (that is possible, it happens very often that there is a kind of physical instinct), in that case you must listen to it, for the instinct of the

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body is a very sure thing, if it is not disturbed by thought or vital will. The body left to itself knows very well what it can and what it cannot do. And not only that but even a thing that one can do and does usually, if one day you feel a sort of repulsion, as if you were shrinking back, you must definitely not do it; it is an indication that for some reason or other — a purely material reason of a disorder in the functioning of the body — you are not fit to do the thing at that time. Then you must not do it. In that case, it is not even a fear, it is something that shrinks, that withdraws, there is nothing in the head, it does not correspond to any kind of thought like: "What is going to happen?" When the head starts working and you say: "What is going to happen?", you must sweep it away because it is worth nothing; you must use all the means of reason and good sense you have to drive that away. But if it is a purely physical sensation, as though something were contracting, a kind of physical repugnance, if the body itself is refusing, so to say, you should never force it, never, because it is usually when you force it that there's an accident. That may very well be a kind of premonition that there's going to be an accident, that if you do the thing, you will not go far. And in such a case you must not do it. You must not put into it the least *amour-propre*. You must realise: "Today I am not in a good condition."

But if it is a vital fear, if for example you have a competition or a tournament, and you felt this kind of fear and then: "What is going to happen?", you must sweep it away quickly, it means nothing.

But sometimes, it is laziness that prevents us from doing a thing.

Ah! if you are tamasic, that is yet something else. If you have a tamasic nature, you must use another procedure. You must exert your consciousness, your will, your force, gather your energy, shake yourself a little and whip yourself and say: "Hup! hup!"

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forward, march." If it is laziness that keeps you back from, say, doing the vaulting, you must immediately do something much more tiring and say: "Well, you don't want to do that? All right, you are going to do 1500 metres running!" Or else: "I don't want to do the weight-lifting today, I don't feel like doing it: good, I shall do skipping 4000 times at a stretch."

The same method should be used for studies also?

Yes, exactly. If you don't feel like learning your lesson, you take a book ten times more tiring, something dry and compel yourself to read it with attention. There are books of this kind, so dry, of such an arid kind of knowledge... Well, if you don't feel like reading your book of history or geography, which are after all very easy and very entertaining, instead of that take one of those books that are given to you (*Mother looks at a teacher*) — I do not dare to say anything, because your teacher is there! — extremely arid, and compel yourself to study at least half the book. Afterwards, everything else appears charming to you.

Would it not be better to continue the work even if one feels lazy?

That depends on the work; there we enter another domain.

If it is a work that you are doing for the collectivity and not for yourself personally, then you must do it, whatever happens. It is an elementary discipline. You have undertaken to do this work or have been given the work and have taken it up, therefore you have accepted it, and in that case you must do it. At all times, unless you are absolutely ill, ill in the last degree and unable to move, you must do it. Even if you are rather ill, you must do it. An unselfish work always cures you of your petty personal maladies. Naturally, if you are really compelled to be in bed without being able to move, with a terrible fever or a very serious illness, then that's quite different. But otherwise, if

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you are just a little indisposed: "I am not feeling quite well, I have a little headache or I have indigestion, or I have a bad cold, I am coughing", things like that — then doing your work, not thinking of yourself, thinking of the work, doing it as well as you can, that puts you right immediately.

In reality illness is only a disequilibrium; if then you are able to establish another equilibrium, this disequilibrium disappears. An illness is simply, always, in every case, even when the doctors say that there are microbes — in every case, a disequilibrium in the being: a disequilibrium among the various functions, a disequilibrium among the forces.

This is not to say that there are no microbes: there are, there are many more microbes than are known now. But it is not because of that you are ill, for they are always there. It happens that they are always there and for days they do nothing to you and then all of a sudden, one day, one of them gets hold of you and makes you ill — why? Simply because the resistance was not as it used to be habitually, because there was some disequilibrium in some part, the functioning was not normal. But if, by an inner power, you can re-establish the equilibrium, then that's the end, there is no more difficulty, the disequilibrium disappears.

There is no other way of curing people. It is simply when one sees the disequilibrium and is capable of re-establishing the equilibrium that one is cured. Only there are two very different categories you come across... Some hold on to their disequilibrium — they hold on to it, cling to it, don't want to let it go. Then you may try as hard as you will, even if you re-establish the equilibrium the next minute they get into disequilibrium once again, because they love that. They say: "Oh no! I don't want to be ill", but within them there is something which holds firmly to some disequilibrium, which does not want to let it go. There are other people, on the contrary, who sincerely love equilibrium, and directly you give them the power to get back their equilibrium, the equilibrium is re-established and in a few minutes they are

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cured. Their knowledge was not sufficient or their power was not sufficient to re-establish order — disequilibrium is a disorder. But if you intervene, if you have the knowledge and re-establish the equilibrium, quite naturally the illness will disappear; and those who allow you to do it get cured. Only those who do not let you do it are not cured and this is visible, they do not allow you to act, they cling to the illness. I tell them: "Ah! you are not cured? Go to the doctor then." And the funniest part of the thing is that most often they believe in the doctors, although the working remains the same! Every doctor who is something of a philosopher will tell you: "It is like that; we doctors give only the occasion, but it is the body that cures itself. When the body wants to be cured, it is cured." Well, there are bodies that do not allow equilibrium to be re-established unless they are made to absorb some medicine or something very definite which gives them the feeling that they are being truly looked after. But if you give them a very precise, very exact treatment that is sometimes very difficult to follow, they begin to be convinced that there is nothing better to do than to regain the equilibrium and they get back the equilibrium!

I knew a doctor who was a neurologist and treated illnesses of the stomach. He used to say that all illnesses of the stomach came from a more or less bad nervous state. He was a doctor for the rich and it was the rich and unoccupied people who went to him. So they used to come and tell him: "I have a pain in the stomach, I cannot digest", and this and that. They had terrible pains, they had headache, they had, well, all the symptoms! He used to listen to them very seriously. I knew a lady who went to him and to whom he said: "Ah! your case is very serious. But on which floor do you live? On the groundfloor? All right. This is what you have to do to cure your illness of the stomach. Take a bunch of fully ripe grapes (do not take your breakfast, for breakfast upsets your stomach), take a bunch of grapes; hold it in your hand, like this, very carefully. Then prepare to go out — not by your door, never go out by your door! You must go

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out by the window. Get a stool. And go out by the window. Go out in the street, and there you must walk while eating one grape every two steps — not more, yes, not more! You will have stomach-ache! One single grape every two steps. You must take two steps, then eat one single grape and you should continue till there are no more grapes. Do not turn back, go straight on till there are no more grapes. You must take a big bunch. And when you have finished, you may return quietly. But do not take a conveyance! Come back on foot, otherwise the whole trouble will return. Come back quietly and I give you the guarantee that if you do that every day, at the end of three days you will be cured.” And in fact this lady was cured!

(A child) *Sometimes there is a lot of work. One does not know what to do.*

A lot of work... Truly a lot of work?

Many kinds of work. For example, in our studies, we have many subjects to read.

What do you do the whole day, from morning till evening? How much time do you devote to your toilet, to take your bath, to dress? Approximately, not exactly to a minute.

About three quarters of an hour.

How much time do you take for eating?

Fifteen minutes.

Every time? How many times per day? Four? All right. How much time do you spend in gossiping?... That you don’t know!

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I don't gossip.

You don't gossip! You are a marvel, indeed. I shall put you on a pedestal. You don't gossip?

Yes, I gossip, but when I have work, I don't gossip.

Yes. And how many hours per day do you need to work to be able to do your tasks?

In the morning sometimes I get up at half-past four.

To do your home-work? You are still half asleep, aren't you, at half-past four? Are you quite awake?... No! Ah! And then, you start working immediately?

Yes, sometimes.

Because I am leading exactly towards that... When you work, if you are able to concentrate, you can do absolutely in ten minutes what would otherwise take you one hour. If you want to gain time, learn to concentrate. It is through attention that one can do things quickly and one does them much better. If you have a task that should take you half an hour — I don't say if you have to write for half an hour of course — but if you have to think and your mind is floating about, if you are thinking not only of what you are doing but also of what you have done and of what you will have to do and of your other subjects, all that makes you lose thrice as much time as you need to do your task. When you have too much to do, you must learn how to concentrate exclusively on what you are doing, with an intensity in your attention, and you can do in ten minutes what would otherwise take you one hour.

So I do not know, I cannot decide without full knowledge of the matter, if you have too much work, unless you bring me

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all the work you have to do; but I do not believe that you are overburdened with work. I say I do not believe it. Now, I do not assert this because I do not know what all the teachers do. But in any case, if you have much to do, you must learn how to concentrate much, all the more, and when you are doing a thing, to think of that only, and focus all your energy upon what you do. You gain at least half the time. So if you tell me: "I have too much work", I answer: "You do not concentrate enough."

(Another child) *For a mathematical problem, sometimes the solution comes quickly, sometimes it takes too long.*

Yes, it is exactly that: it depends on the degree of concentration. If you observe yourself, you will notice this quite well: when it does not come, it is because of a kind of haziness in the brain, something cloudy, like a fog somewhere, and then you are there as in a dream. You push forward trying to find it, and it is as though you were pushing into cotton-wool, you do not see clearly there; and so nothing comes. You may remain in that state for hours.

Concentration consists precisely in removing the cloud. You gather together all the elements of your intelligence and fix them on one point, and then you do not even try actively to find the thing. All that you do is to concentrate in such a way as to see only the problem — but seeing not only its surface, seeing it in its depth, what it conceals. If you are able to gather together all your mental energies, bringing them to a point which is fixed on the enunciation of the problem, and you stay there, fixed, as though you were about to drill a hole in the wall, all of a sudden it will come. And this is the only way. If you try: Is it this, is it that, is it this, is it that?... You will never find anything or else you will need hours. You must get your mental forces to a point with strength enough to pierce through the words and strike upon the thing that is behind. There is a thing to be found — find it.

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And it is always the days you are a little hazy that it becomes difficult. You are hazy: as though there is something you seem to catch and which escapes you.

Naturally, if it is materially impossible — you do not have to deal with monsters! I believe your teachers are reasonable enough and if you go to them and say, “Well, I could not do it, I had no time, I did what I could, I did not have the time”, they won’t scold you, I don’t think so. But here ninety-nine times out of a hundred, it is a kind of half-inertia of the mind which makes you think that you have too much work. If you observe yourself, you will find out that there is always something which pulls this way, something which pulls that way and then this kind of haziness as though you were living in cottonwool, in the clouds: nothing is clear.

The usefulness of work is nothing else but that: to crystallise this mental power. For, what you learn (unless you put it in practice by some work or deeper studies), half of what you learn, at least, will vanish, disappear with time. But it will leave behind one thing: the capacity of crystallising your thought, making something clear out of it, something precise, exact and organised. And that is the true usefulness of work: to organise your cerebral capacity. If you remain in your hazy movement in that kind of cloudy fluidity, you may labour for years, it will be quite useless to you; you will not come out of it more intelligent than when you entered it. But if you are able, even for half an hour, to concentrate your attention on things that seem to you of very little interest, like a rule of grammar, for example (the rules of grammar are some of the dry things I was speaking about, there are other things much more arid, but indeed the rules of grammar are sufficiently arid), if you take one of them and try to understand it — not learn it by heart and apply mechanically what you have learnt by heart, that will be of no use — but try to understand the thought behind the words: “Why was this rule formulated in this way?” and try to find out your own formula for the thing; that is so interesting. “Why has this gentleman

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who wrote this rule written it in this way? But I am studying, trying to understand why. Why has he put this word after that and that word after that other, and why has he stated the rule in this way? It is because he thought that it was the most complete and the most clear way of expressing the thing." And so that's the thing you must find. And when you find it, you suddenly exclaim: "That is what it means! It must be seen in this way, then it becomes very clear."

I am going to explain it to you: when you have understood, it forms a little crystal in you, like a little shining point. And when you have put in many, many, many of these, then you will begin to be intelligent. That is the utility of work, not simply to stuff the head with a heap of things that take you nowhere.

How is it that in people occupied with scientific studies artistic imagination is lacking? Are these two things opposed to each other?

Not necessarily.

In general?

They do not belong to the same domain. It is exactly as though you had what is called "a torchlight", a small beacon-light in your head at the place of observation. Scientists who want to do a certain work turn the beacon in a particular way, they always put it there and the beacon remains thus: they turn it towards matter, towards the details of matter. But people with imagination turn it upward, because up above there is everything, you know, all inspirations of artistic and literary things: this comes from another domain. It comes from a much more subtle domain, much less material. So these turn upward and want to receive the light from above. But it is the same instrument. The others turn it downwards, and it is just a lack of gymnastic skill. It is the same instrument. It is the same power of a luminous ray

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upon something. But as one has made it a habit of concentrating it in a certain direction, one is no longer supple, one loses the habit of doing things otherwise.

But you can at any time do both the things. When you are doing science, you turn it in one direction and when you do literature and art, you turn it in the other direction; but it is the same instrument: all depends on the orientation. If you have concentration, you can move this power of concentration from one place to another and in every way it will be effective. If you are occupied with science, you use it in a scientific way, and if you want to do art, you use it in an artistic way. But it is the same instrument and it is the same power of concentration. It is simply because people do not know this that they limit themselves. So the hinges get rusty, they do not turn any more. Otherwise, if one keeps the habit of turning them, they continue to turn. Moreover, even from the ordinary point of view, it is not rare to find a scientist having as his hobby some artistic occupation — and the reverse also. It is because they have found that the one was not harmful to the other and that it was the same faculty which could be utilised in both.

Essentially, from the general point of view, particularly from the intellectual viewpoint, the most important thing is the capacity of attention and concentration, it is that which one must work at and develop. From the point of view of action (physical action), it is the will: you must work and build up an unshakable will. From the intellectual point of view, you must work and build up a power of concentration which nothing can shake. And if you have both, concentration and will, you will be a genius and nothing will resist you.

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"The human being is at home and safe in the material body; the body is his protection. There are some who are full of contempt for their bodies and think that things will be much better and easier after death without them. But in fact the body is your fortress and your shelter. While you are lodged in it the forces of the hostile world find it difficult to have a direct hold upon you.... Directly you enter any realm of this [vital] world, its beings gather round you to get out of you all you have, to draw what they can and make it a food and a prey. If you have no strong light and force radiating from within you, you move there without your body as if you had no coat to protect you against a chill and bleak atmosphere, no house to shield you, even no skin covering you, your nerves exposed and bare. There are men who say, 'How unhappy I am in this body', and think of death as an escape! But after death you have the same vital surroundings and are in danger from the same forces that are the cause of your misery in this life....

"It is here upon earth, in the body itself, that you must acquire a complete knowledge and learn to use a full and complete power. Only when you have done that will you be free to move about with entire security in all the worlds."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (12 May 1929)

(A child) After death people enter the vital world, but those who do good go to paradise?

Where is your paradise? Who has taught you that? They have spoken to you of heaven and hell and purgatory?... No? Not

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of all that? From where did you gather your idea of paradise?
From which book?

I have heard about it.

But from whom?

I do not remember now.

It is generally what religious priests say to the faithful to encourage them to do good. For it is a notorious fact that life is not more easy for the good than for the wicked; usually it is the contrary: the wicked succeed better than the good! So people who are not very spiritual say to themselves: "Why should I take the trouble of being good? It is better to be wicked and have an easy life." It is very difficult to make them understand that there are many kinds of good and that sometimes it is worth the trouble perhaps to make an effort to be good. So to make this intelligible to the least intelligent, they are told: "There, it is very simple. If you are quite obedient, quite nice, quite unselfish, if you always do good deeds, and if you believe in the dogmas we teach, well, when you die, God will send you to Paradise. If you have sometimes good will, sometimes bad, if, sometimes you do good, sometimes you don't and if you think very much of yourself and very little of others, then when you die, you will be sent to Purgatory for another experience. And then if you are thoroughly wicked, if you are always doing harm to others, doing all kinds of bad things and you do not care about the good of anyone and particularly if you do not believe in the dogma that we teach you, then you will go straight to Hell and for eternity."

This is one of the prettiest inventions I have ever heard of: they have invented *eternal hell*. That is to say, once you are in hell, it is for eternity.... You understand what that means, for eternity? You will be tortured and burnt (in the hot countries

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you are burnt, in the cold countries you are frozen), and that for eternity. That is it. So I do not know who taught you those pretty things; but they are simply inventions to make people obey, to keep them under control.

There are teachings which are not like that. There are religions which are not like that. But still one can, in a poetic, picturesque, descriptive manner speak of a paradise; because this paradise means a wonderful place where there is utmost joy and happiness and comfort.... And yet that depends upon the religion to which you belong. For there are heavens where you pass your time singing praises to God, you do nothing else — but in the end that must be somewhat wearisome; however, there you pass your time playing music and singing the praises of God. There are other heavens, on the contrary, where you enjoy all possible pleasures, all that you desired to have during your life, you have in heaven. There are heavens where you are constantly in blissful meditation — but for people who are not keen on meditating, that must be rather tiresome. However, that depends, you know: they have invented all kinds of things so that people may really want to be wise and obey the laws given to them.

And man's imagination is so creative, such a form-maker, that there really are in the world places like these heavens. There are places also like these hells and there are places like these purgatories. Man creates out of nothing the things he imagines. If your consciousness is enlightened, then you can be pulled out of these places; otherwise you are shut up, imprisoned there by the very belief you had when alive. You will tell me that it is equal to a life, but it is an altogether illusory and extremely limited existence. It is real only for those who think like that. As soon as you think differently, it does not exist for you any longer; you can come out of it. You can pull a person out of these places, and immediately he perceives that he was imprisoned in his own formation.

Man has an extraordinary power of creation. He has created

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a whole set of godheads in his own image, having the same faults as himself, doing on a bigger scale, with greater power whatever he does. These beings have a relative existence, but still it is an independent existence, just like your thought. When you have a thought, a well-made mental formation which goes out of you, it becomes an independent entity and continues on its way and it does that for which it was made. It continues to act independently of you. That is why you must be on your guard. If you have made such a formation and it has gone out, it has gone out to do its work; and after a time you find out that it was perhaps not a very happy thing to have a thought like that, that this formation was not very beneficial; now that it has gone out, it is very difficult for you to get hold of it again. You must have considerable occult knowledge. It has gone out and is moving on its way.... Supposing in a moment of great anger (I do not say that you do so, but still) when you were in quite a rage against someone, you said: "Ah! couldn't some misfortune befall him?" Your formation has gone on its way. It has gone out and you have no longer any control over it; and it goes and organises some misfortune or other: it is going to do its work. And after sometime the misfortune arrives. Happily, you do not usually have sufficient knowledge to tell yourself: "Oh! It is I who am responsible", but that is the truth.

Note that this power of formation has a great advantage, if one knows how to use it. You can make good formations and if you make them properly, they will act in the same way as the others. You can do a lot of good to people just by sitting quietly in your room, perhaps even more good than by undergoing a lot of trouble externally. If you know how to think correctly, with force and intelligence and kindness, if you love someone and wish him well very sincerely, deeply, with all your heart, that does him much good, much more certainly than you think. I have said this often; for example, to those who are here, who learn that someone in their family is very ill and feel that childish impulse of wanting to rush immediately to the spot to attend to

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the sick person. I tell you, unless it is an exceptional case and there is nobody to attend on the sick person (and at times even in such a case), if you know how to keep the right attitude and concentrate with affection and good will upon the sick person, if you know how to pray for him and make helpful formations, you will do him much more good than if you go to nurse him, feed him, help him wash himself, indeed all that everybody can do. Anybody can nurse a person. But not everybody can make good formations and send out forces that act for healing.

In any case, to come back to our paradise, it is a childish deformation — ignorant or political — of something which is true in a sense but not quite like that.... I have told you many times and I could not repeat it too often, that one is not built up of one single piece. We have within us many states of being and each state of being has its own life. All this is put together in one single body, so long as you have a body, and acts through that single body; so that gives you the feeling that it is one single person, a single being. But there are many beings and particularly there are concentrations on different levels: just as you have a physical being, you have a vital being, you have a mental being, you have a psychic being, you have many others and all possible intermediaries. But it is a little complicated, you might not understand. Suppose you were living a life of desire, passion and impulse: you live with your vital being dominant in you; but if you live with spiritual effort, with great good will, the desire to do things well and an unselfishness, a will for progress, you live with the psychic being dominant in you. Then, when you are about to leave your body, all these beings start to disperse. Only if you are a very advanced yogi and have been able to unify your being around the divine centre, do these beings remain bound together. If you have not known how to unify yourself, then at the time of death all that is dispersed: each one returns to its domain. For example, with regard to the vital being, all your different desires will be separated and each one run towards its own realisation, quite independently, for the physical being will

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no longer be there to hold them together. But if you have united your consciousness with the psychic consciousness, when you die you remain conscious of your psychic being and the psychic being returns to the psychic world which is a world of bliss and delight and peace and tranquillity and of a growing knowledge. So, if you like to call that a paradise, it is all right; because in fact, to the extent to which you are identified with your psychic being, you remain conscious of it, you are one with it, and it is immortal and goes to its immortal domain to enjoy a perfectly happy life or rest. If you like to call that paradise, call it paradise. If you are good, if you have become conscious of your psychic and live in it, well, when your body dies, you will go with your psychic being to take rest in the psychic world, in a blissful state.

But if you have lived in your vital with all its impulses, each impulse will try to realise itself here and there... For example, a miser who is concentrated upon his money, when he dies, the part of the vital that was interested in his money will be stuck there and will continue to watch over the money so that nobody may take it. People do not see him, but he is there all the same, and is very unhappy if something happens to his precious money. I knew quite well a lady who had a good amount of money and children; she had five children who were all prodigals each one more than the other. The same amount of care she had taken in amassing the money, they seemed to take in squandering it; they spent it at random. So when the poor old lady died, she came to see me and told me: "Ah, now they are going to squander my money!" And she was extremely unhappy. I consoled her a little, but I had a good deal of difficulty in persuading her not to keep watching over her money so that it might not be wasted.

Now, if you live exclusively in your physical consciousness (it is difficult, for you have, after all, thoughts and feelings, but if you live exclusively in your physical), when the physical being disappears, you disappear at the same time, it is finished.... There is a spirit of the form: your form has a spirit which persists for seven days after your death. The doctors have declared that you

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are dead, but the spirit of your form lives, and not only does it live but it is conscious in most of the cases. But that lasts for seven or eight days and afterwards it is dissolved. I am not speaking of yogis; I am speaking of ordinary people. Yogis have no laws, it is quite different; for them the world is different. I am speaking to you of ordinary men living an ordinary life; for these it is like that.

So the conclusion is that if you want to preserve your consciousness, it would be better to centralise it on a part of your being that is immortal; otherwise it will vanish like a flame in the air. And it is very fortunate, for if it were otherwise, there would be perhaps gods or types of superior men who would create hells and heavens as they do in their material imagination, where they would imprison you; you would be imprisoned in heaven or in hell according as you pleased or displeased them. It would be a very critical situation and happily it is not like that.

It is said that there is a god of Death. Is it true?

Yes, I call it the spirit of Death. I know it very well. And that is an extraordinary organisation. You do not know to what an extent it is organised.

I believe there are many of these spirits of death, I believe there are hundreds. I have met at least two of them. One I met in France and the other in Japan, and they were very different; which leads one to believe that probably in accordance with the mental culture, the education, the country and beliefs there should be different spirits. But there are spirits of all the manifestations of Nature: there are spirits of fire, spirits of air, of water, of rain, of wind; and there are spirits of death.

Each spirit of death, whatever it may be, has a claim to a certain number of deaths per day. Indeed it is a fantastic organisation; it is a kind of alliance between the vital forces and the forces of Nature. For example, if the spirit of death has decided: "That is the number of people to which I am entitled",

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let us say four or five or six, or one or two persons, it depends on the day; it has decided that certain persons would die, it goes straight and settles down beside the person about to die. But if you happen to be conscious (not the person), if you see the spirit going to a person and you do not want him to die, then you can, if you possess a certain occult power, tell it: "No, I forbid you to take him." It is a thing that has happened, not once but several times, in Japan and here. It was not the same spirit. That is what makes me say that there must be many.

— I don't want him to die.

— But I have a right to one death!

— Go and find someone who is ready to die.

So I have seen several cases: sometimes it is just a neighbour who dies suddenly in place of the other, sometimes it is an acquaintance and sometimes it is an enemy. Naturally, there is a relation, good or bad, of neighbourhood (or anything else) which externally looks like chance. But it is the spirit who has taken *its* dead. The spirit has a claim to one death, it will have one death. You can tell it: "I forbid you to take this one", and have the power of sending it away, and the spirit can do nothing but go away; but it does not give up its due and goes elsewhere. There is another death.

It is the same thing with fire. I saw the spirit of fire, particularly in Japan because fire is an extraordinary thing in that country. When a fire starts, some eighty houses burn: a whole quarter. It is something fantastic. The houses are of wood and they burn like match-boxes; you see a fire kindling and then all of a sudden, puff!... You have never seen a match-box catching fire? a flash! like that, a flash! one, two, three, ten, twenty houses burnt down before my eyes!... So there are spirits of fire. One day, I was in my bed. I was concentrating, looking at people. Suddenly I saw something like a cloud of flames drawing close to the house. I looked and I saw it was a conscious being.

— Eh! what are you here for?

— I have the right to burn the house, start a fire.

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— That's possible, I told it, but not here.

And it could not resist.

It is a question of who proves the stronger. I said: "No, here you can't burn, that's all!" Five minutes later I heard cries: "Ah! Ah!" Two or three houses farther away, a house had caught fire. It had gone there as I had forbidden it to come to my house. It had a claim to one house. There we are!

Sometimes when people are dying, they know that they are about to die. Why don't they tell the spirit to go away?

Ah! well, that depends upon the people. Two things are necessary. First of all, nothing in your being, no part of your being should want to die. That does not happen often. You have always a defeatist in you somewhere: something that is tired, something that is disgusted, something that has had enough of it, something that is lazy, something that does not want to struggle and says: "Well! Ah! Let it be finished, so much the better." That is sufficient, you are dead.

But it is a fact: if nothing, absolutely nothing in you consents to die, you will not die. For someone to die, there is always a second, perhaps the hundredth part of a second when he gives his consent. If there is not this second of consent, he does not die.

I knew people who should have really died according to all physical and vital laws; and they refused. They said: "No, I will not die", and they lived. There are others who do not need at all to die, but they are of that kind and say: "Ah! Well! Yes, so much the better, it will be finished", and it is finished. Even that much, even nothing more than that: you need not have a persistent wish, you have only to say: "Well, yes, I have had enough!" and it is finished. So it is truly like that. As you say, you may have death standing by your bedside and tell him: "I do not want you, go away", and it will be obliged to go away.

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But usually one gives way, for one must struggle, one must be strong, one must be very courageous and enduring, must have a great faith in the importance of life; like someone, for example, who feels very strongly that he has still something to do and he must absolutely do it. But who is sure he has not within him the least bit of a defeatist, somewhere, who just yields and says: "It is all right"?... It is here, the necessity of unifying oneself.

Whatever the way we follow, the subject we study, we always arrive at the same result. The most important thing for an individual is to unify himself around his divine centre; in that way he becomes a true individual, master of himself and his destiny. Otherwise, he is a plaything of forces that toss him about like a piece of cork on a river. He goes where he does not want to go, he is made to do things he does not want to do, and finally he falls into a hole without having the strength to hold on. But if you are consciously organised, unified around the divine centre, ruled and directed by it, you are master of your destiny. That is worth the trouble of attempting.... In any case, I find it preferable to be the master rather than the slave. It is a rather unpleasant sensation to feel yourself pulled by the strings and made to do things whether you want to or not — it makes no difference — but to be compelled to act because something pulls you by the strings, something which you do not even see — that is exasperating. However, I do not know, but I found it very annoying, even when I was a little child. At five, it began to seem to me quite intolerable and I sought for a way so that it might be otherwise — without people getting a chance to scold me. For I knew nobody who could help me and I did not have the chance that you have, someone who can tell you: "This is what you have to do!" There was nobody to tell me that. I had to find it out all by myself. And I found it. I started at five. And you, you were five long ago.... *Voilà.*

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"The mind is an instrument of action and formation and not an instrument of knowledge; at each moment it is creating forms. Thoughts are forms and have an individual life, independent of their author: sent out from him into the world, they move in it towards the realisation of their own purpose of existence. When you think of anyone, your thought takes a form and goes out to find him; and, if your thinking is associated with some will that is behind it, the thought-form that has gone out from you makes an attempt to realise itself."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (19 May 1929)

Do prayers and aspirations also take a form like thoughts?

Yes. At times they take even the form of the person who has the aspiration or makes the prayer—often. That depends. Aspirations sometimes take the form of that to which one aspires, but most often, and specially prayers, clearly take the form of the one who prays.

What is the difference between prayer and aspiration?

I have written this somewhere. There are several kinds of prayers.

There is the purely mechanical, material prayer, with words which have been learnt and are mechanically repeated. That does not signify anything much. And that has usually only one single result, that of quietening the person who prays, for if a prayer is repeated several times, the words end up by making you calm.

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There is a prayer which is a spontaneous formula for expressing something precise which one wants to ask for: one prays for this thing or that, one prays for one thing or another; one can pray for somebody, for a circumstance, for oneself.

There is a point where aspiration and prayer meet, for there are prayers which are the spontaneous formulation of a lived experience: these spring up all ready from within the being, like something that's the expression of a profound experience, and which offers thanksgiving for that experience or asks its continuation or asks for its explanation also; and that indeed is quite close to aspiration. But aspiration is not necessarily formulated in words; or if it is formulated in words, it is almost a movement of invocation. You aspire for a certain state; for instance, you have found something in yourself that is not in keeping with your ideal, a movement of darkness and ignorance, perhaps even of ill-will, something that's not in harmony with what you want to realise; then that is not going to be formulated in words; that will be like a springing flame and like an offering made of a living experience, asking to grow larger, be magnified and ever more and more clear and precise. All that may be put into words *later*, if one tries to remember and note down one's experience. But aspiration always springs up like a flame that rises high and carries in itself the thing one desires to be or what one desires to do or desires to have. I use the word "desire", but truly it is here that the word "aspire" should be used, for that does not have either the quality or the form of a desire.

It is truly like a great purifying flame of will, and it carries in its core the thing that asks to be realised.

For instance, if you have done something you regret having done, if that has unhappy consequences which disturb things, and several people are implicated, you do not know the reactions of the others, but you yourself wish that what has been done may take a turn for the best, and that if there is a mistake, it may be understood, and that no matter what the mistake, this may be for you an opportunity for a greater progress, a greater

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discipline, a new ascent towards the Divine, a door open on a future that you want to be more clear and true and intense; so all this is gathered here (*pointing to the heart*) like a force, and then it surges up and rises in a great movement of ascent, and at times without the shadow of a formulation, without words, without expression, but like a springing flame.

That indeed is true aspiration. That may happen a hundred, a thousand times daily if one is in that state in which one constantly wants to progress and be more true and more fully in harmony with what the Divine Will wants of us.

Prayer is a much more external thing, generally about a precise fact, and always formulated for it is the formula that makes the prayer. One may have an aspiration and transcribe it as a prayer, but aspiration goes beyond prayer in every way. It is much closer and much more as it were self-forgetful, living only in the thing one wants to be or do, and the offering of all that one wants to do to the Divine. You may pray in order to ask for something, you may also pray to thank the Divine for what He has given you, and that prayer is much greater: it may be called an act of thanksgiving. You may pray in gratitude for the aspect of kindness the Divine has shown to you, for what He has done for you, for what you see in Him, and the praise you want to offer Him. And all this may take the form of a prayer. It is decidedly the highest prayer, for it is not exclusively preoccupied with oneself, it is not an egoistic prayer.

Certainly, one may have an aspiration in all the domains, but the very centre of aspiration is in the psychic being, whilst one may pray in all the domains, and the prayer belongs to the domain in which one prays. One may make purely material, physical prayers, vital prayers, mental prayers, psychic prayers, spiritual prayers, and each one has its special character, its special value.

There is a kind of prayer at once spontaneous and unselfish which is like a great call, usually not for one's own self personally, but like something that may be called an intercession

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with the Divine. It is extremely powerful. I have had countless instances of things which have been realised almost instantaneously due to prayers of this kind. It implies a great faith, a great ardour, a great sincerity, and a great simplicity of heart also, something that does not calculate, does not plan, does not bargain, does not give with the idea of receiving in exchange. For, the majority of men give with one hand and hold out the other to get something in exchange; the largest number of prayers are of that sort. But there are others of the kind I have described, acts of thanksgiving, a kind of canticle, and these are very good.

There you are. I don't know if I have made myself clear, but this is how it is.

To be clearer, we may say that prayer is always formulated in words; but the words may have different values according to the state in which they are formulated. Prayer is a formulated thing and one may aspire. But it is difficult to pray without praying to someone. For instance, those who have a conception of the universe from which they have more or less driven out the idea of the Divine (there are many people of this kind; this idea troubles them — the idea that there is someone who knows all, can do everything and who is so formidably greater than they that there can be no comparison; that's a bit troublesome for their *amour-propre*; so they try to make a world without the Divine), these people evidently cannot pray, for to whom would they pray? Unless they pray to themselves, which is not the custom! But one can aspire for something without having any faith in the Divine. There are people who do not believe in the existence of a God, but who believe in progress. They have the idea that the world is in constant progress and that this progress will go on indefinitely without stopping, towards an ever greater good. Well, these people can have a very great aspiration for progress, and they don't even need any idea of a divine existence for that. Aspiration necessarily implies a faith but not necessarily faith in a divine being; whilst prayer cannot exist if it is not addressed to a divine being. And pray to what? One does not pray to

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something that has no personality! One prays to someone who can hear us. If there is nobody to hear us, how could one pray? Hence, if one prays, this means that, even when one doesn't acknowledge it, one has faith in somebody infinitely higher than us, infinitely more powerful, who can change our destiny and change us also, if one prays so as to be heard. That is the essential difference.

So the more intellectual people admit aspiration and say that prayer is something inferior. The mystics tell you that aspiration is all very well but if you want to be really heard and want the Divine to listen to you, you must pray, and pray with the simplicity of a child, a perfect candour, that is, a perfect trust: "I need this or that (whether it be a moral need or a physical or material need), well, I ask You for it, give it to me." Or else: "You have given me what I asked of You, You have made me realise concretely those experiences which were unknown to me and are now marvels I can attain at will; yes, I am infinitely grateful to You and I offer a prayer of thanksgiving to sing Your praise and thank You for Your intervention." It is like that. To aspire it is not necessary to direct the aspiration to someone, towards someone. One has an aspiration for a certain state of being, for knowledge, for a realisation, a state of consciousness; one aspires for something, but it is not necessarily a prayer; prayer is something additional.

Prayer is a personal thing, addressed to a personal being, that is, to something — a force or a being — who can hear you and answer you. Otherwise you can't ask for anything. Do you understand?

When somebody has an ill-will against a person, how does this will act upon that person?

It is the same thing. Through a formation, a mental formation. When somebody is very ill-willed and wants to harm you, his will is expressed more or less; at times he does not dare to

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acknowledge this to himself for he would feel ashamed, but that may come spontaneously. Or else, it may be as with malicious people, something shut up very deep in the consciousness, all the time there, like that, stirring up their spite; and then there are violent people who wish that a calamity may befall those who have caused them some so-called harm or have displeased them for some reason or other.... Anyway, that is it, it belongs to the field of formation; and it is so strong that if you just pass by someone who has a manifest ill-will, you may suddenly feel very uneasy.

Now, if you have a little knowledge and consciousness, you can become aware of the reason, and then, when one realises the reason, there is only one thing to do, just this (*gesture*), as one brushes off a fly. Flies are very troublesome and come back again and again; and evil formations — take care! — have the same habit as flies. You brush flies away, they return, you brush them away again, again they return. They think it is a game. Have you never noticed, flies take this as a game? truly, even as they are sent away, they return. Only, if at a particular moment you become angry, you get into a temper and do this (*gesture*), even if you do not touch it, the fly will not come back. It feels it. Try, you will see.

But a bad thought is a bad deed. There are people who do not know it, but truly a bad thought is a bad deed and if one thinks and wishes harm to someone, well, one is responsible for the misfortunes that come upon him just as much as though one had acted. But the unfortunate thing is that this is not recognised and that never does one intervene in the bad thoughts of people.... There are even people who take great pleasure in inciting the bad thoughts of others. I have known such people (unfortunately far too many), when they have something unpleasant to say to somebody, they never miss the opportunity of telling him: "You know, somebody said that about you", and also: "You know, that other person said this about you." And thus they create as much harm as they think of. And this they

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do at times simply through stupidity, most often through vanity, in order to show off that they know something. But at bottom, in the consciousness, there is what is called mischief-making — something that enjoys creating disorder, misunderstandings, disputes among people, unpleasant situations, and feels at ease amidst these. There are many people with a very sharp tongue. It is called in French “une langue de vipère”, a viperish tongue. This is their great amusement. And they do much, much, much harm. But even without speaking, if one has a strong thought and thinks ill of people, one does a bad deed.

Why is there ill-will?

My child, it is as though you asked me why there is in conscience, ignorance, darkness in the nature! It is the why of the world you are asking me! Why is the world like this and not otherwise?... There are people who have written volumes on the subject. And each one explains it in his own way and that changes nothing, in fact. You may ask me: Why is there ill-will? Why is there ignorance? Why is there stupidity? Why is there wickedness? Why is there all the evil? Why is the world not a very charming place?... All the philosophers explain it to you, each in his own way. The materialists explain it in their way, the scientists explain it in their way, but nobody in all that can find the means of getting out of it! and after all, the one thing that's truly important is... it would be precisely (you ask me: Why is there ill-will?) to find the way so that there may no longer be any ill-will. That would be worth the trouble. If you tell me: Why is there suffering, why is there misery?... What can that do to you, this why, unless it be a means of finding a remedy? But I don't believe it would, for (we have said that here) if you seek for the why, you will find within yourself simply all sorts of explanations which will be more or less useless and will lead you nowhere.

The fact is that it *is* so, isn't it? and the second fact is that

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one doesn't want it thus, and the third is to find the means that it may no longer exist. That is our problem. The world is not as we think it ought to be. There are lots of things in the world which we do not approve of. Well, there are people who like what they call "knowledge" very much and begin to inquire why it is like that. In a way this is very well, but as I said, it would be much more important to find out what to do so that it may be otherwise. This is exactly the problem the Buddha put to himself. He sat under a tree, it is said, until he found the solution. But his solution is not very good, for when you tell me: "The world is bad", well, his solution is: "Do away with the world." — "For whose benefit?" as Sri Aurobindo has written somewhere. Then the world will no longer be bad, for it will not exist! But what is the use of its no longer being bad, since it will not exist? It is very simple logic. It is like those who want the whole world to return to its Origin; and so Sri Aurobindo answers: "You will be the all-powerful master of something that no longer exists, an emperor without an empire or a king without a kingdom", that's all.... It is one solution. But there are other better ones. I believe we have found better ones.

Some say that ill-will comes from ignorance (that was exactly what the Buddha claimed) and that if ignorance disappeared there would no longer be any ill-will. There are others who say that ill-will comes from division, separation, that if the universe were not cut off from its Origin there would be no ill-will. Others still say that it is ill-will which is the cause of everything, of separation and ignorance; and so there arises the problem: Whence does it come, this ill-will? If it were at the origin of everything, it was then *in* the origin of everything. And there we are altogether at a loss, my children! We could speculate upon this for years, we shall never get out of it. And so those who push it so far finish by telling you: Ill-will doesn't exist, it is an illusion. And that's simply because they stop midway in their reasoning, for if they went a little farther they might say: Perhaps it is a human invention, this ill-will.... That is possible!

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Animals don't have ill-will, do they?

I do not think so. I can't say for sure since I don't know all the animal species, but I have heard things which to us seem monstrosities, yet are not at all instances of ill-will. For example, take the world of insects; of all the animal species it is this which most contains the sense of what we call wickedness — and what may be called ill-will, but it could very well be that this is our consciousness applied to their movements which sees a movement of wickedness or ill-will.... There are insects whose larvae can live only on a living being. They can feed only on a living being; dead flesh does not nourish these. So the parent insect that is going to lay its eggs (which will change into larvae) begins by stinging a nervous centre of another insect or small lower animal which it paralyses, and after that gently lays its eggs inside in such a way that when the eggs are hatched the larvae feed on that paralysed but not dead animal. It is Machiavellian, isn't it? Evidently it is not the result of reasoning, it is an instinct. Can this be called ill-will? Is this ill-will?... It is simply the instinct of procreation.

Perhaps, if we say that these insects are moved by the spirit of the species which in itself is conscious and has a conscious will, we can then say that all these imaginations (I give you this one instance, but there are any number of them as terrible, as monstrous for our human consciousness), all these beings, fashioners, who have created these insects must be frightful beings (don't you think so?) and have a perverse and diabolical imagination. It is quite possible, for indeed it is said that the origin of the insect species is a vital origin, that the fashioners are those of a vital type, that is, beings who not only symbolise but represent and live upon the ill-will in the world. These are very conscious of their ill-will, and it is deliberate. The ill-will of men is usually only a kind of reflection — an imitation or a reflection — of the will of the beings of the vital, a will clearly hostile to creation, a will to make things as painful, as ugly, as

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sorrowful, as monstrous as possible. It is said that it is these who have created insects, and so the insect species would perhaps be... But they do not wilfully represent evil, you understand, they are moved by an unconscious instinct. They do not do evil intentionally. They do it because it is in their nature. What I call ill-will is truly the will to do evil for the sake of doing evil, destroying for the sake of destroying, harming for harming's sake and taking pleasure in the fact of doing evil. That really is ill-will. Egoism, I do believe, begins with the birth of mind. I can't tell for certain, for always new things are being found. But what I have seen of the animal species, specially of the higher animals, may be the instinct of preservation, may be violence, obscure and brutal reactions, but is that truly what is called ill-will?... It is possible. If someone were to tell me a story he has witnessed which proves the opposite, I am ready to admit it but for the time being — I haven't seen it. All that I know of animals is their instinct which pushes them into action, but they don't have that perversity that's in the human mind. I believe it is with this kind of mental functioning and under the direct influence of the vital that man has become an ill-willed being. The Titans are ill-willed beings but the Titans are beings of the vital world manifested in the forces of Nature: they want to do evil for the pleasure of doing it, to destroy for the pleasure of destroying.

People always speak about the wickedness of cats, for instance, playing with the mouse before eating it. That's an example given to children; but I have seen cats. I know what they do. It is not at all true. They don't do this at all through malice. Usually it happens like this: the mother-cat hunts for the little ones and catches a mouse. If it were to give the mouse immediately to the kittens to eat, they wouldn't be able to eat it, for it is hard, tough, and they don't have the capacity to eat such hard, tough flesh. Besides, it is also bad when it is like that. So they play with it (they seem to be playing with it), they toss it about, roll it, catch it, let it run, run after it, until it is very nicely softened. And then, when it is well softened, ready for eating, and the

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meat already worked upon, then they give it to the little ones who can now eat it. But certainly they don't go and play with the mouse for the pleasure of playing! They hunt first, you see, and then prepare the dinner. They have neither furnace nor fire to cook and soften the thing. They must prepare it and make it ready for eating.

But it is also said that the first expression of love in living beings is the desire to devour. One wants to absorb, desires to devour. There is one instance which would seem to prove that this is not altogether false—that is when the tiger catches its prey or the snake its victim, it happens that both the tiger's and the snake's victims give themselves up in a kind of delight of being eaten. An experience is narrated of a man who was in the bush with his friends and had lagged behind and was caught by a tiger, a man-eater. The others came back when they saw that he was missing. They saw the tracks. They ran after him, just in time to prevent the tiger's eating him. When he came to himself a little, they told him he must have had a frightful experience. He said: "No, just imagine, I don't know what happened to me, as soon as that tiger caught me and while it was dragging me along, I felt an intense love for it and a great desire to be eaten by it!"

This is quite true, it is not an invention. It is a true story.

Well, I have seen with my own eyes.... I believe I have already narrated this to you—the story of the little rabbit which had been put in a python's cage. It was in the cage in the *Jardin des Plantes* in Paris. It was the breakfast day. I happened to be there. The cage was opened, the little white rabbit put inside. It was a pretty little white rabbit and it immediately fled to the other end of the cage and trembled like anything. It was horrible to see this, for it knew very well what was happening, it had felt the snake, it knew very well. The serpent was simply coiled up on its mat. It seemed to be asleep, and very quietly it stretched out its neck and head, and then began looking at the rabbit. It looked at it without stirring—just looked at it. I saw the rabbit

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which at first stopped trembling; it no longer was afraid. It was quite doubled up and it began to recover. And then I saw it lift its head, open its eyes wide, and look at the snake, and slowly, very slowly it went forward towards it till it was just at the right distance. Then the snake with a single leap — without any disturbance, without even uncoiling itself, just remaining where it was, you understand — hop! it took it. And then it began rolling it, preparing it for its dinner. It was not in order to play with it. It prepared the thing. It crushed all its bones nicely, made them crack; then it smeared it with a kind of gluey substance to make it quite slippy. And when it was all quite ready, it began swallowing it slowly, comfortably.... But it didn't have to disturb itself, it didn't have to make the least movement, except the last swift one just to catch it when it was right in front. It was the other creature that had come to it.

There you are. Indeed there are many things in Nature. There is this, there is perhaps ill-will also. But I am not quite sure that it is not one of those presents that mental activity has given to man... as soon as he was separated from his instinct and wanted to act independently....

What exactly is instinct?

It is the consciousness of Nature. Nature is conscious of its action, but this is not an individual consciousness. There is an instinct of the species. Some have said that there were even “spirits of the species”, conscious beings for each species. Instinct depends on the way Nature works, and Nature is a conscious force which knows what it wants, does it in its own way, knowing where it is going and its roads: it chooses them itself. For man this appears incoherent, for his own consciousness is too narrow (he can't see the whole well enough; when one sees only the small details of things or little fragments, one can't understand at all), but Nature has a plan, it has a conscious will, it is altogether a conscious entity — it can't be called a being, for it is not in the

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same proportion. When we speak of a being with our human consciousness, we immediately imagine a human being, perhaps a little larger or much larger, but still functioning always in the same way. That is why I don't call it a being, but it is a conscious entity, a conscious will doing things consciously, deliberately, and having formidable forces at its disposal.

It is also said that the forces of Nature are blind and violent. But it is not at all that! It is man in his relative proportion with Nature who judges like that. Wait a little, let us take this example. When there is an earthquake, many islands are engulfed and millions of people killed. People say: "This Nature is monstrous." From the human point of view this Nature is monstrous. What has it done? It has wrought a cataclysm. But just think how in jumping or running or doing something or other, you get a good knock and turn black and blue. It is the same thing for our cells as an earthquake; you destroy a huge number of cells! It is a question of proportion. For us, our little consciousness, ever so little, this appears something formidable but after all it is quite simply a contusion somewhere upon earth (not even in the universe). We are speaking only of the earth. What is it? Nothing at all, just a tiny little plaything in the universe. If we speak of this universe, then the disappearance of the worlds — these are just contusions. It is nothing.

One must, if one can, widen one's consciousness.

I knew somebody who wanted to widen his consciousness; he said he had found a way, it was to lie flat on his back at night, out-of-doors, and look at the stars and try to identify himself with them, and go away deep into an immense world, and so lose completely all sense of proportion, of the order of the earth and all its little things, and become vast as the sky — you couldn't say as vast as the universe, for we see only a tiny bit of it, but vast as the sky with all the stars. And so, you know, the little impurities fall off for the time being, and one understands things on a very vast scale. It is a good exercise.

Both are good exercises. Try to compare them, you'll see:

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you are walking on a street, there is an army of ants going from one nest to another (you do not look down, you are talking with someone); very negligently you put one foot and then the other, and you crush hundreds of ants without even being aware of it. If you were an ant, you would say: "What a wicked and beastly force!" You are just walking. You have not paid attention. But suppose there are beings of this kind for whom we are just tiny little ants. They put one foot and then the other and millions of people are killed. They are not even aware of it! They have not done it on purpose. They were just walking along, that's all. The only difference you could make (and yet I am not quite sure), the only difference between the ant and man is that man is able to think of what happens to him, and perhaps the ant is not conscious of it? I don't know at all. I don't guarantee it. *Voilà.*

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“Each man has some fad or one preferred shibboleth or another, each thinks that he is free from this or that prejudice from which others suffer and is willing to regard such notions as quite false; but he imagines that his is not like theirs, it is for him the truth, the real truth. An attachment to a rule of the mind is an indication of a blindness still hiding somewhere.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (19 May 1929)

Are superstitions mental rules?

No, not rules but mental formations. Generally a superstition originates in an experience. For instance, there is a certain superstition in Europe, and you are told: “Never walk under a ladder, it will bring you ill-luck.” It is probable that someone walked under a ladder and the ladder slipped and fell upon him, and the story starts off like that. It can happen that this is a repeated experience, for, in fact, if a ladder is badly placed and you pass underneath it could fall at that very moment, and that would bring ill-luck! There are innumerable superstitions of this kind. They depend upon the countries, besides; these things are quite local and one may even find contradictory superstitions in different countries. In certain countries if you see a black cat, it is a sign that a catastrophe will come. In others if you see a black cat, it means that something very fine will happen! If you put things together you will come to the conclusion that nothing at all will happen to you! It is like that. Almost all superstitions are the result of an experience that is quite local, occasional, exceptional, which has been raised into a mental principle. It is a mental formation, it is not a rule.

Now, there are other instances, as for example a large

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number of religious rules which are founded solely on hygienic principles, on medical knowledge, and have been raised into religious principles, for that was the only way to make people observe them. If you are not told that "God wants" that you should do this or that, you would not do it, the majority of men ordinarily do not do it. For instance, that very simple thing — washing your hands before eating; in countries where the civilisation is not quite scientific, some people discovered that in truth it was probably more hygienic to wash the hands first! If they had not made a religious rule, if they hadn't said that "God wanted" that a man wash his hands before eating, otherwise it would be an offence against Him, people would have said: "Oh, why? No, not today, tomorrow. I have no time, I am in a hurry!" But in this way there is that constant fear at the back of their minds that something bad will happen to them due to God's anger. This too is a superstition, a big superstition.

They do things because they are told to do them. There is an entire class of religion — for instance the Chaldean religion — which forbids the eating of pork. They say it is altogether impure and that you will become impure if you eat it. The truth is that in these countries (for they are hot countries), pig's flesh is full of little worms which one takes in with the meat, even if it is cooked. It has to be cooked over an extremely long time to kill the worms. And so the little worms resist ordinary cooking and settle in your stomach or intestines, and then there they flourish and at times even end up by killing you or, in any case, by making you ill. These worms breed specially in this kind of meat. Now, if all this is explained to people, they do not understand; they haven't any medical, scientific or hygienic ideas and this does not at all interest them: "Ah, but this meat is not expensive, it is sold cheap! We'll see what happens." What will happen is that after a while they will have terrible pains in their intestines, and then they will grow thinner and thinner and eat more and more, quite uselessly; they will not know what has happened; they will be simply eaten up by the worms. But if they are told: "Don't do

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this, God will be furious and will punish you”, that is enough.
They won’t do it.

Another question?

“Someone has said that when you open the door to Yoga, you are confronted by a multitude of obstacles. Is this true?”

“It is not an absolute rule; and much depends upon the person. Adverse conditions come to many as a test for the weak points in their nature. The indispensable basis for Yoga, which must be well established before you can walk freely on the path, is equanimity. Naturally, from that point of view, all disturbances are tests which you have to pass. But they are necessary too in order to break down the limits which your mental constructions have built around you and which prevent your opening to the Light and the Truth.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (19 May 1929)

When we come to the spiritual life with an aspiration, can the adverse forces attack us?

Everybody, without exception.

Even though they look very nice?

Sometimes, yes. Sometimes these are the most dangerous.

But how can we know?

Ah! The easiest way, when you have a Guru, is to go and ask him. It is within the reach of everyone. It is enough to have faith in one’s Guru, to go and find him and ask him; he will tell you, for he indeed knows.

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If you do not have a Guru, then it is a little more difficult, because these forces are very clever; they do not put on a look of catastrophe and misery and wickedness, for you will immediately find it out and will not let yourself be taken in; generally they come in the garb of a friend. If you are very sincere, soon you notice some little indications, like small suggestions that satisfy your vanity or awaken in you doubts or make you a bit unconscious of what exactly is to be done—very tiny things. If you are very sincere, you see through them; particularly if you are alert enough not to allow yourself to be deceived by compliments or attempts that encourage you in these satisfactions of *amour-propre*. Things that give just a little encouragement to your vanity—that is the surest sign; something that makes you think: “After all, I am not so bad. All that I do, I do well. My attempt is very praiseworthy. My sincerity is above all reproach, etc.” You become more and more self-satisfied and then there you may be sure. But even there, it does not always take these forms. There are other things, depending upon the persons. For some it is this; for others, they awaken ideas of grandeur: “If I continue in this way I shall become a great Yogi. I shall have great powers. I shall do much fine work. How nicely I am going to serve the Divine, how happy he will be with me!” It is very dangerous. The very opposite thing may happen: “After all, perhaps I am good for nothing. Is it worth while my making any effort? Nothing will come out of this effort. Am I capable of the spiritual life? Probably I shall never do anything, I am giving up tangible things for the sake of an unrealisable dream. And what am I after all? A grain of dust. Is it worth my making an effort to find the Divine? Probably I shall find nothing at all and all my efforts are futile.” That is even much more dangerous. I could cite hundreds of examples like that.

There is only one thing that can truly save you, it is to have a contact, even the slightest, with your psychic being—to have felt the *solidity* of that contact. Then whatever comes to you

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from this person or that circumstance you place in front of that and see whether it is all right or not. Even if you are satisfied—in every way—even if you say to yourself: “At last I have found the friend I wanted to have. I am in the best circumstances of my life, etc.”, then put that before this little contact with your psychic being, you will see whether it keeps its bright colour or suddenly there comes a little uneasiness, not much, nothing making a great noise, but just a little uneasiness. You are no longer so sure that it was as you thought! Then you know: yes, it is that small voice which one must listen to always. It is that which is the truth and the other can’t trouble you any longer.

If you come to the spiritual life with a sincere aspiration, sometimes an avalanche of unpleasant things falls upon you: you quarrel with your best friends, your family kicks you out of the house, you lose what you thought you had gained.... I knew someone who had come to India with a great aspiration and after a very long effort towards knowledge and even towards Yoga. That was long long ago. At that time, people used to put on watch-chains and trinkets. This gentleman had a golden pencil which his grandmother had given him to which he was attached as the most precious thing in the world. It was fixed to his chain. When he landed at one of these ports — at Pondicherry or perhaps elsewhere in India or at Colombo, I believe it was at Colombo — they used to get into small boats and the boats took you ashore. And so this gentleman had to jump from the gangway of the ship into the boat. He missed his step, somehow got back his balance, but he made a sudden movement and the little gold pencil dropped into the sea and went straight down into the depths. He was at first very much aggrieved, but he told himself: “Why, that is the effect of India: I am freed from my attachments....” It is for very sincere people that the thing takes such a form. Fundamentally, the avalanche of troubles is always for sincere people. Those who are not sincere receive things with the most beautiful bright colours just to deceive them, and then in the end to enable them to find out that they are mistaken! But

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when someone has big troubles, it proves that he has reached a certain degree of sincerity.

Here you say: “When you come to the Divine, you must abandon all mental conceptions; but, instead of doing that, you throw your conceptions upon the Divine and want the Divine to obey them.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (19 May 1929)

Yes, everyone. All the while, constantly. If the Divine is not as you understand him, well, that is not the Divine. If he does not do what you want, if he does not act as you think he should, if he has not the character you lend him, it is not the Divine: “I recognise you as the Divine if you do exactly what I want you to do!” Naturally, people are not sincere enough to admit that, but it is so. I could give you millions of examples—not hundreds, but millions. And there is not a single one among you who does not do this unconsciously. It is a rule, you know; one says: “Yes, I am quite ready to surrender to the Divine and do his will, to accept his presence and his action, but *on condition* that it is like this or like that, that he thinks like that, feels like that, acts like that, etc.” At the first opportunity I shall show you a little example dangling before your eyes. That will not fail. It will come one of these days. Quite soon. *Voilà*.

“The power of money is at present under the influence or in the hands of the forces and beings of the vital world. It is because of this influence that you never see money going in any considerable amount to the cause of Truth. Always it goes astray, because it is in the clutch of the hostile forces and one of the principal means by which they keep their grip upon the earth. The hold of the hostile forces upon money-power is powerfully, completely and thoroughly organised and to extract anything out of this compact organisation is a most difficult task. Each

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time that you try to draw a little of this money away from its present custodians, you have to undertake a fierce battle.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (12 May 1929)

What is the money situation now? Have these beings still a great power over money?

Yes, it continues. It continues, it is no better. Besides, the conditions to be fulfilled are not fulfilled.¹ So you can't expect that it would be better. Even this very morning, I was complaining (but “I was complaining” is just a way of speaking, it is to make myself understood), I was telling myself: to do what we want to do we need a great deal of money — a great deal, you understand, not just a little — and then I said to myself: still, it is not that money is lacking; there is a lot of money in the world. There are even people who have so much that they do not know what to do with it. But it will never come to their mind to give it for the divine Work.... They can't say that they do not know, for one has always the means to know if one wants to know. When the idea comes to you: “I want to make the best use of my money” (and the best use, not only from the viewpoint that this gentleman or lady conceives as being useful), well, one can always find out. Generally (there are exceptions), generally these people who have a lot of money put one condition: it must bring them at least some satisfaction. There must be some merit — they give, but they must get something. If they are not business people and do not give their money to gain more, if they are, for example, philanthropists who wish to give money to help humanity make progress, they always wish, more or less consciously (but generally very consciously) they always wish, that it should bring them fame, a kind of satisfaction of

¹ In a former talk (of 10 March 1951) Mother had said that the condition to be fulfilled for obtaining power over money was to become master of the sex impulse in human beings.

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their *amour-propre*. They give money for founding a school: the school will bear their name. They build a monument somewhere: it must be mentioned that Mr. So-and-so has donated the money and so on.... There was a time when I was building Golconde,² there were people who approached me or sent others to me to say: "I am quite willing to give you so much or so much, but you must place in one of the rooms a marble tablet on which is written: "This room has been built by the gift of Mr. So-and-so." Then, I said: "I am sorry. I can make marble tablets for you but I'll pave the basement with them!" It is like that.

There are exceptions, as there are exceptions to all rules; however I cannot say that money goes spontaneously, freely, without effort there where useful things will be done most. No. The maximum of goodwill is to give money for something which one understands well (which is also easy to understand), to build a hospital, for example, or to open a crèche for little children. These are all works of goodwill that men understand. But if they are told that we want to change the human consciousness, we want to create a new world, oh! the first thing they say is: "Pardon me! Do not speak of God, for if it is God who is doing the work, well, it is God who will give you the means for it and you have no need of our help." I have heard people saying: "If you represent the Divine upon earth you can do whatever you like; there is no need for us to give you anything." And how many among you are free from that idea (an aftertaste of that idea): the Divine is all-powerful, therefore, the Divine can do whatever he likes?

That is the first argument, that is the theory. The Divine is all-powerful, he can do whatever he likes; therefore he does not need anybody's help. And if you push your idea sufficiently far, you will see that if the Divine is truly all-powerful in this world and does always whatever he wants, well, I tell you, he

² One of the guest-houses of the Ashram.

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is the greatest monster in the universe! Because One who is all-powerful and makes the world such as it is, looking with a smile at people suffering and miserable, and finding that all right, I would call a monster. It was the kind of thing I used to think about when I was five. I used to tell myself: "It is not possible, what is taught there is not true!" Now, as you have a little more philosophical mind, I shall teach you how to come out of the difficulty. But, first of all, you must understand that that idea is a childish idea. I simply call on your common sense. You make of your Divine a person, because that way you understand him better. You make of him a person. And then this person has organised something (the earth, it is too big, it is difficult to understand—take anything else) and then this thing the Divine has organised with the full power to do exactly as he likes. And in this thing—that he has made with the full power to do as he likes—there is ignorance, stupidity, bad will, fear, jealousy, pride, wickedness, and also suffering, illness, grief, all the pains; and a set of people who cannot say that they have perhaps more than a few minutes of happiness in the whole day and the rest of it is a neutral condition, passing by like a thing that's dead—and you call that a creation!... I call it something like a hell! And one who would make that deliberately and not only make it but look at it and say: "Ah! it is very good", as it is narrated in some religious books, that after having made the world such as it is, the seventh day he looked at it and was extremely satisfied with his work and he rested.... Well, that never! I do not call that God. Or otherwise, follow Anatole France and say that God is a demiurge and the most frightful of all beings.

But there is a way out of the difficulty. (*To a child*) Do you know it, you? Yes, yes, you know it! You will see all these conceptions and this idea that you have are based upon one thing, an entity that you call God and a world that you call his creation, and you believe these are two different things, one having made the other and the other being under the first, being the expression of what the first has made. Well, that is the initial

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error. If you could feel deeply that there is no division between that something you call God and this something you call his creation, if you said: "It is exactly the same thing" and if you could feel that what you call God (perhaps it is only a word), what you call God suffers when you suffer, he does not know when you do not know; and that it is through this creation, little by little, step by step, that he finds himself again, unites with himself, is realising himself, expressing himself, and it is not at all something he wanted in an arbitrary way or made like an autocrat, but that it is the growing expression, developing more and more, of a consciousness that is objectifying itself to itself.... Then there is no other thing but the sense of a collective advancing towards a more total realisation, a self-awareness of knowledge-consciousness — no other thing but that, a progressive self-awareness of knowledge-consciousness in a total unity which will reproduce integrally the Original Consciousness.

That changes the problem.

Only, it is a little difficult to understand and one must make a little more progress. Instead of being like a little child that kneels down, joins its hands and says: "My God, I pray to Thee, make me a good child so that I may never hurt my mother...." That of course is very easy and indeed I cannot say that it is bad. It is very good. Only there are children with whom these things do not work, because they say: "Why should I ask You to make me good? You should make me good without there being any need of my asking You for it. Otherwise You are not nice!" It is very good when one has a simple heart and does not think much, but when one begins to think, it becomes more difficult. But if you had by your side someone to tell you: instead of that, instead of lighting a candle and kneeling down before it with your hands folded, light a flame in your heart and then have a great aspiration towards "something more beautiful, more true, more noble, better than all that I know. I ask that from tomorrow I begin to know all these things, all that I cannot do I begin to do and every day a little more." And then, if you throw yourself out a little,

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if, for one reason or another, you were put in the presence of much misery in the world, if you have friends who are unhappy or relatives who suffer or you meet any kind of difficulties, then you ask that the whole consciousness might be raised *all together* towards that perfection which must manifest and that all this ignorance that has made the world so unhappy might be changed into an enlightened knowledge and all this bad will be illumined and transformed into benevolence. And then as far as one can, as far as one understands, one wishes it with all one's heart; and indeed that can take the form of a prayer and one can ask — ask of what? — ask of that which knows, ask of that which can, ask of all that is greater and stronger than oneself, to help so that it may be thus. And how beautiful those prayers would be!

My children, in five years I shall take with you a study course of spiritual life. I give you five years to prepare yourselves; what I am telling you now is just a little of the kind, as one would light a small candle to give you an idea of what light is. But I want you all to see that we do not repeat and say over and over again indefinitely all that nonsense which is uttered every time one turns towards something other than the ordinary life. Even as I have spoken here, in this book, of the confusion that is made between asceticism and the spiritual life,³ well, one day I shall

³ "Take, for example, the very universal superstition, prevalent all over the world, that asceticism and spirituality are one and the same thing. If you describe someone as a spiritual man or a spiritual woman, people at once think of one who does not eat or sits all day without moving, one who lives in a hut in great poverty, one who has given away all he had and keeps nothing for himself. This is the picture that immediately arises in the minds of ninety-nine people out of a hundred, when you speak of a spiritual man; the one proof of spirituality for them is poverty and abstinence from everything that is pleasant or comfortable. This is a mental construction which must be thrown down if you are to be free to see and follow the spiritual truth.... Once it is gone, you find something that is much higher than your narrow ascetic rule, a complete openness that leaves the being free. If you are to get something, you accept it, and if you are to give up the very same thing, you with an equal willingness leave it. Things come and you take them up; things go and you let them pass, with the same smile of equanimity in the taking or the leaving."

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speak to you of the confusion made between what one calls God and what I call the Divine. This will be later on.

It is 9.20 — time to wind up.

Next time we shall speak of health and illness and I shall confound all those who are attached by iron chains to their illness and who do not want to let it go! I shall give them scissors to cut their chains.

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"There are two factors that have to be considered in the matter [the causes of illness]. There is what comes from outside and there is what comes from your inner condition. Your inner condition becomes a cause of illness when there is a resistance or revolt in it or when there is some part in you that does not respond to the protection; or even there may be something there that almost willingly and wilfully calls in the adverse forces. It is enough if there is a slight movement of this kind in you; the hostile forces are at once upon you and their attack takes often the form of illness."

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"Some part in you that does not respond to the protection." What does this mean, Mother?

I have already explained it to you. What is it that you do not understand?

I have understood the sense of the words, but I do not understand why it is so.

Because I said "some part of the being"? You understand very well, don't you, what "being under protection" means? You understand also "going out of the protection"? If you do something contrary, for example, if you are under the protection of the Divine and for a moment you have a thought of doubt or ill-will or revolt, immediately you go out of the protection. So the protection acts around you to prevent adverse forces from coming upon you or an accident from happening, that is to say, even if you lose consciousness, because of the protection

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even your lack of consciousness will not produce a bad result immediately. But if you go out of the protection and are not all the time vigilant, then either you will be attacked by the adverse forces or an accident will happen.

But those who are not conscious?

Those who are not conscious? But there, too, I have said that I was not speaking of ordinary people. I am not speaking of ordinary people, they are not under a special protection. Ordinary people are under ordinary conditions. They have no special protection watching over them. I am not saying all this for them. They follow all the ordinary laws of life and you cannot explain things to them in the same way.... You were thinking of everybody, that it was so for everybody? It is only for people who do yoga, it is not for everybody.

Can one get ill through fear?

Yes. I knew someone who was so full of fear that he got cholera! There was cholera in the next house and he got so frightened that he caught the illness and without any other reason, there was no other reason for his catching it: it was through sheer fright. And it is a very common thing; in an epidemic, it is so in the majority of cases. It is through fear that the door is opened and you catch the illness. Those who have no fear can go about freely and generally they catch nothing. But still as I have said there,¹ you may have no fear in the mind, you may have no fear even in the vital, but who has no fear in the body?... Very few.

A strict discipline is needed to cure the body of fear. The cells themselves tremble. It is only by discipline, by yoga that one can overcome this fear. But it is a fact that one can catch anything through fear, even invite an accident. And, you see,

¹ *Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (19 May 1929).*

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from a certain point of view everything is contagious. I knew a person who got a wound through the kind of fear that he felt seeing someone else's wound. He really got it.

What is the difference between mental, vital and physical fear?

If you are conscious of the movement of your mind, the movement of your vital and the movement of your physical, you know it.

As for the mental, it is very simple: thoughts come. You begin thinking, for example, there is this illness and this illness is very contagious, perhaps you are going to catch it, and if you catch it, it is going to be a terrible affair and what is to be done so as not to catch it?... So the mind begins to tremble: what is going to happen tomorrow? etc.

As for the vital, you feel it. You feel it in your sensations. All at once you feel hot, you feel cold, you perspire or all kinds of unpleasant things happen. And then you feel your heart beating fast and suddenly you have fever and then the circulation stops and you become cold.

Physically, well... When you do not any longer have the other two fears, you can become aware of the physical fear. Generally, the other two are much more conscious. They hide the physical fear from you. But when you have no longer any mental or vital fear, then you become aware of it. It is a curious little vibration that gets into your cells and they begin shivering that way. But the cells are not like a heart beating very fast. It is in the very cells: they tremble with just a slight quivering. And it is very difficult to control this. Yet it can be controlled.

I am sure that most of you have felt this as, for example, when one does an exercise which is not done often or does it for the first time; these are tiny little vibrations which seize you in all the cells. And then naturally, you lose your full control over the movement. The body does not answer to the Force any

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more. When you want to put your will to do something, that brings about a kind of resistance and incapacity in the body. Only, you are not aware of it usually because your attention is drawn more to the mental apprehension or to the kind of vital recoil which is very apparent in the consciousness, whereas you are not so very conscious of the resistance produced in the body. Generally in all sports (athletics and all competitions), a certain incident occurs: you must have noticed with your friends that some do much better than usual, while others who usually do well are almost incapacitated at that moment. They do much worse. Well, this depends on those small vibrations. Because you lose your full control. Your will has no longer the full control over the body, for it vibrates and answers to forces other than yours.... Naturally I am not speaking of those whose head is in a whirl or whose vital is altogether upset. Nothing can be done with them, it is better that they don't try. But I mean those who have some control over themselves, who undergo the training, you see, but at the time of the competition, cannot do as well as usual; it depends on a lack of receptivity in the body which gets this little tremor in the cells of which you are not conscious but which acts as an obstruction. That prevents it from receiving the Force fully.

Are illnesses tests in the Yoga?

Tests? Not at all.

You are given an illness purposely to make you progress? Surely it is not like that. Actually, you may turn the thing round and say that there are people whose aspiration is so constant, whose goodwill so total that whatever happens to them they take as a trial on the path to make progress. I knew people who, whenever they fell ill, took that as a proof of the Divine Grace to help them to progress. They told themselves: it is a good sign, I am going to find out the cause of my illness and I shall make the necessary progress. I knew a few of this kind and they moved on

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magnificently. There are others, on the contrary, who, far from making use of the thing, let themselves fall flat on the ground. So much the worse for them. But the true attitude when one is ill, is to say: "There is something that is not all right; I am going to see what it is." You must never think that the Divine has purposely sent an illness, for that would truly be a very wicked Divine!

Even so, there are microbes in water?

These people are in such a physical, mental, and vital condition that they are liable to catch an illness, even without drinking water, I assure you! Their whole being is a constant disharmony, their whole physical being. I do not mean inwardly, they are perhaps all right there — but those who are all right resist everything.

And I have seen just the contrary. I have seen in this country, here, village people who had only such water as was no longer water to drink, it was mere mud, I have seen it with my own eyes. It was yellowish mud in which cows had bathed and done all the rest and people had waded through it after walking on the roads. They threw their rubbish and everything was in it. And then I saw these people. They entered it, it was, as I said, yellowish mud and there at the end there was a little bit of water — it was not water, it was yellowish, you know — they bent over, collected this water in their palms and drank it. And there were some who did not even allow it to settle. Some knew what to put in it, the herbs needed to make it settle, and if one leaves it sufficiently long it becomes a little clearer. But there were some who knew nothing at all and drank it as it was. And I came to learn that there was just then an epidemic of cholera all round and I said: "There are still people living in that village with that kind of water?" I was told: "We do not have a single case of cholera...." They had become immune, they were habituated. But if there had been a single person who had caught it by chance, probably all would have been dead; for then fear would enter and with

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fear in them there would be no more resistance, for they were poor miserable things. But it is the moral conditions of these people that are terrible, more than the physical conditions — the moral conditions.

There are sadhus, you know, who accept the conditions of a dirty life through saintliness. They never wash themselves, they have nothing about them that hygiene demands. They live in a truly dirty condition — and they are free from all illness. Probably because they have faith and they do so purposely. Their spirit is magnificent.... I am speaking of sincere people and not those who pretend. They have faith. They do not think of their body, they think of the life of their soul. They have no illness. There are some who come to a state in which an arm or a leg or any part of the body has become completely stiff due to their ascetic posture. They cannot move any more; anybody else would die under such conditions; they continue to live because they have faith and they do it purposely, because it is a thing they have imposed on themselves.

Therefore, the moral condition is much more important than the physical. If you were in surroundings where everyone was tidy and then you remained three days without taking a bath, you would fall ill. This is not to say that you should not take a bath! Because we do not want to be sadhus, we want to be yogis. It is not the same thing. And we want the body to take part in the yoga. So we must do whatever is necessary to keep it fit. However, this is only to tell you that the moral condition is much more important than the physical.

Besides, these people, by their asceticism, wilfully spoil their body, torture themselves, yet if it was someone else who did the same thing, people would shout, protest, declare he is a monster. But one does it by one's own choice. And one bears it very well because it is imposed on one's own self and one feels a kind of glory in having done something very "remarkable", through one's aspiration for the divine life!

No other questions?

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Well, now, I told you the other day that I would speak to you of illness; I thought of it today and have made notes.... For you may tell me there are microbes, and that there are people who have no thought of illness and catch it all the same; but thinking is not the only factor, not by any means. Still, I shall try to explain to you now the notes I have made. (*Mother looks at a paper.*)

I have told you first of all that all illness without any exception — without exception — is the expression of a break in equilibrium. But there are many kinds of breaks in equilibrium.... First, I am speaking only of the body, I am not speaking of the nervous illnesses of the vital or of mental illnesses. We shall see that later on. We are speaking only of this poor little body. And I say that all illnesses, all, whatever they may be (I would add even accidents) come from a break in equilibrium. That is, if all your organs, all the members and parts of your body are in harmony with one another, you are in perfect health. But if there is the slightest imbalance anywhere, immediately you get either just a little ill or quite ill, even very badly ill, or else an accident occurs. That always happens whenever there is an inner imbalance.

But then, to the equilibrium of the body, you must add the equilibrium of the vital and the mind. For you to be able to do all kinds of things with immunity, without any accident happening to you, you must have a triple equilibrium — mental, vital, physical — and not only in each of the parts, but also in the three parts in their mutual relations.... If you have done a little mathematics, you should have been taught how many combinations that makes and what a difficult thing it means! There lies the key to the problem. For the combinations are innumerable, and consequently the causes of illness too are innumerable, the causes of accidents also are innumerable. Still, we are going to try to classify them so that we may understand.

First of all, from the point of view of the body — just the body — there are two kinds of disequilibrium: functional and

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organic. I do not know if you are aware of the difference between the two; but you have organs and then you have all the parts of your body: nerves, muscles, bones and all the rest. Now, if an organ by itself is in disequilibrium, it is an organic disequilibrium, and you are told: that organ is ill or perhaps it is badly formed or it is not normal or an accident has occurred to it. But it is the organ that is ill. But the organ may be in a very good condition, all your organs may be in a very good condition, but there is still an illness as they do not function properly: there is a lack of balance in the functioning. You may have a very good stomach, but suddenly something happens to it and it does not function properly; or the body may also be excellent, but something happens to it and it does not work properly any more. Then you have an illness due to functional imbalance not organic imbalance.

Generally, illnesses due to functional imbalance are cured much more quickly and easily than the others. The others become a little more serious. Sometimes they become very grave. So there are already two domains to see and know, but if you have a little knowledge of your body and the habit of observing its working, you can know what kind of imbalance yours is.

Most often when you are young and leading a normal life, the imbalance is purely functional. There are only a few poor people who for one reason or other have had an accident or imbalance before their birth, these carry with them something that is much more difficult to cure (not that it is incurable; in theory, there is nothing incurable), but it becomes more difficult.

Good. Now what are the causes of this imbalance, whatever it may be? As I told you just now, the causes are innumerable; because, first of all, there are all the inner causes, that is, those personal to you, and then all the external causes, those that come to you from outside. That makes two major categories.

The internal causes:

We said: you have a brain, lungs, a heart, a stomach, a liver, etc. If each one does its duty and works normally and if

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all move together in harmony at a given moment and in the right way (note that it would be very complicated if you were obliged to think of all that, and I am afraid things would not go right all the time! Fortunately, it does not need our conscious thinking), admitting however they are in good harmony with one another, good friends, in perfect agreement, and each one fulfilling its task, its movement at the right time, in tune with the rest, neither too soon nor too late, neither too fast nor too slow, indeed, every one going all right, then you are marvellously well! Suppose now that one of them, for some reason or other, happens to be in a bad mood: it does not work with the necessary energy, at the required moment it goes awhile on strike. Do not believe that it alone will fall ill: the whole system will go wrong and you will feel altogether unwell. And if, unfortunately, there is a vital imbalance, that is, a disappointment or too violent an emotion or too strong a passion or something else upsetting your vital, that comes in addition. And if furthermore your thoughts roam about and you begin to have dark ideas and formulate frightful things and make catastrophic formations, then after that you are sure to fall ill altogether.... You see the complication, don't you, just a tiny thing can go the wrong way and thus through an inner contagion can lead to something very serious. So what is important is to control things immediately. One must be conscious, conscious of the working of one's organs, aware of the one that does not behave very well, telling it immediately what is to be done to set itself right. What is needed (I shall explain it to you later on) is to give them a lesson as one does to little children. When they begin indulging in unhealthy fancies (indeed it is then the occasion to say it) you must tell them: no, it is not like that the work is to be done, it is the other way! Suppose for example, your heart begins to throb madly; then you must make it calm, you tell it that this is not the way to behave, and at the same time (solely to help it) you take in long, very regular rhythmic breaths, that is, the lung becomes the mentor of the heart and teaches

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it how to work properly. And so on. I could give you countless examples.

Good. We say then that there is an imbalance between the different parts of the being, disharmony in their working. That is what I have just told you. And then there are internal conflicts. These are quarrels. There are internal quarrels among the different parts of yourself. Supposing there is an organ (it happens very often) that needs rest and there is another that wants action, and both at the same time. How are you going to manage it? They begin to quarrel. If you do what one wants, the other protests! And so you have to find a middle term to put them in harmony. And then, at times, if you add to the physical the vital and mental (I do not speak of the speculative mind or the independent vital, I am speaking of the mental and vital parts of the *body*, because there is a physical vital and a physical mind; there is a physical mind and this physical mind is the worst of all, it is that which goes on all the time and you have the utmost difficulty in stopping it: it goes on and on and on); well, if there is a dispute between them, between the mind, the vital and the physical, you have a battlefield, and this battlefield can become the cause of all possible illnesses. They fight violently. One wants something, the other does not, they quarrel and you are in a kind of internal whirlwind. That can give you fever—you do get it usually—or else you are seized by an inner shivering and you have no longer any control. For the most important of all causes for bodily illness is that the body begins to get restless; it trembles and the trembling increases more and more, more and more and you feel that you will never be able to reestablish the balance, it eludes you. Then in that case you must know what the dispute is about, the reason of the dispute and find out how to reconcile the people within you.

All these are functional imbalances.

There are other kinds of imbalance and they are more or less a part of what you were saying just now. There is an aspiration within you (I am now speaking of people who do yoga or at any

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rate know what the spiritual life is and try to walk on the path), within you there is a part of the being — either mental or vital or sometimes even physical — that has understood well, has much aspiration, its special aptitudes, that receives the forces well and is making good progress. And then there are others that cannot, others still that don't want to (that of course is very bad), but there are yet others that want to very much but cannot, do not have the capacity, are not ready. So there is something that rises upward and something that does not move. That causes a terrible imbalance. And usually this translates itself into some illness or other, for you are in such a state of inner tension between something that cannot or something that clings, that does not want to move and something else that wants to: that produces a frightful unease and the result usually is an illness.

Now there is the opposite, almost the opposite, that is, the whole being goes ahead, progresses, advances in an increasing equilibrium and achieves remarkable progress; you have the feeling you are in a wonderfully favourable state, everything is going on well, you are sure; and you see yourself already gloriously well on the way.... Crack! an illness. Then you say: "How is it? I was in such a good condition and now I have fallen ill! It is not fair." But this happens because you are not completely conscious. There was a small part in the being that did not want to move. Usually it is something in the vital; sometimes it is a tiny mental formation that does not agree to follow; sometimes it is simply something in the body which is quite inert or has not the slightest intention of moving, that wants things to remain always as they are. It pulls backward, separates itself wilfully, and naturally, even if it is quite small, it brings about such an imbalance in the being that you fall ill. And then you say to yourself: "It is truly a pity, I was going on so well, it is not fair! Truly God is not kind!... When I was making so much progress, He ought to have prevented me from becoming ill!"... It is like that.

Now, there is still another thing. You do the yoga according

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to your capacity. You have been told: "Open yourself, you will receive the Force." You have been told: "Have faith, be of good-will and you will be protected." And indeed you are bathed in the Consciousness, bathed in the Force, bathed in the Protection and to the extent you have faith and open yourself, you receive all that, and it helps you in keeping fit and in rejecting the little inner disturbances and re-establishing order when these come, in protecting yourself against small attacks or accidents which might have happened. But if somewhere in your being — either in your body or even in your vital or mind, either in several parts or even in a single one — there is an incapacity to receive the descending Force, this acts like a grain of sand in a machine. You know, a fine machine working quite well with everything going all right, and you put into it just a little sand (nothing much, only a grain of sand), suddenly everything is damaged and the machine stops. Well, just a little lack of receptivity somewhere, something that is unable to receive the Force, that is completely shut up (when one looks at it, it becomes as it were a little dark spot somewhere, a tiny thing hard as a stone: the Force cannot enter into it, it refuses to receive it — either it cannot or it will not) and immediately that produces a great imbalance; and this thing that was moving upward, that was blooming so wonderfully, finds itself sick, and sometimes just when you were in the normal equilibrium; you were in good health, everything was going on well, you had nothing to complain about. One day when you grasped a new idea, received a new impulse, when you had a great aspiration and received a great force and had a marvellous experience, a beautiful experience opening to you inner doors, giving you a knowledge you did not have before; then you were sure that everything was going to be all right.... The next day, you are taken ill. So you say: "Still that? It is impossible! That should not happen." But it was quite simply what I have just said: a grain of sand. There was something that could not receive; immediately it brings about a disequilibrium. Even though very small it is enough, and you fall ill.

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You see there are reasons! — many reasons, numberless reasons. For all these things combine in an extraordinarily complex way, and in order to know, in order to be able to cure an illness, one must find out its cause, not its microbe. For it happens that (excuse me, I hope there are no doctors here!), it happens that when microbes are there, they find out magnificent remedies to kill the microbes, but these remedies cure some and make others much more ill! Nobody knows why.... Perhaps I know why. Because the illness had another cause than the purely physical one; there was another. The first was only an outer expression of a different disorder, and unless you touched that, discovered that disorder, never would you be able to prevent the illness from coming. And to discover the disorder, you must have an extensive occult knowledge and also a deep knowledge of all the inner workings of each one.

Thus we have seen in brief, very rapidly all the internal causes. Now there are external causes that come and bring complications.

If you were in a perfectly harmonious environment where everything was full of a total and perfect goodwill, then evidently you could lay the blame only on yourself. But the difficulties that are within are also without. You can, to a certain extent, establish an inner equilibrium, but you live in surroundings full of imbalance. Unless you shut yourself up in an ivory tower (which is not only difficult but not always recommendable), you are obliged to receive what comes from outside. You give and you receive; you breathe in and absorb. So there is a mixture and that is why one can say that all is contagious, for you live in a state of ceaseless vibrations. You give out your vibrations and receive also the vibrations of others, and these vibrations are of a very complex kind. There are still (we shall say for simplifying the language) mental vibrations, vital vibrations, physical vibrations and many others. You give, you receive; you give, you receive. It is a perpetual play. Even granting that there is no bad will, there is necessarily contagion. And as I was saying just

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now, all is contagious, everything. You are looking at the effect of an accident: you absorb a certain vibration. And if you are over-sensitive and, over and above that, you have fear or disgust (which is the same thing, disgust is only a moral expression of a physical fear), the accident can be translated physically in your body. Naturally you will be told that those who have such reactions are in a state of nervous imbalance. It is not quite true. They are persons with an ultra-supersensitive vital, that is all. And it is not always a proof of inferiority, on the contrary! For as you progress spiritually, a certain hypersensitivity of the nerves occurs and if your self-control does not increase along with your sensibility, all kinds of untoward things may happen to you.

But that is not the only thing.

Unhappily there is much bad will in the world, and among the different kinds of bad will there is the small type that comes from ignorance and stupidity, there is the big type that comes from wickedness and there is the formidable one that is the result of anti-divine forces. So, all that is in the atmosphere (I am not telling you this to frighten you, for it is well understood that one should fear nothing — but it is there all the same) and these things attack you, sometimes intentionally, sometimes unintentionally. Unintentionally, through other people: others are attacked, they don't know, they pass it on without even being aware of it. They are the first victims. They pass the illness to others. But there are wilful attacks. We were speaking the other day of mental formations and of wicked people who make mental formations to harm you, make them wilfully to do harm. And then there are others who go still a step further.

There is a misguided, perverted occultism which is called black magic, it is a thing one must never touch. But unfortunately, there are people who touch it through pure wickedness. You must not believe it is an illusion, a superstition; it is real. There are people who know how to do magic and do it, and with their magic they obtain altogether detestable results.... It is understood of course that when you have no fear and remain

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under protection, you are sheltered. But there is a "when", there is a condition, and then if the condition is not always fulfilled, very unpleasant things may happen. So long as you are in a state full of strength, full of purity — that is, in a state of invincibility, if anybody does anything against you, that falls back upon him automatically, as when you throw a tennis-ball against the wall, it comes back to you; the thing comes back to them exactly in the same way, sometimes with a greater force, and they are punished by their own wickedness. But naturally it all depends on the person against whom the magic is done, on his inner force and purity.... I have come across such things, many cases like this. And in such cases, in order to resist, one must be, as I said, a warrior in the vital, that is, a spiritual fighter in the vital. All who do yoga sincerely must become that, and when they do become that, they are altogether sheltered. But one of the conditions for becoming it is never to have bad will or a bad thought towards others. For if you have a bad feeling or bad will or a bad thought, you come down to their level and when you are on the same level with them, well, you may receive blows from them.

Now, without going to that extreme, there are in the physical atmosphere, the earth-atmosphere, numerous small entities which you do not see, for your sight is too limited, but which move about in your atmosphere. Some of them are quite nice, others very wicked. Generally these little entities are produced by the disintegration of vital beings — they pullulate — and these form quite an unpleasant mass. There are some which do very fine things. I believe I narrated to you the story of the little beings who tugged at my sari to tell me that the milk was about to boil and that I had to go and see that it did not boil over. But all of them are not so good. Some of them like to play ugly little tricks, wicked little pranks. And so most often it is they who are behind an accident. They like little accidents, they like the whole whirl of forces that gather round an accident: a mass of people, you know, it is very amusing! And then that gives them their food,

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because, in reality, they feed upon human vitality thrown out of the body by emotions and excitements. So they say: just a small accident, it is quite nice, many accidents!...

And then if there is a group of such small entities, they may clash with one another, because among themselves they do not have a very peaceful life: clashing with one another, fighting, destroying, demolishing each other. And that is the origin of microbes. They are forces of disintegration. But they continue to be alive even in their divided forms and this is the origin of germs and microbes. Therefore most microbes have behind them a bad will and that is what makes them so dangerous. And unless one knows the quality and kind of bad will and is capable of acting upon it, there is a ninety-nine per cent chance of not finding the true and complete remedy. The microbe is a very material expression of something living in a subtle physical world and that is why these very microbes (as I have said there)² that are always around you, within you, for years together do not make you ill and then suddenly they make you fall ill.

There is another reason. The origin of the microbes and their support lie in a disharmony, in the being's receptivity to the adverse force. I will tell you a story. I do not know whether I have already told it to you, but I am going to tell you now for it will give you an illustration.

I was in Japan. It was at the beginning of January 1919. Anyway, it was the time when a terrible flu raged there in the whole of Japan, which killed hundreds of thousands of people. It was one of those epidemics the like of which is rarely seen. In Tokyo, every day there were hundreds and hundreds of new cases. The disease appeared to take this turn: it lasted three days and on the third day the patient died. And people died in such large numbers that they could not even be cremated, you understand, it was impossible, there were too many of them. Or otherwise, if one did not die on the third day, at the end of

² *Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (19 May 1929)*.

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seven days one was altogether cured; a little exhausted but all the same completely cured. There was a panic in the town, for epidemics are very rare in Japan. They are a very clean people, very careful and with a fine morale. Illnesses are very rare. But still this came, it came as a catastrophe. There was a terrible fear. For example, people were seen walking about in the streets with a mask on the nose, a mask to purify the air they were breathing, so that it might not be full of the microbes of the illness. It was a common fear.... Now, it so happened I was living with someone who never ceased troubling me: "But what is this disease? What is there behind this disease?" What I was doing, you know, was simply to cover myself with my force, my protection so as not to catch it and I did not think of it any more and continued doing my work. Nothing happened and I was not thinking of it. But constantly I heard: "What is this? Oh, I would like to know what is there behind this illness. But could you not tell me what this illness is, why it is there?" etc. One day I was called to the other end of the town by a young woman whom I knew and who wished to introduce me to some friends and show me certain things. I do not remember now what exactly was the matter, but anyway I had to cross the whole town in a tram-car. And I was in the tram and seeing these people with masks on their noses, and then there was in the atmosphere this constant fear, and so there came a suggestion to me; I began to ask myself: "Truly, what is this illness? What is there behind this illness? What are the forces that are in this illness?" I came to the house, I passed an hour there and I returned. And I returned with a terrible fever. I had caught it. It came to you thus, without preparation, instantaneously. Illnesses, generally illnesses from germs and microbes take a few days in the system: they come, there is a little battle inside; you win or you lose, if you lose you catch the illness, it is not complicated. But there, you just receive a letter, open the envelope, hop! puff! The next minute you have the fever. Well, that evening I had a terrible fever. The doctor was called (it was not I who called him), the doctor was called

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and he told me: "I must absolutely give you this medicine." It was one of the best medicines for the fever, he had just a little (all their stocks were exhausted, everyone was taking it); he said: "I have still a few packets, I shall give you some" — "I beg of you, do not give it to me, I won't take it. Keep it for someone who has faith in it and will take it." He was quite disgusted: "It was no use my coming here." So I said: "Perhaps it was no use!" And I remained in my bed, with my fever, a violent fever. All the while I was asking myself: "What is this illness? Why is it there? What is there behind it?..." At the end of the second day, as I was lying all alone, I saw clearly a being, with a part of the head cut off, in a military uniform (or the remains of a military uniform) approaching me and suddenly flinging himself upon my chest, with that half a head to suck my force. I took a good look, then realised that I was about to die. He was drawing all my life out (for I must tell you that people were dying of pneumonia in three days). I was completely nailed to the bed, without movement, in a deep trance. I could no longer stir and he was pulling. I thought: now it is the end. Then I called on my occult power, I gave a big fight and I succeeded in turning him back so that he could not stay there any longer. And I woke up.

But I had seen. And I had learnt, I had understood that the illness originated from beings who had been thrown out of their bodies. I had seen this during the First Great War, towards its end, when people used to live in trenches and were killed by bombardment. They were in perfect health, altogether healthy and in a second they were thrown out of their bodies, not conscious that they were dead. They did not know they hadn't a body any more and they tried to find in others the life they could not find in themselves. That is, they were turned into so many countless vampires. And they vampirised upon men. And then over and above that, there was a decomposition of the vital forces of people who fell ill and died. One lived in a kind of sticky and thick cloud made up of all that. And so those who took in this cloud fell ill and usually got cured, but those

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who were attacked by a being of that kind invariably died, they could not resist. I know how much knowledge and force were necessary for me to resist. It was irresistible. That is, if they were attacked by a being who was a centre of this whirl of bad forces, they died. And there must have been many of these, a very great number. I saw all that and I understood.

When someone came to see me, I asked to be left alone, I lay quietly in my bed and I passed two or three days absolutely quiet, in concentration, with my consciousness. Subsequently, a friend of ours (a Japanese, a very good friend) came and told me: "Ah! you were ill? So what I thought was true.... Just imagine for the last two or three days, there hasn't been a single new case of illness in the town and most of the people who were ill have been cured and the number of deaths has become almost negligible, and now it is all over. The illness is wholly under control." Then I narrated what had happened to me and he went and narrated it to everybody. They even published articles about it in the papers.

Well, consciousness, to be sure, is more effective than doctors' pills!... The condition was critical. Just imagine, there were entire villages where everyone had died. There was a village in Japan, not very big, but still with more than a hundred people, and it happened, by some extraordinary stroke of luck, that one of the villagers was to receive a letter (the postman went there only if there was a letter; naturally, it was a village far in the countryside); so he went to the countryside; there was a snowfall; the whole village was under snow... and there was not a living person. It was exactly so. It was that kind of epidemic. And Tokyo was also like that; but Tokyo was a big town and things did not happen in the same fashion. And it was in this way the epidemic ended. That is my story.

Now this brings us naturally to the cure. All that is very well, we now have the knowledge; so, how to prevent illnesses from coming, first of all, and when the illness does occur, how to cure it?

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One may try ordinary means and sometimes that succeeds. It is usually when the body is convinced that it has been given the conditions under which it must be all right; it takes the resolution that it must be all right and it is cured. But if your body has not the will, the resolution to get cured, you may try whatever you like, it won't be cured. This also I know by experience. For I knew people who could be cured in five minutes, even of a disease considered very serious, and I knew people who had no fatal illness, but cherished it with such persistence that it did become fatal. It was impossible to persuade their body to let go their illness.

And it is here that one must be very careful and look at oneself with great discrimination to discover the small part in oneself that—how to put it?—takes pleasure in being ill. Oh! there are many reasons. There are people who are ill out of spite, there are people who are ill out of hate, there are people who are ill through despair, there are people... And these are not formidable movements: it is quite a small movement in the being: one is vexed and says: "You will see what is going to happen, you will see the consequences of what he has done to me! Let it come! I am going to be ill." One does not say it openly to oneself, for one would scold oneself, but there is something somewhere that thinks in that way.

So there are two things you have to do when you have discovered the disorder, big or small—the disharmony. Firstly, we said that this disharmony creates a kind of tremor and a lack of peace in the physical being, in the body. It is a kind of fever. Even if it is not a fever in general, there is localised fever; there are people who get restless. So the first thing to do is to quieten oneself, bring peace, calm, relaxation, with a total confidence, in this little corner (not necessarily in the whole body). Afterwards you see what is the cause of the disorder. You look. Of course, there are many, but still you try to find out approximately the cause of this disorder, and through the pressure of light and knowledge and spiritual force you re-establish the harmony, the

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proper functioning. And if the ailing part is receptive, if it does not offer any obstinate resistance, you can be cured in a few seconds.

It is not always the case. Sometimes there is, as I have said, a bad will: you are more or less on strike, at least you want the illness to have its consequences. So, that takes a little more time. However, if you do not happen to be particularly ill-willed, after some time the Force acts: after a few minutes or hours or at the most some days you are cured.

Now, in the case of special attacks of adverse forces, the thing gets complicated, because you have not only to deal with the will of the body (note that I do not admit the argument of those who say: "But as for myself I do not want to be ill!", for your consciousness always says that it does not want to be ill, one must be half-crazy to say, "I want to be ill"; but it is not your consciousness that wants to be ill, it is some part of your body or at the most, a fragment of the vital that has gone wrong and wishes to be ill, and unless you observe with a good deal of attention you do not notice it). But I say that the situation gets complicated if behind this there is an attack, a pressure from adverse forces who really want to harm you. You may have opened the door through spiritual error, through a movement of vanity, of anger, of hatred or of violence; even if it is merely a movement that comes and goes, that can open the door. There are always germs watching and only waiting for an occasion. That is why one should be very careful. Anyhow, for some reason or other, the influence has pierced through the shell of protection and acts there encouraging the illness to become as bad as it can be. In that case the first means is not quite sufficient. Then you have to add something; you must add the Force of spiritual purification which is such an absolutely perfectly constructive force that nothing that's in the least destructive can survive there. If you have this Force at your disposal or if you can ask for it and get it, you direct it on the spot and the adverse force usually runs away immediately, for if it happens to be in

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the midst of this Force it gets dissolved, it disappears; for no force of disintegration can survive within this Force; therefore disintegration disappears and with it that also disappears. It can be changed into a constructive force, that is possible, or it may be simply dissolved and reduced to nothing. And with that not only is the illness cured, but all possibility of its return is also eliminated. You are cured of the illness once for all, it never comes back. There you are.

Now, this is the general picture; on the details could be written books and books. I have given you only general explanations.

Considering the causes you have told us about, one should be always ill!

But in ordinary life, most of the time, people are almost always ill—except a few who escape for reasons of a different order that we shall explain one day. There are very few people who are not more or less ill all the while. But even in ordinary life, if within you there is trust, goodwill, a kind of certitude, this kind of inner confidence, oh! as there is in most children perhaps (I do not know, for, after all, those we see here are fairly exceptional), however, there is a trust in life, they are young and they have the feeling that the whole life is before them. Very few things are behind, everything is in front. So that gives them a kind of self-confidence, that pulls them out.

Otherwise, I do not know, in the ordinary life I have known very few people who did not complain of having at least some physical ailment which they carried always with them.... You know perhaps that play of Jules Romains, *Doctor Knock*, in which he says that a healthy man is a patient unaware of his sickness. It is usually true. When you are sufficiently busy not to be all the while occupied with yourself, you do not notice it, but it is there.

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*Mother, you told us one day that all that happens to us
has been decided in advance. What does that mean?*

This is but a way of speaking. This happens because to express a thing I can't be saying all the words at the same time, can I? I am obliged to say them one after another. Otherwise, if all the words were spoken at the same time, it would make a big noise and nobody would understand anything! Well, when you try to explain the universe, you do as you would when you speak. You say one thing after another, but to tell the truth, you must say everything at one go. Now, how can that be done?... Indeed, since you repeat it to me, it is very likely that I must have said that somewhere.... I must have said the contrary also! But if you put it in this way, that everything that happens has been decided in advance, then with the consciousness of time that you have now, it is as if you said: yesterday it was decided what would happen today; and this year it is decided what will happen next year. It is in this way that the thing is translated in your consciousness — naturally, because it is thus that we see, think, understand and above all speak and express ourselves. But it is not like that.

There are people who have perceived this unreality so strongly that they have felt there was no reason why they could not go back instead of going forward, for backward, forward, the present, everything that we express in this way exists all at the same time. It is on different levels. If I tell you: "What is happening to you had been decided in advance", I could also say: "What is happening here, has already happened elsewhere", that would be equally true, and equally false, because it is impossible to express this in words.

I am going to give you an example which perhaps will make

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you understand. I do not remember exactly when it happened; it must have been some time in the year 1920 probably (perhaps earlier, perhaps in 1914-1915, but I don't think so, it was some time in the year 1920). One day—every day I used to meditate with Sri Aurobindo: he used to sit on one side of a table and I on the other, on the veranda—and one day in this way, in meditation, I entered (how to put it?...), I went up very high, entered very deep or came out of myself (well, whatever one may say does not express what happened, these are merely ways of speaking), I reached a place or a state of consciousness from which I told Sri Aurobindo just casually and quite simply: "India is free." It was in 1920. Then he put to me a question: "How?" And I answered him: "Without any fight, without a battle, without a revolution. The English themselves will leave, for the condition of the world will be such that they won't be able to do anything else except go away."

It was *done*. I spoke in the future when he asked me the question, but there where I had seen, I said, India *is* free, it was a fact. Now, India was not free at that time: it was 1920. Yet it was there, it had been done. And it happened in 1947. That is to say, from the external physical point of view I saw it twenty-seven years in advance. But it had been done.

Could you see Pakistan?

No, for the freedom could have come about without Pakistan. Indeed, if they had listened to Sri Aurobindo there would have been no Pakistan.

Well, externally it seems to take time, but in fact it is like that.

*If you see some catastrophe coming, can you, Mother,
by your effort change it?*

That depends upon the nature of the event. There are many

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things.... That depends also upon the level from which one sees. There is a plane where there are all the possibilities, and on that level, as there are all the possibilities, there is the possibility also of changing these possibilities. If a catastrophe is foreseen in that plane, one can have the power of preventing it also. In other cases, even though one is forewarned, one has no action upon the event. And yet there, it depends on the level from where one sees.

A case of this kind was reported to me once where the very seeing of a thing prevented it from happening. An American gentleman had arrived at one of those big American hotels where there are lifts (you do not go down a staircase, you take a lift to go up or come down); now, early in the morning just before getting up, he had a dream which he remembered well: he had seen a boy dressed as a lift-boy and making the same movement a lift-boy makes directing you to get in. He was there. And then, at the end of the movement, instead of a lift, there was a hearse! —that is to say, that kind of carriage... oh! you must have seen some here now and then, to carry the dead to the cemetery; when they are not burnt, they are carried on a bier with black draperies, etc. So there was such a carriage, a hearse for carrying the dead. And the boy was signing to him to get into the carriage. When he came out of his room, the boy was there with the lift to take him down: exactly the same boy, the same face, the same dress, the same gesture. He remembered the hearse — he did not get into the lift. He said: "No, no!" and he walked down. And before he reached the groundfloor, he heard a terrible noise and the lift had crashed down to the ground and all who were in it were killed. It was because of the dream that he had not got in, for he had understood.

Therefore in such a case when you have the vision, you can avert the catastrophe.

There are other cases, as I said, when you are simply forewarned. You are forewarned. In reality, it is to help you to prepare within for what must come, so that you may take the right inner attitude to face the event. It is like a lesson telling

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you: "This is what it must teach you." You cannot change the thing, but you can change your attitude and your inner reaction. Instead of having a bad reaction, a wrong attitude towards the experience that occurs, you have a good reaction, a good attitude, and you derive as much benefit as possible out of what has happened.

In either case, it depends absolutely on the plane on which you see. When you have control over your nights and are conscious of your sleep and your dreams or of your visions, you also see the difference between the two; you can distinguish the difference: what is given to you as a warning so that you may intervene and what is given to you as an intimation so that you may take the right attitude towards what is going to happen. It is always a lesson, but it is not always the same lesson. At times you can act with your will; at times you must learn the inner lesson which the incident is about to give you so that you may be ready for the event to have a fully favourable consequence. The same thing holds for everything that you see, there are hundreds of different varieties of visions and dreams and each one brings you the lesson it has to bring.

For example, when people are taken ill or when they are caught in an accident. Well, whether I see it myself or come to know of it from outside through someone's telling me about it — in every case it is not the same. There are cases when I am informed and I see that it is for intervening and I have the full power to change the consequence, that is, to cure the sick person. There are cases where I see I am not to intervene. For instance, it is time for the person to leave his body: he will leave the body. But knowing this, I must do for the person and for those around him what has to be done for the event to have the maximum beneficial effect or the minimum adverse effect — it depends on the circumstances.

There are events appertaining to a universal necessity and those one cannot change. There are events still in the balance which can be decided either way. The whole thing is to have a

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perception that's not only clear-sighted but also quite impartial and impersonal, without even the shadow of a shadow of preference. Then, when one is in that perfect state — it can't be said, of neutrality, it is not neutrality: it is a state of consciousness which is immobile like a mirror — then one can see within it the quality of the thing that's happening, one can see the things that have been decided so that they cannot be altered and those that are still in the balance and can be changed.

To tell the truth, for each event the situation is different. There are some that can be changed completely, reversed altogether; there are some that are capable of undergoing quite a considerable change; there are others that can suffer only a slight modification — a slight modification but one that has a considerable consequence; and there are some that are inevitable; they are so because they are so; if you tried to oppose, you would break your head against a wall and that would serve no purpose. The whole thing is to have this perspicacity, know to which domain the event belongs and not will any other thing than what *must be*.

I could give hundreds of instances of different cases.

A thing seems to have been completely determined: it is *going* to be so. But you have within you a will that surges up, a flame that is kindled, a great aspiration that is in harmony with a higher Will and you force it upon the event. And then a kind of combination takes place: what had to happen will happen, but along with something else which comes at the same time and changes the nature of the former. For events of importance to the earth, this happens very often. For example, when an entire set of movements, circumstances, combinations of forces bring about an absolute necessity of war, one can, by calling in another force, change the extent and the consequences, and sometimes even the nature of the war, but one is not able to avert it. I could give you examples of this kind, of a very general nature.

I told you the other day with regard to the "spirit" of death, what can be done, through an inner action, to prevent Death

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from coming to someone's house; but then it goes to another's. You cannot deprive Death of what is its due. I have explained this to you. There are other cases where one might say in a somewhat childish way: "Death was not yet informed", and so you can take away from it its booty without any consequences. But that does not always happen. There are cases when one does that. But put in this way it sounds childish like a fairy tale. Yet, it corresponds to something in the setting of the circumstances: it depends on the way the circumstances move.

What I would like to bring home to you is that the problem is extremely complicated and subtle, and that at times the direction of the movement can be altered a little; at other times, the movement can be reversed; and at still others just the consequences and the inner attitude with regard to the movement alone can be changed. And naturally men see all these things in a too simplified way and translate all this by their prayer to God: they say, in one case, "God has given me what I asked from him", in another case, "He has refused me." And so, that's that. That is how they understand and it is sheer stupidity. To know how it happens, you must have a general, collective consciousness, at least as wide as the earth. That is the minimum. To understand truly one must have a universal consciousness. Then you can understand. For, I have said it somewhere in what I was reading today; I have said that all things are interdependent and there is neither any "beginning" nor any "end". Where do you put the beginning?¹ ... To understand that, you

¹ "If you look from one plane of consciousness, the individual will appear to you as if he were not only an instrument and recorder, but a creator. But look from another and higher plane of consciousness with a wider view of things and you will see that this is only an appearance. In the workings of the universe whatever happens is the result of all that has happened before. How do you propose to separate one being from the integral play of the manifestation or one movement from the whole mass of movements? Where are you going to put the origin of a thing or its beginning? The whole play is a rigidly connected chain; one link merges imperceptibly into another. Nothing can be taken out of the chain and explained by itself as if it were its own source and beginning."

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have to go beyond the earth-bound consciousness, you have to enter a universal consciousness. Then you will be able to understand.

But we are compelled — I am repeating what I said at the beginning — we are compelled to say things one after another. We say: "When the universe began... When the creation began... it begins in that way.... This happened and then that happened and then this took place and then that took place...." We say one thing after another, and to say the truth, it is not really like that at all! From a certain point of view, it is foolishness, but we cannot do otherwise. I cannot say all the words at the same time. So it is the state of our consciousness and the means at our disposal for expressing ourselves which make us say things that are stupid from the point of view of the absolute knowledge. But it is an approximation. Our stupidity is an approximation and becomes less stupid when we become aware that it happens only because we cannot express ourselves otherwise. We are obliged to say things in succession, but they are a single whole.

And for most people it is not merely a question of saying but of knowing. They know things only one after another, feel them still more thus, live them yet more so. But there is a consciousness in which one knows all at the same time, understands all at the same time, can express all at the same time and can live wholly at the same time. But how to do it? Here it is not like that!

And so, you see, what one tries to do is to bring the two modes of consciousness as near each other as one is able to, so that even while living externally in the way we are compelled to do (because the physical world is like that and our physical consciousness is like that), we may be able at the same time to join the other Consciousness so closely that while doing things according to the material law and in the material way, in our consciousness we may not lose sight of the fact that it is only an approximation, a translation, and that it is not the Thing itself.

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Mother, I do not understand the question put here: “If our will is only an expression or echo of the universal Will, where is the place of individual initiative? Is the individual only an instrument to register universal movements? Has he no power of creation or origination?”

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Ah! Nor do I. When these questions were put to me, I had the utmost difficulty in answering them, for they were altogether outside my understanding of things. Here precisely, when I read the question, I felt like telling you: “I am very sorry, but the person who put the question had a terribly confused thought and consciousness, she was mixing up everything.” For there are three things mixed up here.

First of all, I do not know who told her that our will is only an expression or echo of the universal Will.... Perhaps I had said somewhere before that there is only *one* Will and it is translated or rather deformed in the individual consciousness and this Will is taken as one’s own will. I must have said something like that, and that our will becomes truly our own will by the fact that it separates itself from the initial universal Will and it is so deformed that it no longer resembles that Will at all. So, it must be that which worked in her head and she asked whether our will was only the expression or echo of the universal Will.

What place does there remain then for individual initiative... that is to say, what can the individual do? Can he say, “It is I who have decided? It is I, I have decided that?” Then the second question; but here I do not understand at all: “Is the individual merely an instrument for recording universal movements?” What does that mean? I do not understand quite well what was meant by that. An instrument for recording? A gramophone, probably, yes, for recording universal movements.... There are very few people who are capable of recording universal movements, to start with. Generally, they record only the movements

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of their small surrounding, themselves and what's around them. And then, a third idea is added to that: "Has he no power of creation?" This is yet another thing. But I answered (perhaps at that time I understood better what she meant than I do now!), I answered, for I speak of the three things in the text that follows. I said that only when the individual rises in his consciousness up to the highest Consciousness which is the origin of all things, where is the origin of all things, can he become a creator. That is to say, if he is identified with the creative Consciousness, he is naturally and he becomes the creative Consciousness. If he identifies himself, he is identified.²

So, what was it that was troubling you in the question? What did you not understand?

The whole question.

The whole question? And now, do you understand?... Not quite? I told you that you did not understand because it was muddled up; in one question three different ideas were included. So naturally it created a confusion. But taken separately they are what I explained to you just now, most probably; that is to say, one has this altogether ignorant and obliterated consciousness and is convinced that he is the cause and effect, the origin and result of himself, separate from all others, separate with a limited power to act upon others and a little greater capacity to be set in movement by others or to react to others' influence. That is how people think usually, something like that, isn't that so? How do you feel, you? What effect do you have upon yourself? And you? And you?...

You have never thought about it? You have never looked

² "If a being were able to create in that way a thought or feeling or action or anything else, he would be the creator of the world.... He can initiate a movement only by identifying himself with the conscious Power which is the ultimate source of all movements."

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into yourself to see what effect you exercise upon yourself? Never thought over it? No? How do you feel? Nobody will tell me? Come, you tell me that. Never tried to understand how you feel? Yes? No? How strange! Never sought to understand how, for example, decisions take place in you? From where do they come? What makes you decide one thing rather than another? And what is the relation between a decision of yours and your action? And to what extent do you have the freedom of choice between one thing and another? And how far do you feel you are able to, you are free to do this or that or that other or nothing at all?... You have pondered over that? Yes? Is there any one among the students who has thought over it? No? Nobody put the question to himself? You? You?...

Even if one thinks over it, perhaps one is not able to answer!

One cannot explain?

No.

It is difficult to explain? Even this simple little thing, to see where in your consciousness the wills that come from outside meet your will (which you call yours, which comes from within), at what place the two join together and to what extent the one from outside acts upon that from within and the one from within acts upon that from outside? You have never tried to find this out? It has never seemed to you unbearable that a will from outside should have an action upon your will? No?

I do not know.

Oh! I am putting very difficult problems! But, my children, I was preoccupied with that when I was a child of five!... So I thought you must have been preoccupied with it since a long time.

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In oneself, there are contradictory wills.

Yes, many. That is one of the very first discoveries. There is one part which wants things this way; and then at another moment, another way, and a third time, one wants still another thing! Besides, there is even this: something that wants and another which says no. So? But it is exactly that which has to be found if you wish in the least to organise yourself. Why not project yourself upon a screen, as in the cinema, and then look at yourself moving on it? How interesting it is!

This is the first step.

You project yourself on the screen and then observe and see all that is moving there and how it moves and what happens. You make a little diagram, it becomes so interesting then. And then, after a while, when you are quite accustomed to seeing, you can go one step further and take a decision. Or even a still greater step: you organise—arrange, take up all that, put each thing in its place, organise in such a way that you begin to have a straight movement with an inner meaning. And then you become conscious of your direction and are able to say: "Very well, it will be thus; my life will develop in that way, because that is the logic of my being. Now, I have arranged all that within me, each thing has been put in its place, and so naturally a central orientation is forming. I am following this orientation. One step more and I know what will happen to me for I myself am deciding it...." I do not know, I am telling you this; to me it seemed terribly interesting, the most interesting thing in the world. There was nothing, no other thing that interested me more than that.

This happened to me.... I was five or six or seven years old (at seven the thing became quite serious) and I had a father who loved the circus, and he came and told me: "Come with me, I am going to the circus on Sunday." I said: "No, I am doing something much more interesting than going to the circus!" Or

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again, young friends invited me to attend a meeting where we were to play together, enjoy together: "No, I enjoy here much more...." And it was quite sincere. It was not a pose: for me, it was like this, it was true. There was nothing in the world more enjoyable than that.

And I am so convinced that anybody who does it in that way, with the same freshness and sincerity, will obtain most interesting results.... To put all that on a screen in front of yourself and look at what is happening. And the first step is to know all that is happening and then you must not try to shut your eyes when something does not appear pleasant to you! You must keep them wide open and put each thing in that way before the screen. Then you make quite an interesting discovery. And then the next step is to start telling yourself: "Since all that is happening within me, why should I not put this thing in this way and then that thing in that way and then this other in this way and thus wouldn't I be doing something logical that has a meaning? Why should I not remove that thing which stands obstructing the way, these conflicting wills? Why? And what does that represent in the being? Why is it there? If it were put there, would it not help instead of harming me?" And so on.

And little by little, little by little, you see clearer and then you see why you are made like that, what is the thing you have got to do — that for which *you are born*. And then, quite naturally, since all is organised for this thing to happen, the path becomes straight and you can say beforehand: "It is in this way that it will happen." And when things come from outside to try and upset all that, you are able to say: "No, I accept this, for it helps; I reject that, for that harms." And then, after a few years, you curb yourself as you curb a horse: you do whatever you like, in the way you like and you go wherever you like.

It seems to me this is worth the trouble. I believe it is the most interesting thing.

Mother, what is this little screen?

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This screen? It is the psychic consciousness.

*And this play?*³

Play? It is the play of the central consciousness. It is precisely the consciousness that is at the origin of the psychic being. And then there you have to take only a tiny step to find out how this psychic consciousness should reflect and translate the one supreme Consciousness. And there the matter ends. This last step becomes very easy.

But it is the secret that's discovered at the end. And when it is discovered, there is no more fighting, for the battle has already been fought and everything arranged; so it is in one single movement and in a way as simple, as natural and as straight as possible that the thing happens, without any reaction.

I think that is what the sages of the past meant when they said: "Know thyself." Not anything else. But then, instead of going in there as if with a bandage on your eyes, and knocking your nose or forehead against something hard to find out that it is hard or that it is a wall or a closed door or an obstruction or some bad will; instead of all that, there is no need of years of experience and all kinds of misfortune and more or less unpleasant circumstances, in order to learn to know oneself: you do the work quietly, as I said.

When I did that, there was no cinema, so I could not compare what I was doing with the cinema — it was not yet there, but it is exactly like projecting on the screen what is inside,

³ "In the universal play there are some, the majority, who are ignorant instruments; they are actors who are moved about like puppets, knowing nothing. There are others who are conscious, and these act their part, knowing that it is a play. And there are some who have the full knowledge of the universal movement and are identified with it and with the one Divine Consciousness and yet consent to act as though they were something separate, a division of the whole. There are many intermediary stages between that ignorance and this full knowledge, many ways of participating in the play."

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objectifying it. And a screen that's all white, quite smooth, that does not deform. If the screen were not quite smooth and very white, your image would be all hazy, you would not be able to see anything. Well, it is the same thing. The screen must be very white, quite smooth, quite clean, quite pure. Then one sees things as they are.

You must have a great deal of sincerity, a little courage and perseverance and then a sort of mental curiosity, you understand, curious, seeking to know, interested, wanting to learn. To love to learn: that, one must have in one's nature. To find it impossible to stand before something grey, all hazy, in which nothing is seen clearly and which gives you quite an unpleasant feeling, for you do not know where you begin and where you end, what is yours and what is not yours and what is settled and what is not settled — what is this pulp-like thing you call yourself in which things get intermingled and act upon one another without even your being aware of it? You ask yourself: "But why have I done this?" You know nothing about it. "And why have I felt that?" You don't know that, either. And then, you are thrown into a world outside that is only fog and you are thrown into a world inside that is also for you another kind of fog, still more impenetrable, in which you live, like a cork thrown upon the waters and the waves carry it away or cast it into the air, and it drops and rolls on. That is quite an unpleasant state. I do not know, but to me it appears unpleasant.

To see clearly, to see one's way, where one is going, why one is going there, how one is to go there and what one is going to do and what is the kind of relation with others... But that is a problem so wonderfully interesting — it is interesting — and you can always discover things every minute! One's work is never finished.

There is a time, there is a certain state of consciousness when you have the feeling that you are in that condition with all the weight of the world lying heavy upon you and besides you are going in blinkers and do not know where you are going,

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but there is something which is pushing you. And that is truly a very unpleasant condition. And there is another moment when one draws oneself up and is able to see what is there above, and one becomes it; then one looks at the world as though from the top of a very very high mountain and one sees all that is happening below; then one can choose one's way and follow it. That is a more pleasant condition. This then is truly the truth, you are upon earth *for that*, surely. All individual beings and all the little concentrations of consciousness were created to do this work. It is the very reason for existence: to be able to become fully conscious of a certain sum of vibrations representing an individual being and put order there and find one's way and follow it.

And so, as men do not know it and do not do it, life comes and gives them a blow here: "Oh! that hurts", then a blow there: "Ah! that's hurting me." And the thing goes on like that and all the time it is like that. And all the time they are getting pain somewhere. They suffer, they cry, they groan. But it is simply due to that reason, there is no other: it is that they have not done that little work. If, when they were quite young, there had been someone to teach them to do the work and they had done it without losing time, they could have gone through life gloriously and instead of suffering they would have been all-powerful masters of their destiny.

This is not to say that necessarily all things would become pleasant. It is not at all that. But your reaction towards things becomes the true reaction and instead of suffering, you learn; instead of being miserable, you go forward and progress.

After all, I believe it is for this that you are here—so that there is someone who can tell you: "There, well, try that. It is worth trying." Indeed, this should be said when children are quite young. For unless it be awakened in their consciousness, they won't understand. Yet it can be done even with a very young brain, for at five one doesn't have a very big brain; you have particularly the feeling that there are gaps, that many things

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should be known but are not known. The brain has not yet been formed. There is the consciousness there, fully conscious, luminous, clear-sighted, all is there; but there are gaps, and when one tries to draw anything out of it, it does not come through. That is what happens when one is quite young. But if one continues little by little, little by little, the ideas are organised as they come, and instead of being a chaos which must be put into order afterwards, it gets organised as it takes shape. It is a great advantage.

Anyway, you are all still very young. You can try. Try for five minutes every day — not more — looking at yourself, seeing what happens there, within. It is so interesting!

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Does the psychic being always progress?

There are in the psychic being two very different kinds of progress: one consisting in its formation, building and organisation. For the psychic starts by being only a kind of tiny divine spark within the being and out of this spark will emerge progressively an independent conscious being having its own action and will. The psychic being at its origin is only a spark of the divine consciousness and it is through successive lives that it builds up a conscious individuality. It is a progress similar to that of a growing child. It is a thing in the making. For a long time, in most human beings the psychic is a being in the making. It is not a fully individualised, fully conscious being and master of itself and it needs all its rebirths, one after another, in order to build itself and become fully conscious.

But this sort of progress has an end. There comes a time when the being is fully developed, fully individualised, fully master of itself and its destiny. When this being or one of these psychic beings has reached that stage and takes birth in a human being, that makes a very great difference: the human being, so to say, is born free. He is not tied to circumstances, to surroundings, to his origin and atavism, like ordinary people. He comes into the world with the purpose of doing something, with a work to carry out, a mission to fulfil. From this point of view his progress in growth has come to an end, that is, it is not indispensable for him to take birth again in a body. Till then rebirth is a necessity, for it is through rebirth that he grows; it is in the physical life and in a physical body that he gradually develops and becomes a fully conscious being. But once he is fully formed, he is free, in this sense that he can take birth or not, at will. So there, one kind of progress stops.

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But if this fully formed being wants to become an instrument of work for the Divine, if instead of retiring to repose in a psychic bliss, in its own domain, he chooses to be a worker upon earth to help in the fulfilment of the Divine Work, then he has a fresh progress to make, a progress in the capacity for work, for organisation of his work and for expression of the Divine Will. So there is a time when the thing changes. So long as he remains in the world, so long as he chooses to work for the Divine, he will progress. Only if he withdraws into the psychic world and refuses to continue doing the Divine Work or renounces it, can he remain in a static condition outside all progress, because, as I have told you, only upon earth is there progress, only in the physical world; it is not acquired everywhere. In the psychic world there is a kind of blissful repose. One remains what one is, without any movement.

But for those who are not conscious of their psychic?

They are compelled to progress whether they want it or not.

The psychic being itself progresses in them and they are not conscious of it. But they themselves are compelled to progress. That is to say, they follow a curve. They follow an ascent in life. It is the same progress as that of the growing child; there comes a time when it is at the summit of its growth and then, unless it changes the plane of progress, unless the purely physical progress turns into a mental progress, a psychic progress, a spiritual progress, it goes down the curve and then there will be a decomposition and it will not exist any longer.

It is just because progress is not constant and perpetual in the physical world that there is a growth, an apogee, a decline and a decomposition. For anything that does not advance, falls back; all that does not progress, regresses.

So this is just what happens physically. The physical world has not learnt how to progress indefinitely; it arrives at a certain point, then it is either tired of progressing or is not capable

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of progressing in the present constitution, but in any case it stops progressing and after a time decomposes. Those who lead a purely physical life reach a kind of summit, then they slide down very quickly. But now, with the general collective human progress, there is behind the physical progress a vital progress and a mental progress, so that the mental progress can go on for a very long time, even after the physical progress has come to a stop, and through this mental progress one keeps up a kind of ascent long after the physical has ceased to progress.

And then there are those who do yoga, who become conscious of their psychic being, are united with it, participate in its life; these, indeed, progress till the last breath of their life. And they do not stop even after death, when they have left their body under the plea that the body cannot last any longer: they continue to progress.

It is the incapacity of the body to transform itself, to continue progressing that causes it to regress and in the end become more and more open to the inner disequilibrium until one day that becomes strong enough to bring about a total imbalance and it can no longer regain its balance and health. We shall see that next week. It is only in the pure spiritual life — that which is outside all physical and terrestrial existence, including the mental — that there is no progress. You reach a static state and are outside all movements of progress. But at the same time you are outside the manifestation also. When you reach that state, you no longer belong to the manifestation, you go out of the manifested world. One must go out of the manifested world in order to go out of all progress, because the two are identical: manifestation means progress and progress means manifestation.

Many men think and write through inspiration. From where does it come?

Many! That is indeed a wonderful thing. I did not think there have been so many.... So?

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Poets, when they write poems...

Ah! Inspirations come from very many different places. There are inspirations that may be very material, there are inspirations that may be vital, there are inspirations that come from all kinds of mental planes, and there are very, very rare inspirations that come from the higher mind or from a still higher region. All inspirations do not come from the same place. Hence, to be inspired does not necessarily mean that one is a higher being.... One may be inspired also to do and say many stupid things!

What does “inspired” mean?

It means receiving something which is beyond you, which was not within you; to open yourself to an influence which is outside your individual conscious being.

Indeed, one can have also an inspiration to commit a murder! In countries where they decapitate murderers, cut off their heads, this causes a very brutal death which throws out the vital being, not allowing it the time to decompose for coming out of the body; the vital being is violently thrown out of the body, with all its impulses; and generally it goes and lodges itself in one of those present there, men half horrified, half with a kind of unhealthy curiosity. That makes the opening and it enters within. Statistics have proved that most young murderers admit that the impulse came to them when they were present at the death of another murderer. It was an “inspiration”, but of a detestable kind.

Fundamentally it is a moment of openness to something which was not within your personal consciousness, which comes from outside and rushes into you and makes you do something. This is the widest formula that can be given.

Now, generally, when people say: “Oh! he is an inspired poet”, it means he has received something from high above and

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expressed it in a remarkable manner. But one should rather say that his inspiration is of a high quality.

Does it not come, Mother, whenever one wants it?

Whenever one wants it? Generally not, for one does not know the mechanism of one's being and cannot open the doors at will.

It is a thing that can be done. It is one of the earliest things that you are taught to do in Yoga: to open the door whenever one wants. It is the result of meditation or concentration or aspiration: all these processes are followed to open the door somewhere.

And generally you try to open it precisely towards the highest thing, not towards anything whatever. For the other kind of receptivity people unfortunately always have.... It is impossible to be altogether shut up in an ivory tower—besides, I believe it would not be very favourable, it would be impossible to progress if one were completely shut up in oneself. One would be able only to rearrange whatever was in oneself. Just imagine you were like a closed globe, altogether closed, that there was no communication with outside—you put out nothing, you receive nothing, you are shut up—you have a few elements of consciousness, movements, vibrations (call them what you like), all that is contained as within a ball, along with your consciousness also. You have no relation with things outside, you are conscious only of yourself. What can you do?... Change the organisation within; that you can do, you can do many things by changing this organisation. But it is confined to that. It is a kind of inner progress, but there is no true progress in relation to the forces outside oneself. You would find yourself extremely limited after a time, you would be tired of yourself: turning and turning again, turning and turning again the elements inside—not very pleasant.

But all the while you externalise yourself and all the while you bring back something from this externalisation; it is like

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something porous: a force goes out and then a force comes in. There are pulsations like that. And this is why it is so important to choose the environment in which one lives, because there is constantly a kind of interchange between what you give and what you receive. People who throw themselves out a great deal in activity, receive more. But they receive on the same level, the level of their activity. Children, for example, who are younger, who always move about, always shout and romp and jump (very rarely do they keep quiet, except while asleep, and perhaps not even so), well, they spend much and they receive much, and generally it is the physical and vital energy that is spent and it is physical and vital energies that are received. They recuperate a good part of what they spend. So there, it is very important for them to be in surroundings where they can, after they have spent or while they are spending, recover something that is at least equal in quality to theirs, that is not of an inferior quality.

When you no longer have this generosity in your movements, you receive much less and this is one of the reasons —one of the chief reasons—why physical progress stops. It is because you become thrifty, you try not to waste; the mind intervenes: “Take care, don’t tire yourself, don’t do too much, etc.” The mind intervenes and physical receptivity diminishes a great deal. Finally, you do not grow any more —by growing reasonable, you stop growing altogether!

But receptivity opens to other levels. Those who live in a world of desires and passions, increase their vital receptivity so much at times that it reaches proportions very unpleasant to themselves and to their surroundings. And then there are those who live in the mental consciousness; their mental receptivity grows very much. All who create mentally, study and live in mental activity, if the mental activity is constant, can progress indefinitely. Mind in the human being does not stop functioning even when the physical instrument has deteriorated. It may no longer manifest its intelligence materially, if there is a lesion in the brain, for example, but nothing can prevent the mind

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itself, independently of the instrument, from progressing, from continuing to grow. It is a being that lasts infinitely longer than the physical. It is still young when physically one is already old. Only when you do not take enough care to keep your brain in a good state, only if accidents occur and there are lesions then you can no longer express yourself. But the mind in itself continues to grow. And those who have a sufficient physical balance, for example, those who have not gone to excesses of any kind, who have never mistreated their body, who have never poisoned themselves like most people—who have never smoked, drunk alcohol and so on—keep their brain in a relatively good condition and they can progress, even in their expression, till the end of their life. It is only if in the last years of their life they make a kind of withdrawal within themselves, that they lose their power of expression. But the mind goes on progressing.

The vital is by nature immortal. But it is not organised, and in its normal state, it is over-excited, full of contradictory passions and impulses. So with all that it destroys itself. But otherwise the elements continue to exist. A desire, a passion is a very living thing and continues to live for a very long time, even independently of the being who... is subjected to them, I might say, rather than creates them, because they are things that one is subjected to, that rush upon you from outside like a storm that seizes you and carries you away, unless you keep very calm like that, very still, very quiet, as though one were clinging to something solid and immobile in oneself, allowing the storm to pass over when it begins to blow—it blows, but one must not stir, one must not let oneself tremble or shiver or shake; one must remain altogether immobile and know that these are passing storms. And when the storm has blown over, it passes and goes away; then one can heave a deep breath and resume one's normal balance; and there has been only a minimum destruction. In such cases, generally, things turn out well in the end.

But those who are like a piece of cork on the water and rush about in all directions and do not succeed in recovering their

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poise and watching themselves, anything can happen to them. They may be drawn into a whirlpool all of a sudden and lo! engulfed. And there remains nothing.

That's all?

There are people who do foolish things...

Yes.

And they know they are doing so, but their mind does not justify them, it gives no support, no excuse, no reasoning or explanation. What is this state?¹

What is this state? People who know that they are doing foolish things, who are conscious, but who are not able to refrain from them, because their mind does not have enough strength to check them?...

But the mind never has sufficient strength to check them! For the mind is an instrument made to see all things from all sides. Then how can you expect to have a will strong enough to resist an impulse when the mind looks at it first from this side and then from that side? And then it says: "After all, it is like that and why should it not be like that?" And so, where is your will?...

As I said there,¹ it always finds a way to explain everything, justify everything and give admirable reasons for all things.

It is only the psychic being that has the strength to intervene. If your mind is in contact with your psychic being, if it receives the influence of the psychic being, then it is strong enough to organise the resistance. It knows what the true thing is and

¹ "This physical mind is usually in a kind of alliance with the lower vital consciousness and its movements; when the lower vital manifests certain desires and impulses, the more material mind comes to its aid and justifies and supports them with specious explanations and reasonings and excuses."

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what the false; and knowing what the true thing is, if it has the goodwill, it will organise the resistance, give battle and gain the victory. But that is the only condition: it must be in contact with the psychic being.

For even the most beautiful theories, even if one knows mentally many things and holds admirable principles, that is not sufficiently strong to create a will capable of resisting an impulse. At one time you are quite determined, you have decided that it would be thus—for example, that you would not do such a thing: it is settled, you will not do it—but how is it that suddenly (you do not know how or why nor what has happened), you have not decided anything at all! And then you immediately find in yourself an excellent reason for doing the thing.... Among others, there is a certain kind of excuse which is always given: “Well, if I do it this time, at least I shall be convinced that it is very bad and I shall do it no longer and this will be the last time.” It is the prettiest excuse one always gives to oneself: “This is the last time I am doing it. This time, I am doing it to understand perfectly that it is bad and that it must not be done and I shall not do it any more. This is the last time.” Every time, it is the last time! and you begin again.

Of course there are some who have less clear ideas and who say to themselves: “After all, why don’t I want to do it? These are theories, they are principles that might not be true. If I have this impulse, what is it that tells me that this impulse is not better than a theory?...” It is not for them the last time. It is something they accept as quite natural.

Between these two extremes there are all the possibilities. But the most dangerous of all is to say: “Well, I am doing it once more this time, that will purify me of this. Afterwards I shall no longer do it.” Now the purification is never enough!

It happens only when you have decided: “Well, this time, I am going to try not to do it, and I shall not do it, I shall apply all my strength and I shall not do it.” Even if you have just a little success, it is much. Not a big success, but just a small success,

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a very partial success: you do not carry out what you yearn to do; but the yearning, the desire, the passion is still there and that produces whirls within, but outside you resist, "I shall not do it, I shall not move; even if I have to bind myself hand and foot, I shall not do it." It is a partial success — but it is a great victory because, due to this, next time you will be able to do a little more. That is to say, instead of holding all the violent passions within yourself, you can begin calming them a little; and you will calm them slowly at first, with difficulty. They will remain long, they will come back, they will trouble you, vex you, produce in you a great disgust, all that, but if you resist well and say: "No, I shall carry out nothing; whatever the cost, I shall not carry out anything; I will stay like a rock", then little by little, little by little, that thins out, thins out and you begin to learn the second attitude: "Now I want my consciousness to be above those things. There will still be many battles but if my consciousness stands above that, little by little there will come a time when this will return no longer." And then there is a time when you feel that you are absolutely free: you do not even perceive it, and then that is all. It may take a long time, it may come soon: that depends on the strength of character, on the sincerity of the aspiration. But even for people who have just a little sincerity, if they subject themselves to this process, they succeed. It takes time. They succeed in the first item: in not expressing. All forces upon earth tend towards self-expression. These forces come with the object of manifesting themselves and if you place a barrier and refuse to express them, they may try to beat against the barrier for a time, but in the end, they will tire themselves out and not being manifested, they will withdraw and leave you quiet.

So you must never say: "I shall first purify my thought, purify my body, purify my vital and then later I shall purify my action." That is the normal order, but it never succeeds. The effective order is to begin from the outside: "The very first thing is that I do not do it, and afterwards, I desire it no longer and

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next I close my doors completely to all impulses: they no longer exist for me, I am now outside all that." This is the true order, the order that is effective. First, not to do it. And then you will no longer have desire for anything and after that it will go out of your consciousness completely.

When the psychic is about to enter into the world, does it choose in advance the form it is going to take?

It is an interesting question. That depends. As I have just told you, there are psychic beings who are in the making, progressing; these generally, right at the outset, cannot choose much, but when they have arrived at a certain degree of growth and of consciousness (generally while they are still in a physical body and have had a certain amount of experience), they decide at that time what their next field of experience will be like.

I can give you some rather external examples. For instance, a psychic being needed to have the experience of mastery, of power in order to know the reactions and how it is possible to turn all these movements towards the Divine: to learn what a life of power may teach you. It took birth in a king or a queen. These enjoyed some power and during that time they had their experiences; they reached the end of the field of experience. Now, they know what they wanted to know, they are about to go, they are going to leave their body that's now become useless, and they are going to prepare for the next experience. Well, at that time, when the psychic being is still in the body and has noted what it has learnt, it decides for the next occasion. And sometimes it is a movement of action and reaction: because it has studied one entire field, it needs to study the opposite field. And very often it chooses a very different life from the one it had. So before leaving, it says: "Next time, it is in this domain that I shall take birth...." Suppose, for example, the psychic has reached a stage of growth when it would like to have the chance of working on the physical body to make it capable of coming consciously into

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contact with the Divine and of transforming it. Now, it is about to leave the body in which it had authority, power, activity, the body it has used for its growth; it says: "Next time I shall take birth in a neutral environment, neither low nor high, where it will not be necessary (how to put it?) to have a highly external life, where one will have neither great power nor great misery — altogether neutral, as you know, the life in between." It chooses that. It returns to its own psychic world for the necessary rest, for assimilation of the experience gained, for preparation of the future experience. It naturally remembers its choice and, before coming down once more, when it has finished its assimilation, when it is time to return, to come down upon earth, it cannot, from that domain, see material things as we see them, you know: they appear to it in another form. But still the differences can be foreseen: the differences of environment, differences of activity in the environment are clearly seen, quite perceptible. It can have a vision that is total or global. It can choose. At times it chooses the country; when it wants a certain kind of education, civilisation, influence, it can choose its country beforehand. Sometimes it can't, sometimes it chooses only its environment and the kind of life it will lead. And then from up there, before it comes down, it looks for the kind of vibrations it wants; it sees them very clearly. It is as though it was aiming at the place where it is going to drop. But it is an approximation because of the fact that another condition is necessary: not only its choice but also a receptivity from below and an aspiration. There must be someone in the environment it has chosen, generally the mother (sometimes both the parents, but the most indispensable is the mother), she must have an aspiration or a receptivity, something sufficiently passive and open or a conscious aspiration towards something higher. And that kindles for the psychic being a little light. In the mass representing for it the environment in which it wants to be born, if under the influence of its own projected will a small light is kindled, then it knows that it is there it must go.

It is necessary, it is this that makes the difference in months

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or days, perhaps, not so much perhaps in years; however, this creates an uncertainty, and that is why it cannot foretell the exact date: "On that date, that day, at that hour I shall take birth." It needs to find someone receptive. When it sees that, it rushes down. But what happens is something like an image: it is not exactly that, but something very similar. It throws itself down into an unconsciousness, because the physical world, even human consciousness whatever it may be, is very unconscious in comparison with the psychic consciousness. So it rushes into an unconsciousness. It is as though it fell on its head. That stuns it. And so generally, apart from some very very rare exceptions, for a long time it does not know. It does not know any longer where it is nor what it is doing nor why it is there, nothing at all. It finds a great difficulty in expressing itself, especially through a baby that has no brain, naturally; it is only the embryo of a brain which is hardly formed and it does not have the elements for manifesting itself. So it is very rare for a child to manifest immediately the exceptional being it contains.... That happens. We have heard about such things. It happens, but generally some time is needed. Only slowly it awakens from its stupor and becomes aware that it is there for some reason and by choice. And usually this coincides with the intensive mental education which shuts you completely from the psychic consciousness. So a mass of circumstances, happenings of all kinds, emotions, all sorts of things are necessary to open the inner doors so that one might begin to remember that after all one has come from another world and one has come for a particular reason.

Otherwise, if all went normally, it could very quickly have a connection, very quickly. If it had the luck to find someone possessing a little knowledge, and instead of falling into a world of ignorance, it fell upon a little bit of knowledge, everything would be done quite quickly.

But the psychic will and psychic growth escape completely all common notions of justice, of reward and punishment as men understand them. There are religions, there are philosophies that

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tell you all kinds of stories, which are simply the application of notions of human justice to the invisible world, and so these are stupidities. For it is not at all like that truly; the notion of reward and punishment as man understands it is an absurdity. That does not apply at all, not at all to the inner realities. So once you enter the true spiritual world, all that becomes really stupidities. For things are not at all like that.

A large number of people come and tell me: “What then have I done in my previous life to be now in such difficult conditions, with such misfortunes happening to me?” And most often I am obliged to tell them: “But don’t you see that it is a blessing upon you, a grace! And perhaps in your previous life you have asked for it so that you could make a greater progress....” These ideas are quite current: “Oh! I am ill. Oh! my body is in a bad condition, what have I done? What crime have I committed in the other life so that in this one...” This is all childishness.

So there you are. *Au revoir*, my children.

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How do you know the character of a man by looking at his eyes?

Not only by looking at his eyes. I know the character of a man through self-identification. And then outwardly, if you want, the eyes are like doors or windows: there are some which are open, so one enters within, goes very deep inside, and one may see everything that happens there. There are others which are partly open, partly closed; others still have a veil, a kind of curtain; and then there are others which are fastened, locked up, doors closed so well that they cannot be opened. Indeed, this is already an indication, it gives an indication of the strength of the inner life, the sincerity and transparency of the being. And so, through these doors that are open I enter and identify myself with the person within. And I see what he sees, understand what he understands, think what he thinks, and I could do what he does (but usually I refrain from that!) and in this way I get to know what people are like. And it doesn't need much time; it goes very fast. It can even be done through a photograph, but not so well. A photograph captures only a moment, a minute of somebody; if there were many photographs... But still, even with a photograph, by going a little deeper one can have a fairly clear idea. But *all* knowledge is knowledge by identification. That is, one must become that which one wants to know. One may surmise, imagine, deduce, one may reason, but one does not know.

So it is something difficult for human beings?

No, why?

One can learn how to identify oneself. One must learn. It is

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indispensable if one wants to get out of one's ego. For so long as one is shut up in one's ego, one can't make any progress.

How can it be done?

There are many ways. I'll tell you one.

When I was in Paris, I used to go to many places where there were gatherings of all kinds, people making all sorts of researches, spiritual (so-called spiritual), occult researches, etc. And once I was invited to meet a young lady (I believe she was Swedish) who had found a method of knowledge, exactly a method for learning. And so she explained it to us. We were three or four (her French was not very good but she was quite sure about what she was saying!); she said: "It's like this, you take an object or make a sign on a blackboard or take a drawing — that is not important — take whatever is most convenient for you. Suppose, for instance, that I draw for you... (she had a blackboard) I draw a design." She drew a kind of half-geometric design. "Now, you sit in front of the design and concentrate all your attention upon it — upon that design which is there. You concentrate, concentrate without letting anything else enter your consciousness — except that. Your eyes are fixed on the drawing and don't move at all. You are as it were hypnotised by the drawing. You look (and so she sat there, looking), you look, look, look.... I don't know, it takes more or less time, but still for one who is used to it, it goes pretty fast. You look, look, look, you *become* that drawing you are looking at. Nothing else exists in the world any longer except the drawing, and then, suddenly, you pass to the other side; and when you pass to the other side you enter a new consciousness, and you know."

We had a good laugh, for it was amusing. But it is quite true, it is an excellent method to practise. Naturally, instead of taking a drawing or any object, you may take, for instance, an idea, a few words. You have a problem preoccupying you, you don't know the solution of the problem; well, you objectify

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your problem in your mind, put it in the most precise, exact, succinct terms possible, and then concentrate, make an effort; you concentrate only on the words, and if possible on the idea they represent, that is, upon your problem — you concentrate, concentrate, concentrate until nothing else exists but that. And it is true that, all of a sudden, you have the feeling of something opening, and one is on the other side. The other side of what?... It means that you have opened a door of your consciousness, and instantaneously you have the solution of your problem.

It is an excellent method of learning "how" to identify oneself.

For instance, you are with someone. This person tells you something, you tell him the contrary (as it usually happens, simply through a spirit of contradiction) and you begin arguing. Naturally, you will never come to any point, except a quarrel if you are ill-natured. But instead of doing that, instead of remaining shut up in your own ideas or your own words, if you tell yourself: "Wait a little, I am going to try and see why he said that to me. Yes, why did he tell me that?" And you concentrate: "Why, why, why?" You stand there, just like that, trying. The other person continues speaking, doesn't he? — and is very happy too, for you don't contradict him any longer! He talks profusely and is sure he has convinced you. Then you concentrate more and more on what he is saying, and with the feeling that gradually, through his words, you are entering his mind. When you enter his head, suddenly you enter into his way of thinking, and next, just imagine, you understand why he is speaking to you thus! And then, if you have a fairly swift intelligence and put what you have just come to understand alongside what you had known before, you have the two ways together, and so can find the truth reconciling both. And here you have truly made progress. And this is the best way of widening one's thought.

If you are beginning an argument, keep quiet immediately, instantaneously. You must be silent, say nothing at all, and then

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try to see the thing as the other person sees it — that won't make you forget your own way of seeing it, not at all! but you will be able to put both of them together. And you will truly have made progress, a real progress.

It is the same for everything. In all that you do together with others, if you do not agree, take it as a divine Grace, a marvellous opportunity given you to make a progress. And it is simple: instead of being on this side, you are on the other; instead of looking at yourself, you enter the other person and look. You must have just a little bit of imagination, a little more control over your thoughts, over your movements. But that is not very difficult. When you have tried it out a little, after a while you find it very easy.

You must not just look and then make a mental effort, telling yourself: "Why is it like this and like that? Why does he do that? Why does he say that?" You will never arrive at anything. You won't understand, you will imagine all kinds of explanations which will be worthless and teach you nothing at all except to tell yourself: "That person is stupid or else wicked" — things that lead nowhere. On the other hand, if you only make that little movement, and instead of looking at him as an object quite alien to you, you try to enter within, you enter within, into that little head that's before you, and then, suddenly, you find yourself on the other side, you look at yourself and understand quite well what he is saying — everything is clear, the why, the how, the reason, the feeling which is behind the whole thing.... It is an experiment you have the opportunity of making a hundred times a day.

At first you won't succeed very well, but if you persist, you will end up by succeeding admirably. This adds a lot of interest to life. And besides it is a work which really makes you progress, for it makes you come out of that little armour of yours in which you are nicely shut up, in which you knock against everything. You have seen moths knocking against the light, haven't you?... Everyone's consciousness is like that, it goes along knocking here, knocking there, for these are things

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foreign to it. But instead of knocking about, one enters within, then it becomes a part of oneself. One widens oneself, breathes freely, has enough space to move in, one doesn't knock against anything, one enters, penetrates, understands. And one lives in many places at the same time. It is very interesting, one does it automatically.

For instance, when you are reading a book that interests you very much, a wonderful novel full of exciting adventures, when you are completely absorbed in the story, at times you forget your class-hour or even dinner-time or your bed-time. You are completely absorbed in what you are reading. Well, this is a phenomenon of self-identification. And if you do it with a certain perfection, you succeed in understanding ahead what is going to happen. There is a moment when, being fully absorbed in the story, you come to know (without trying to look for it) towards what end the author is leading you, how he is going to unfold his story and come to his conclusion. For you have identified yourself with the creative thought of the author. You do it more or less perfectly, without knowing that you are doing it, but these are phenomena of self-identification.

There are, in Paris, theatres of the third or fourth rank where sensational dramas are performed. These are suburban theatres. They are not for intellectuals but for the masses, and all the elements are always extremely dramatic, moving. Well, those who go there are mostly very simple people and forget completely that they are in a theatre. They identify themselves with the drama. And so, things like this happen: on the stage there is the traitor hiding behind the door, and the hero comes along, not aware naturally that the traitor is hiding there and he is going to be killed. Now, there are people sitting up there (in what is called the gallery), right up in the theatre, who shout: "Look out, he is there!" (*Laughter*) It has not happened just once, it happens hundreds of times, spontaneously. I had seen a play of this kind called *Le Bossu*, I believe; anyway it was quite a sensational drama and it was being played at the *Théâtre de la*

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Porte Saint-Martin. In this play there was a room. On the stage a large room could be seen and at its side a small room and... I don't remember the story now, but in the small room there was a button which could be pressed, and by pressing the button the ceiling of the bigger room could be brought down on those who were there so as to crush them inexorably!... And a warning had been given, people had already spoken about it, passed on the word. And now there was a traitor who had hidden himself in the little room and he knew the trick of the button, and then there was the hero who came in with other people, and they started arguing; and everyone knew that the ceiling was going to come down.... I didn't say anything, I remembered I was in the theatre, I was waiting to see how the author was going to get out of this situation to save his hero (for it was evident he couldn't kill him off like that before everybody!). But the others were not at all in the same state. Well, there were spectators who shouted, really shouted: "Look out, mind the ceiling!" That's how it was.

These are phenomena of self-identification. Only, they are involuntary. And this is also one of the methods used today to cure nervous diseases. When someone cannot sleep, cannot be restful because he is too excited and nervous and his nerves are ill and weakened by excessive agitation, he is told to sit in front of an aquarium, for instance — an aquarium, that's very lovely, isn't it? — before an aquarium with pretty little fish in it, goldfish; just to sit there, settle down in an easy-chair and try not to think of anything (particularly not of his troubles) and look at the fish. So he looks at the fish, moving around, coming and going, swimming, gliding, turning, meeting, crossing, chasing one another indefinitely, and also the water flowing slowly and the passing fish. After a while he lives the life of fishes: he comes and goes, swims, glides, plays. And at the end of the hour his nerves are in a perfect state and he is completely restful!

But the condition is that one must not think of one's troubles, simply watch the fish.

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Can the Divine be attained in this way?

You know, the only way of knowing the Divine is by identifying oneself with Him. There is no other, there is only one, one single way. Hence, once you are master of this method of identification, you can identify yourself. So you choose your object for identification, you want to identify yourself with the Divine. But so long as you do not know how to identify yourself, a hundred and one things will always come across your path, pulling you here, pulling you there, scattering you, and you will not be able to identify yourself with Him. But if you have learnt how to identify yourself, then you have only to direct the identification, place it where you want it, and then hold on there until you get a result. It will come very fast if you are master of your power of identification. Yes, it will come very quickly. Ramakrishna used to say that the time could vary between three days, three hours and three minutes. Three days for very slow people, three hours for those who were a little swifter, three minutes for those who are used to it.

Three days for very slow people?

For very slow people, yes. He was asked: "How long does it take one to get identified with the Divine?" that was his answer.

And that means three days without doing anything?

No, not without doing anything. It is not necessary to do nothing simply in order to be identified with the Divine. Evidently you cannot remain seated motionless for three days without doing anything; it would mean you had already attained an extraordinary degree of perfection if you could do that — forget all your needs and remain motionless for three days. No, it is not that he means; the thought must be concentrated solely on the Divine. And he did it before that person, to show him, prove to him that

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what he was saying was true. That did not take him more than three minutes.

But it is just that, what hinders the experience is the absence of the practice of concentration, and also the absence of one-pointedness, singleness of purpose, of will. One “wants” it for a minute, two minutes, ten minutes, a quarter of an hour, an hour, and afterwards, one wants many other things.... One “thinks” about it for a few seconds, and after that thinks of a thousand other things. So naturally in this way you could take an eternity. For indeed, in this you cannot add up; if it could be accumulated like grains of sand, if with every thought you give to the Divine you place a little grain of sand somewhere, after a time this would make a mountain. But it is not like that, it does not remain. It has no result. It does not accumulate, you cannot go on adding, cannot progress quantitatively — you can progress in intensity, progress qualitatively. Yes, you can learn within yourself how to do it; but what you have done counts only in this way. It does not get accumulated like grains of sand on a dune. Else it would be enough to become quite clever and tell yourself: “Well, I shall give at least a dozen thoughts to the Divine every day.” And then, by little bits like that, after some time one has a little hill....

Well, my children, it will soon be ten o'clock. But if someone has a very interesting question... You? Ask.

I have a question.

Very interesting?

*It is interesting for me. It is said that there are people who are very intelligent, and others who are crazy.
Why?*

Why? But, my child, there are all kinds of things in Nature! No two things are identical. All the possibilities exist in Nature:

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everything you can imagine and a hundred million times more. So you notice that there are intelligent people and again others who are not. And then there are others still who are unbalanced. And yet, your observations cover a very narrow field. But you can tell yourself that all this exists and hundreds of thousands of millions of other things also exist, and that no two things are alike in the world. And I don't think there is anything one can imagine which doesn't exist somewhere. This is exactly what amuses Nature most — she tries out everything, does everything, makes everything, undoes everything, and she makes all possible combinations and goes on changing them, re-handling them, remaking them, and it is a perpetual movement of all the possibilities following one another, clashing, intermingling, combining and falling apart. No two moments of terrestrial life are alike; and for how long has the earth existed?... Very well-informed people will perhaps tell you approximately. And for how long will it yet live? They will perhaps tell you that also: figures with many zeros, so many zeros that you won't be able to read them. But it won't ever be the same thing twice over nor will there be two similar moments. If you find things looking alike, that is only an appearance. There are no two things alike, and no two identical moments. And all this goes so far back that you cannot keep count. And it goes so far forward that you can't keep count either. And it will never be twice the same thing. So, you can't ask me why this exists and why that exists!... You wanted to ask me why? Nature has much more imagination than you, you know! She imagines new things all the time. It must be so for it is changing all the time and all combinations are always new. Not two seconds in the universe are identical. She has a great deal of imagination. Have you never thought about that?... Do you ever really have two similar moments? No. You know very well that you are not today what you were yesterday and you won't be tomorrow what you are today... and that if you went back only... say, ten years, you wouldn't recognise yourself at all any longer! You don't know

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even what you used to think about, granting that you thought about anything!

So, there is no problem. All that you can do is to try and investigate the field of experience given to you which is extremely limited, to see all the possibilities. And you could begin noting them; you would see that it would make a huge volume immediately, simply in that tiny little field of experience which is yours!

And what are you?... One second in Eternity!

Voilà!

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"The movement of love is not limited to human beings and it is perhaps less distorted in other worlds than in the human. Look at the flowers and trees. When the sun sets and all becomes silent, sit down for a moment and put yourself into communion with nature, you will feel rising from the earth, from below the roots of the trees, and mounting upward and coursing through their fibres, up to the highest outstretching branches, the aspiration of an intense love and longing,—a longing for something that brings light and gives happiness, for the light that is gone and they wish to have back again. There is a yearning so pure and intense that if you can feel the movement in the trees, your own being too will go up in an ardent prayer for the peace and light and love that are unmanifested here."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (2 June 1929)

The trees aspire for the light. What is this light?

The sun, my child. Have you never seen leaves closing up when night comes, as soon as the sun dips below the horizon?

Can trees have an aspiration for something else?

Something else means what? What are the possible openings for a tree?

To become a man?

A man? But they know nothing about man! As man aspires to be a god?... I knew animals which aspired to become human

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beings, but they were living with human beings. Cats and dogs, for example, which lived in a close intimacy with human beings, truly had an aspiration. I had a cat which was very, very unhappy for being a cat, it wanted to be a man. It had an untimely death. It used to meditate, it certainly did a kind of sadhana of its own, and when it left, even a portion of its vital being reincarnated in a human being. The little psychic element that was at the centre of the being went directly into a man, but even what was conscious in the vital of the cat went into a human being. But these are rather exceptional cases.

*You say that perhaps stones also feel love?*¹

It is possible.

Can it be known?

One can feel it. There is a certain state of consciousness in which one perceives this divine Love wherever it is found, and one does not feel so great a difference between creatures as it appears physically. There is much more aspiration than one would think in things we call inanimate. Much more. In stones also there is a kind of spontaneous sense of what is higher, more noble, more pure, and though they cannot express it in any way, they feel it, and this affects them differently.

Even in things, even in objects, even in stones, there is a strange receptivity which comes from this Presence. There are stones—if you know how to do it—that can accumulate forces. They can accumulate forces, keep them and transmit them. One

¹ “Love is universal and eternal; it is always manifesting itself and always identical in its essence. And it is a Divine Force; for the distortions we see in its apparent workings belong to its instruments. Love does not manifest in human beings alone; it is everywhere. Its movement is there in plants, perhaps in the very stones; in the animals it is easy to detect its presence.”

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can take stones (what are called precious stones) and concentrate forces into them and they keep them. And these forces irradiate slowly, very gradually. But if one knows how to do it one can accumulate such a quantity as would last, so to speak, indefinitely.

Are these forces of any use when they come out from the stones?

Certainly, yes! The stone can preserve the force almost indefinitely. There are those stones which can serve as a link, there are stones which can serve as a battery. There are stones which can hold a force for protection. That indeed is remarkable, my child. One can accumulate in a stone (particularly in amethysts) a force for protection, and the force truly protects the one who wears the stone. It is very interesting, I have experienced it. I knew someone who had a stone of this kind, charged with the power of protection, and it was wonderful when he wore it.... There are stones which can be used to foretell events. Some people know how to read in these stones events which are going to happen. Stones can carry messages. Naturally, this requires an ability on both sides: on one side, a sufficiently strong power of concentration; on the other, a power to see and read directly, without using very precise words either. Consequently, because they can serve as batteries, it means that they carry within them the source of the force itself, otherwise they wouldn't be receptive. It is a force of this kind that is at the origin of crystallisations, as in rock-crystals, for instance, which form such magnificent patterns, with such a complete harmony, and that comes from one thing alone, this Presence at the centre. Now, one doesn't see because one has no inner sensibility, but once one has the direct perception of the forces of love behind things, one sees that they are the same everywhere. Even in constructed things: one can come to understand what they say.

Anything else?

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Mother, when flowers are brought to you, how do you give them a significance?

To the flowers? But it's in the same way, by entering into contact with the nature of the flower, its inner truth. Then one knows what it represents.

Mother, one day you said you would tell us the difference between what you call "the Divine" and we call "God".

Oh! but I told you that it would be later, several years later. I said that you had to be sufficiently old. I even said what age. I don't now remember which, but the brain must be a little more ready to be able to follow.

"All the deformations of this great and divine Power come from the obscurity and ignorance and selfishness of the limited instrument. Love, the eternal force, has no clinging, no desire, no hunger for possession, no self-regarding attachment; it is, in its pure movement, the seeking for union of the self with the Divine, a seeking absolute and regardless of all other things. Love divine gives itself and asks for nothing. What human beings have made of it, we do not need to say; they have turned it into an ugly and repulsive thing. And yet even in human beings the first contact of love does bring down something of its purer substance; they become capable for a moment of forgetting themselves, for a moment its divine touch awakens and magnifies all that is fine and beautiful. But afterwards there comes to the surface the human nature, full of its impure demands, asking for something in exchange, bartering what it gives, clamouring for its own inferior satisfactions, distorting and soiling what was divine."

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*Why do human beings always want to have something
in exchange for what they give?*

Because they are shut up in themselves.

They sense their limitation and think that in order to grow, increase and even survive, they need to take things from outside, for they live in the consciousness of their personal limitation. So, for them, what they give makes a hole and this hole must be filled up by receiving something!... Naturally, this is a mistake. And the truth is that if instead of being shut up in the narrow limits of their little person, they could so widen their consciousness as to be able not only to identify themselves with others in their narrow limits, but to come out of these limits, pass beyond, spread out everywhere, unite with the one Consciousness and become all things, then, at that moment the narrow limits will vanish, but not before. And as long as one senses the narrow limits, one wants to take, for one fears to lose. One spends and wants to replenish. It is due to that, my child. For if one were spread out in all things, if all the vibrations which come and go expressed the need to merge into everything, to widen oneself, grow, not by remaining within one's limits but coming out of them, and finally to be identified with everything, one would no longer have anything to lose for one would have everything. Only, one doesn't know this. And so, as one doesn't know, one can't do it. One tries to take, accumulate, accumulate, accumulate, but that is impossible, one can't accumulate. One must identify oneself. And then, the little bit one gives, one wants to get back: one has a kind thought, one expects some recognition; one gives a little affection, one expects it from others... for one doesn't have the ability to become the kind thought in everything, one doesn't have the ability to be the affection, the tender love in all things. One feels just like that, all cut up and limited, and fears to lose everything, fears to lose what one has because one would be impoverished. On the other hand, if one were able to identify oneself, one would no longer need to

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pull. The more one spreads out, the more one has. The more one gets identified, the more one becomes. And then, instead of taking, one gives. And the more one gives, the more one grows.

But for this, one must be able to come out of the limits of one's little ego. One must be identified with the Force, identified with the Vibration instead of being identified with one's ego.

It is very difficult, but one can succeed.

Why do people say that it is easier to do bad things than good ones?

They say so, but it is not always true, and it depends on people. I knew people (not many, but still...) for whom it was impossible to do anything bad. Everything in their nature revolted at the idea of doing harm; the spontaneous movement was completely against this. But this is rare. Still, it does exist.

This happens because the world as it is at present is still largely under the influence of the adverse forces, particularly the vital force which is dynamic and generally makes you act. This force is largely under the influence of the adverse vital, that is, forces which like to hurt, destroy, damage. That kind of will to spoil things: when one sees something beautiful, instead of admiring, loving, being happy, wishing that it grows and progresses (which is the true divine movement), one feels a sort of anger, rage, one wants to destroy, one wants to damage. This is the movement of the adverse forces. Unfortunately, this is quite spontaneous in many people, and even in children... the instinct to destroy and spoil. Well, it is the presence of the adverse forces. And these are forces which come directly from the vital world and incarnate on earth in human consciousness, and at times also in animal consciousness. It is the hatred for things beautiful, for what is pure, what is good, what is true. It is the hatred of the divine Presence. And naturally, with this hatred, the will to destroy and damage, to spoil, mar, deform,

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disfigure. One step more and it is the will to inflict suffering. And all this is the influence of the adverse forces, which acts quite spontaneously in the inconscient, in the subconscious, in half-consciousness. It is only the pure and luminous consciousness which can oppose this and prevent it from acting. But the state of the world is such that this is a constant battle. Very few people can escape from this hold. Everyone generally has a tiny little corner in him—at times quite small, at times bigger, sometimes quite unconscious, sometimes a little conscious, sometimes superbly, completely conscious—which likes destroying, likes spoiling. And the state of the world is such that when one gives way to that, one is helped by an onrush of forces which lie waiting for the opportunity, waiting for the moment to be able to manifest, which need human collaboration to be able to manifest and seek it. As soon as the opportunity comes, they rush forth, throwing out a formidable amount of energy. And so one feels stronger as soon as one begins to do evil. That is why it is easier, whilst if one wants to react, refuses to become the instrument of these forces, one must fight hard, be very strong, very straight, very pure, very sincere, and above all, not egoistic. One must not turn round upon oneself, and must never be afraid. And this is not easy. That is, the world is in such a state that in order never to be moved by the adverse forces—the forces of darkness, destruction, wickedness, hatred—one must be a hero, a true hero, who is not afraid of blows and fears nothing, who never turns round upon himself and doesn't have that kind of self-pity which is so despicable a thing. That is why... in order not to do evil, think evil, wish evil, never, under any circumstances, one must be a hero.... It is not always easy to be a hero. The days one is tired, the days one wants to rest, not to make any effort, one slips, everything slips down. It is terribly slippery. It is more slippery than a children's toboggan. One slides down, down like that, down in a whirlwind. And it is only when one is right at the bottom that one realises that one has

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come down. Then one must climb back. That is not always comfortable.

But for one who has faith in the Divine Grace, the return to the Light becomes easy.²

² This last sentence was added by Mother in September 1969 when this talk was published for the first time.

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"Love is a supreme force which the Eternal Consciousness sent down from itself into an obscure and darkened world that it might bring back that world and its beings to the Divine. The material world in its darkness and ignorance had forgotten the Divine. Love came into the darkness; it awakened all that lay there asleep; it whispered, opening the ears that were sealed: 'There is something worth waking to, worth living for, and it is love!' And with the awakening to love there entered into the world the possibility of coming back to the Divine. The creation moves upward through love towards the Divine and in answer there leans downward to meet the creation the Divine Love and Grace."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (2 June 1929)

Where does love come from?

Where does love come from? From the Origin of the universe.

Besides, I say that there. That's what I say. I say that love is a supreme force which the Eternal Consciousness has emanated in order to send it into the world. Love comes from that. (*Mother takes the Bulletin of August 1953 and reads a passage from "The Four Austerities and the Four Liberations".*) This answers the question:

"Love is, in its essence, the joy of identity: it finds its supreme expression in the bliss of union. Between the two there are all the phases of its universal manifestation."

First, it is the joy of identity. Something must be there already which can become conscious of the identity, and that precisely is

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love. Then comes the manifestation of love. And in its supreme form, that is, when it returns to its source crossing all the phases of its manifestation, it becomes the bliss of union. For the feeling of union comes as a consequence of the feeling of separation. The passage through the whole manifested universe gives the feeling of separation from the Origin; and the return to the Origin is the bliss of union, that is, the two things that were separated are united once again. And it is still Love; it is Love after the great circuit of the manifestation. When it returns to its Origin, it becomes the bliss of union. (*Mother continues reading the passage from "The Four Austerities"*):

"At the beginning of this manifestation, Love is, in the purity of its origin, composed of two movements, two complementary poles of the impulsion towards complete fusion. On one side, it is the supreme power of attraction and on the other the irresistible need of absolute self-giving. No other movement can do better in throwing a bridge over the abyss that was dug in the individual being when its consciousness separated from its origin and became inconscience.

"What was projected into space had to be brought back to itself without, however, destroying the universe so created. Therefore Love burst forth, the irresistible power of union.

"It has been soaring over darkness and inconscience; it has scattered itself, pulverised itself in the bosom of unfathomed night. And from that moment began the awakening and the ascent, the slow formation of matter and its endless progression."

That is the answer to your question. That is, no matter how high you may climb back, at the Origin you will find love. But not what men call love.

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Mother, what kind of love is that which says, "If you love me, I shall love you"?

If you love me, I shall love you? That's exactly the way men speak: "If you love me, I love you, if you don't love me, I don't love you." This is just the most human expression of love. And it goes still farther, they apply it also to their relation with the Divine. They say to the Divine: "If you do what I want, I shall say that you love me, and I shall love you. But if you don't do what I want, then I won't think at all that you love me, and I certainly will not love you."

That's how it is. That means that it becomes commercial.

But "If you don't love me, I shall love you"?

That begins to be better!

And what is better still is not to ask oneself whether one is loved or not, one should be absolutely indifferent to that. And that begins to be true love: one loves because one loves, not at all because one receives a response to one's love or because the other person loves you. All those conditions—that is not love. One loves because one cannot do otherwise but love. One loves because one loves. One doesn't care at all about what will happen; one is perfectly satisfied with the feeling of one's love. One loves because one loves.

All the rest is bargaining, it is not love.

And, moreover, one thing is certain: the moment one experiences true love, one doesn't even put the question any longer. It seems altogether childish and ridiculous and insignificant to ask this question. One has the complete plenitude of joy and realisation the moment one experiences true love and one doesn't at all need any kind of response. One is love, that's all. And one has the plenitude of the satisfaction of love. There is no need at all of any reciprocity.

I tell you, so long as there is this calculation in the mind or

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the feelings and sensations, so long as there is some calculation, more or less acknowledged, it is bargaining, it is not love.

You can't manage to understand?... I hope it will come one day!

All the rest is exactly what men have made of love. And besides it is not very pretty and leads to all kinds of things which are still less pretty, like jealousy, for instance, or envy, and in violent natures it goes as far as hatred. The small beginning is this: the need, when one loves, that what one loves or the person one loves should know that he is loved. But in the relation with the Divine: one loves the Divine but insists that the Divine should know that one loves Him! That's the beginning of the fall. One does not even think about the real thing. It doesn't even slightly touch the mind.

One doesn't think: one loves, that's all. One loves and is in the plenitude of love and the intense joy of love, and then, that's all.

It is a long, long, long way to go from what men call "love" to true love — a long way.

I am not even speaking here about all the repulsive forms it takes in the ordinary human consciousness; I am telling you about the best conditions, about love in its best form, even the most disinterested. I don't know, if you question human beings, I would like to know very much the percentage of those who don't even care for reciprocity. Simply that. Not those who say: "If you love me, I love you", that indeed is at the very bottom of the ladder, right at the bottom, almost in the pit.... There is a still lower rung: "Love me and then I shall see if I love you." There you have to deal with altogether disgusting people. I am speaking only of the need of reciprocity: that is the first step of the descending scale.

However, you will understand this one day. You are still very young.

What kind of love do animals have for men?

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It is almost the same as that of rather unintellectual men for the Divine. It is made of admiration, trust and a sense of security. Admiration: it seems to you something really very beautiful. And it is not reasoned out: an admiration from the heart, so to speak, spontaneous. For instance, dogs have this in a very high degree. And then, trust — naturally this is sometimes mixed with other things: with the feeling of some need and dependence, for it is that person who will give me to eat when I am hungry, give me shelter when it is rough weather, who will look after me. This is not the most beautiful side. And then, unfortunately, it gets mixed up (and I believe — I consider it entirely man's fault) with a kind of fear; a feeling of dependence and a kind of fear of something which is much stronger, much more conscious, much more... which can harm you, and you have no strength to defend yourself. It is a pity, but I believe it is altogether man's fault.

But if men really deserved the love of animals, it would be made of a feeling of wonder and of the sense of security. It is something very fine, this sense of security; something that's able to protect you, to give you all that you need, and near which you can always find shelter.

Animals have an altogether rudimentary mind. They are not tormented by incessant thoughts like human beings. For example, they feel a spontaneous gratitude for an act of kindness towards them, whilst men, ninety-eight times out of a hundred, begin to reason and ask themselves what interest one could have in being good. This is one of the great miseries of mental activity. Animals are free from this and when you are kind to them they are grateful to you, spontaneously. And they have trust. So their love is made of that, and it turns into a very strong attachment, an irresistible need to be near you.

There is something else. If the master is really a good one and the animal faithful, there is an exchange of psychic and vital forces, an exchange which becomes for the animal something wonderful, giving it an intense joy. When they like to be quite close to you in that way, when you hold them, it is that they

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vibrate internally. The force one gives them—the strength of affection, of tenderness, protection, all that—they feel it, and it creates a deep attachment in them. Even fairly easily, in some of the higher animals like dogs, elephants, and even horses, it creates quite a remarkable need for devotion (which indeed is not thwarted by all the reasonings and arguments of the mind), which is spontaneous and very pure in its essence, something that's very beautiful.

The working of the mind in man in its rudimentary form, its first manifestation has spoilt many things which were much finer before.

Naturally, if man rises to a higher level and makes good use of his intelligence, then things can take on a much greater value. But between the two, there is a passage where man makes the most vulgar and low use of his intelligence; he makes it an instrument for calculation, domination, deception, and there it becomes very ugly. I have known in my life animals I considered much higher than many people, for that sordid calculation, that wish to cheat and profit was precisely not there in them. There are others that catch it—through contact with man they catch it—but there are those who don't have it.

The unselfish movement, uncalculating, is one of the most beautiful forms of psychic consciousness in the world. But the higher one rises in the scale of mental activity, the rarer it becomes. For with intelligence come all the skill and cleverness, and corruption, calculation. For instance, when a rose blossoms it does so spontaneously, for the joy of being beautiful, smelling sweet, expressing all its joy of living, and it does not calculate, it has nothing to gain out of it: it does so spontaneously, in the joy of being and living. Take a human being, well, apart from a very few exceptions, the moment his mind is active he tries to get some advantage out of his beauty and cleverness; he wants it to bring him something, either men's admiration or even much more sordid gains yet. Consequently, from the psychic point of view, the rose is better than human beings.

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Only, if you climb a rung higher and consciously do what the rose does unconsciously, then it is much more beautiful. But it must be the same thing: a spontaneous flowering of beauty, uncalculating, simply for the joy of being. Little children have this at times (at times, not always). Unfortunately, under the influence of their parents and the environment, they learn to be calculating when yet very young.

But this kind of wish to gain by what one has or does is truly one of the ugliest things in the world. And it is one of the most widespread and it has become so widespread, that it is almost spontaneous in man. Nothing can turn its back on the divine love more totally than that, that wish to calculate and profit.

Do flowers love?

This is their form of love, this blossoming. Certainly, when one sees a rose opening to the sun, it is like a need to give its beauty. Only, for us, it is almost unintelligible, for they do not think about what they do. A human being always associates with everything he does this ability to see himself doing it, that is, to think about himself, think of himself doing it. Man knows that he is doing something. Animals don't think. It is not at all the same form of love. And flowers, so to speak, are not conscious: it is a spontaneous movement, not a consciousness that is conscious of itself, not at all. But it is a great Force which acts through all that, the great universal Consciousness and the great Force of universal love which makes all things blossom in beauty.

That is what I have written there also (*Mother resumes reading "The Four Austerities"*):

"Is it not love, under an erring and obscure form, that is associated with all the impulsions of the physical and vital nature as the push towards every movement and every grouping and which has become quite visible in the plant world?"

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You know, crystals which are formed in matter already obey a movement of love; but this becomes quite perceptible in the vegetable kingdom, in the tree and plant. It is the need to grow to get more light. All these trees which are always growing higher — always growing, the smaller ones trying to catch up with the taller, the taller ones trying to climb yet higher; you put two plants side by side, they both try to find an orientation that gives them the maximum light possible—that is the need to grow to get more air, more light, more space (*Mother continues reading*):

"In the flower it is the gift of beauty and fragrance in a loving efflorescence. And in the animal is it not there behind hunger and thirst, the need for appropriation, expansion, procreation, in brief, behind all desire, whether conscious or not? and, among the higher orders, in the self-sacrificing devotion of the female for her young ones?"

... which in human beings becomes maternal love. The only difference is that it is conscious of itself. And in animals it is often even purer than in human beings. There are instances of the devotion, care, self-forgetfulness of animals for their young, which are absolutely wonderful. Only, it is spontaneous, not thought out, not reflected upon; the animal does not think about what it is doing. Man thinks. At times this spoils the movement (at times — most often), sometimes it can give it a higher worth but that is rare. There is less spontaneity in man's movements than in an animal's.

I had a puss, the first time it had its kittens it did not want to move from there. It did not eat, did not satisfy any call of nature. It remained there, stuck to her kittens, shielding them, feeding them; it was so afraid that something would happen to them. And that was quite unthought out, spontaneous. It refused to move, so frightened it was that some harm might come to them

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— just through instinct. And then, when they were bigger, the trouble it took to educate them — it was marvellous. And what patience! And how it taught them to jump from wall to wall, to catch their food; how, with what care, it repeated once, ten times, a hundred times if necessary. It was never tired until the little one had done what it wanted. An extraordinary education. It taught them how to skirt houses following the edge of walls, how to walk so as not to fall, what had to be done when there was much space between one wall and another, in order to cross over. The little ones were quite afraid when they saw the gap and refused to jump because they were frightened (it was not too far for them, but there was the gap and they did not dare) and then the mother jumped, it went over to the other side, it called them: come, come along. They did not move, they were trembling. It jumped back and then gave them a speech, it gave them little blows with its paw and licked them, and yet they did not move. It jumped. I saw it do this for over half an hour. But after half an hour it found that they had learnt enough, so it went behind the one it evidently considered the most ready, the most capable, and gave it a hard knock with its head. Then the little one, instinctively, jumped. Once it had jumped, it jumped again and again and again....

There are few mothers who have this patience. *Voilà*, my children. That's all? Nothing more?... Good night.

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"All religions have each the same story to tell. The occasion for its birth is the coming of a great Teacher of the world. He comes and reveals and is the incarnation of a Divine Truth. But men seize upon it, trade upon it, make an almost political organisation out of it. The religion is equipped by them with a government and policy and laws, with its creeds and dogmas, its rules and regulations, its rites and ceremonies all binding upon its adherents, all absolute and inviolable. Like the State, it too administers rewards to the loyal and assigns punishments for those that revolt or go astray, for the heretic and the renegade.

"The first and principal article of these established and formal religions runs always, 'Mine is the supreme, the only truth, all others are in falsehood or inferior'....

"This attitude is natural to the religious mind; but it is just that which makes religion stand in the way of the spiritual life. The articles and dogmas of a religion are mind-made things and, if you cling to them and shut yourself up in a code of life made out for you, you do not know and cannot know the truth of the spirit that lies beyond all codes and dogmas, wide and large and free. When you stop at a religious creed and tie yourself in it, taking it for the only truth in the world, you stop the advance and widening of your inner soul."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (9 June 1929)

If someone follows a religion and has a good capacity, can he go farther and reach identification with the Divine?

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It is impossible.

Religion is always a limitation for the spirit.

If a man has a spiritual life independently of his mental formations and the set limits in which he lives, then this spiritual life makes him, so to say, cross the religious principles and enter something higher. But his consecration must come from within and not be formal. If it comes exclusively from the form, then the limitation is so great that he cannot go farther.

There are people who have necessarily to come out of their religion if they do not want to be halted in their progress. But those who have practically no mental activity, who do not ask themselves any questions, who have only an intense devotion in their heart and an urge to give themselves to something that is infinitely greater, for these it does not matter whether they have a religion or not. It is all the same. But if one is attached to forms, one can never go any farther.

It is difficult to go so far unless the mind is free and dwells in the light. It is one of the fairly indispensable conditions (although not absolutely indispensable). However, there are people who have no mental power and accept any dogma whatever without discussion; they feel that nothing can prevent them from having this inner urge which will put them in contact with the Divine. But generally they do not have a mental life: it is very much restricted.

Do castes have any importance in the spiritual life?

Castes? What has that got to do with spiritual life? Absolutely nothing. It is merely a social organisation, that is all.

It is said that the Brahmins are more advanced for serving the Divine?

They say many things.

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Spiritual life does not depend upon these considerations, not at all. Certain social virtues depend upon them and solely because there exist in some environments special traditions of education and that some traditions are better than others. But that is all.

As for the question of not mixing blood, it is a subject for discussion. Because, for example, if you take the various kinds of dogs (excuse me, I do not mean to make an unfair comparison), still, the dog belonging to its kind of breed, when great care is taken to keep the type pure, to prevent any mixture, becomes more and more stupid, whilst the street-dog, product of mixed breed and sometimes a horror from the physical point of view — it is hideous, made of one kind crossed with another — is generally much superior from the point of view of intelligence. So even in these cases one cannot say.... Marriages in small communities, made within the caste, where no mixture is allowed, end usually in a gradual, progressive decline of intelligence in the group. It is not a selection, rather the contrary. New admixtures are always necessary to bring forth new types capable of manifesting progress.... From the social point of view, this is quite justifiable, and it is very convenient and simple: it gives frames allowing precisely an easier organisation but that is all the worth it has.

But I believe it is the same for the caste as for the country. Each caste is convinced that it alone holds the maximum progress possible! And when you hear people speaking, even those who are outcastes are full of contempt for the others and believe themselves superior.

“One who holds a particular faith, or who has found out some truth, is disposed to think that he alone has found the Truth, whole and entire. This is human nature. A mixture of falsehood seems necessary for human beings to stand on their legs and move on their way. If the vision of the Truth were sud-

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denly given to them they would be crushed under the weight."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (9 June 1929)

Are men advancing more and more towards the Divine?

It is difficult to say. Logically the whole creation must advance more and more towards the Divine, because it is its ultimate goal. But in fact it is a peculiar movement, for one takes three steps forward and two backward; one takes two steps forward and one sideways! So, it will take very long to arrive at the goal. It looks like that.

There is a great difference between the general principle, the theory seen in its totality over the millenniums, without taking any account of the number of years (not years, I say millenniums, thousands of centuries), a great difference between that and the practical facts. It can be said that the whole creation is moving towards union with its Creator, but there is the fact, first of all, that the whole evolutionary movement is a spiral movement. And in this spiral there are innumerable points, and at each point a progress in the vertical line is achieved. But one has to make a whole round in order to come back once more to the same point, but at a slightly higher level.... And so, all the time you spend doing other things, reaching other points, the first one is as it were forgotten. In human history that is translated in this way:

There is a wonderful civilisation with all kinds of extraordinary productions, from the scientific point of view, the artistic point of view, even the political, organisational and social point of view. There were fine civilisations like those which have left a kind of occult memory of a continent that might have linked India with Africa, for example, of which no trace remains (unless some human races be the remnants of that civilisation). There are civilisations like that which disappear suddenly and then follows a whole period full of darkness, unconsciousness, ignorance, of

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altogether primitive races which seem so close to animals that one asks whether there is really any difference. And so there is a big hole in the darkness, passing through all kinds of disorders. Then all of a sudden it emerges above, at an even higher level, with greater virtues, a greater realisation... as though all those hours in the night, of labour in the night had prepared Matter so that it might express something higher. Then again another darkness, an oblivion: the earth becomes again barbarous, obscure, ignorant, painful. And suddenly some thousands of years later, a new civilisation comes....

So if you look at that from below, you ask yourself: "Where is the progress?" Because always it disappears, collapses or it rots, is ruined completely—and is forgotten. And mankind becomes once again something very ordinary, amorphous, grovelling in a half-obscenity. And then yet once more suddenly there is an illumination. And while one is in the midst of the illumination one says, "Now, we have it, it is the right thing, now we must not fall again...."

So far there has always been a relapse.

We shall see.

Will there be a fall once again?

That, my child, I have not said. I have said nothing, I said: "We shall see."

In reality, I believe it depends somewhat upon each one of us and on our aspiration. If everyone does all that is needed and the maximum he can do, there is a chance of arriving at a stabilised stage where the upward movement will go on without the need to destroy anything in order to begin again.

It is not indispensable, but it has always been so till now, and indeed, I don't know if Nature does not take great pleasure in it....

It happens we are obliged to take our support on what Nature has done, because it is she who has been at work till

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now. But at the same time we do not approve of her ways of working. So, that produces a small inner conflict (in the family, if I may say so!); but it makes things somewhat difficult, because she does not like her way of being to be disturbed. And yet, if one goes on doing as she wants, then it will always be the same story, always there will have to be this disappearing and beginning again, for it is her play. Hence one must be able to prevent her from destroying. But if by chance a good way is found to get her interested and make her collaborate, then with her collaboration it would be possible to succeed.

In reality, all that is needed is to make her understand that things can be done in another way than hers.

And then since she possesses (as you see) a wonderful ingenuity and a truly fantastic imagination.... You have only to look at animals or to photograph them. If you look at that and compare the little mouse with the giraffe or the elephant with the cat, all those animals that were once there and all the animals that still have extraordinary and queer forms—what an imagination, what a tremendous imagination! If you had to create all the animals that are on earth, you would have found it rather difficult! Now that you see them, it appears to you quite natural.... I saw the other day a picture representing simply a giraffe picking fruits from far up a tree. I said: "One must have some imagination to find that, an animal having a neck long enough to reach the top of a tree so that it may eat the fruit!" It is wonderful. And everything is like that. It appears to us quite natural because we have always lived with it, but one must truly have a genius....

So, the person who has the genius as well as the power to realise whatever she imagines, does not like very much people meddling in her affairs! She says: "Are you capable of doing what I do?"

You must convince her that you don't want to upset anything she is doing, but that you wish simply to bring in something more. There is only one way to convince her: to do it. So long

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as it is an aspiration, she smiles, she looks on, she says: "Let us see, let us see, what are you going to do?"

But when it will have been done, I believe, she will say: "It is all right."

So there is only one way, it is to do it.

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“Each time that something of the Divine Truth and the Divine Force comes down to manifest upon earth, some change is effected in the earth’s atmosphere. In the descent, those who are receptive are awakened to some inspiration from it, some touch, some beginning of sight. If they were capable of holding and expressing rightly what they receive, they would say, ‘A great force has come down; I am in contact with it and what I understand of it, I will tell you.’ But most of them are not capable of that, because they have small minds. They get illumined, possessed, as it were, and cry, ‘I have the Divine Truth, I possess it whole and entire....’”

“One Divine Consciousness is here working through all these beings, preparing its way through all these manifestations. At this day it is here at work upon earth more powerfully than it has ever been before. There are some who receive its touch in some way, or to some degree; but what they receive they distort, they make their own thing out of it. Others feel the touch but cannot bear the force and go mad under the pressure. But some have the capacity to receive and the strength to bear, and it is they who will become the vessels of the full knowledge, the chosen instruments and agents.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (9 June 1929)

How does the divine Force choose the instrument in which it wants to manifest itself?

Through affinity. For the quality, the nature of the consciousness is visible in the divine domain. It has a special vibration, a special light and this can be perceived. And so, when there is

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an affinity (sometimes merely an affinity, sometimes an identity, depending on the being's degree of perfection), the Force goes there. Those who are still in the course of formation but whose psychic being is sufficiently developed are seen, their vibrations are seen, the being that is there is seen and accordingly the degree of manifestation is determined, the exact line of manifestation, the importance and conditions of the manifestation. All that is included in the inner vision.

But it may happen that the instrument does not understand, for the man in whom the Force is manifested sometimes loses his head and is unable to contain the Force?

That may happen, everything is possible. But generally... I told you this the other day, when I spoke of the rebirth of psychic beings, I told you that from their domain they see a certain vibration, a certain light and they know that it is there that they must go. But when they drop down, most of the time they drop into unconsciousness and lose their faculties, at least for the moment. In the end they will come to themselves. But it takes time to recover, it comes as one progresses, through successive illuminations.

Between the vital being and the mental, which progresses faster generally?

That depends on people. It is the vital in those who have a stronger vital and the mental in those who have a stronger mental being. You mean in the same person? That depends absolutely on which one is more active and more strong. In what way? In each person the combination is different, so one cannot make a general rule and say how it must be. One can say that in certain types of cases, it is like this, and in certain others it is like that.

But to tell the truth, I do not believe that much progress

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can be made if the two do not agree, if one pulls one way and the other another. It will always be difficult. And generally it is better if the mind is converted first, for it is the mind that must have the power to organise the other parts of the being.

(*Mother stops and suddenly looks at the disciples.*) Someone here has just sent a mental formation that... has taken, if you like, the shape of a blue paper on which something was written. It dropped down whirling, and dropped upon one of you. So I would like to know if anyone has all of a sudden received some sensational answer?... Nobody?... I could not spot who it was among you, for it fell twirling.... Too bad. But it dropped upon one of you. It was some blue paper, it took the form of a blue paper and there was a very interesting answer upon it. Nobody received anything? Didn't some idea all of a sudden enter your head? No? (*Nobody answers*)

If the vital is not converted and if the mind is convinced?

Well, you pass your life in quarrelling with yourself! One draws you to one side and the other tries to be your good mentor but you don't listen to it. So you feel as though pulled from all sides. You know what you ought to do and you do not do it. You know what ought not to be done and you do it. And because you do stupid things, you feel sorry. So there are two things, you are unhappy for two reasons: first of all, because of the stupid things you have done, and then due to the regret they bring. It is a somewhat painful situation....

Can't the vital be converted?

Convert the vital? Surely one can. It is a difficult task, but it can be done. If it could not be done, then there would be no hope. But generally the mind is not sufficient. For, I have known very many people who could see very clearly, understand very well, were mentally thoroughly convinced, could even describe to you and

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tell you extraordinary things, could easily give excellent lessons to others, but their vital was up to all sorts of tricks and would not listen at all to all that. It said, "It is all the same to me, say what you may; as for myself, I go my own way!"

It is only when contact with the psychic has been established that this can convert anything at all—even the worst criminal—in a moment. These are those "illuminations" which seize you and turn you inside out completely. After that, all goes well. There may be slight difficulties of adjustment, but still things go well.

But the mind is a big preacher, that is its nature: it gives speeches, sermons, as it is done in the churches. So the vital usually gets impatient and answers the mind, not very politely: "You are a nuisance! what you say is very good for you, but for me it won't do." Or, at the best, when the mind is gifted with especially remarkable capacities and the vital is of a little higher kind, it may say: "Oh! how beautiful it is, what you tell me (sometimes this happens), but you see, I, I am unable to do it; it is very beautiful, but it is beyond my capacity."

But this vital is a strange creature. It is a being of passion, enthusiasm and naturally of desire; but, for example, it is quite capable of getting enthusiastic over something beautiful, of admiring, sensing anything greater and nobler than itself. And if really anything very beautiful occurs in the being, if there is a movement having an exceptional value, well, it may get enthusiastic and it is capable of giving itself with complete devotion—with a generosity that is not found, for example, in the mental domain nor in the physical. It has that fullness in action that comes precisely from its capacity to get enthused and throw itself wholly without reserve into what it does. Heroes are always people who have a strong vital, and when the vital becomes passionate about something, it is no longer a reasonable being but a warrior; it is wholly involved in its action and can perform exceptional things because it does not calculate, does not reason, does not say "One must take precautions, one must not do this,

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must not do that." It becomes reckless, it gets carried away, as people say, it gives itself totally. Therefore, it can do magnificent things if it is guided in the right way.

A converted vital is an all-powerful instrument. And sometimes it gets converted by something exceptionally beautiful, morally or materially. When it witnesses, for example, a scene of total self-abnegation, of uncalculating self-giving — one of those things so exceedingly rare but splendidly beautiful — it can be carried away by it, it can be seized by an ambition to do the same thing. It begins by an ambition, it ends with a consecration.

There is only one thing the vital abhors; it is a dull life, monotonous, grey, tasteless, worthless. Faced with that, it goes to sleep, falls into inertia. It likes extremely violent things, it is true; it can be extremely wicked, extremely cruel, extremely generous, extremely good and extremely heroic. It always goes to extremes and can be on one side or the other, yes, as the current flows.

And this vital, if you place it in a bad environment, it will imitate the bad environment and do bad things with violence and to an extreme degree. If you place it in the presence of something wonderfully beautiful, generous, great, noble, divine, it can be carried away with that also, forget everything else and give itself wholly. It will give itself more completely than any other part of the being, for it does not calculate. It follows its passion and enthusiasm. When it has desires, its desires are violent, arbitrary, and it does not at all take into account the good or bad of others; it doesn't care the least bit. But when it gives itself to something beautiful, it does not calculate either, it will give itself entirely without knowing whether it will do good or harm to it. It is a very precious instrument.

It is like a horse of pure breed: if it lets itself be directed, then it will win all the races, everywhere it will come first. If it is untamed, it will trample people and cause havoc and break its own legs or back! It is like that. The one thing to know is

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to which side it will turn. It loves exceptional things — exceptionally bad or exceptionally good, it loves the exceptional. It does not like ordinary life. It becomes dull, it becomes half inert. And if it is shut up in a corner and told: “Keep quiet there”, it will remain there and become more and more like something crumbling away, and finally just like a mummy: there is no more life in it, it is dried up. And one will no longer have the strength to do what one wants to do. One will have fine ideas, excellent intentions, but one won’t have the energy to execute them.

So do not wail if you have a powerful vital, but you must have strong reins and hold them quite firmly. Then things go well.

Does depression come from the vital?

Oh, yes. All your troubles, depression, discouragement, disgust, fury, all, all come from the vital. It is that which turns love into hate, it is that which induces the spirit of vengeance, rancour, bad will, the urge to destroy and to harm. It is that which discourages you when things are difficult and not to its liking. And it has an extraordinary capacity for going on strike! When it is not satisfied, it hides in a corner and does not budge. And then you have no more energy, no more strength, you have no courage left. Your will is like... like a withering plant. All resentment, disgust, fury, all despair, grief, anger — all that comes from this gentleman. For it is energy in action.

Therefore, it depends on which side it turns. And I tell you, it has a very strong habit of going on strike. That is its most powerful weapon: “Ah! you are not doing what I want, well, I am not going to move, I shall sham dead.” And it does that for the least reason. It has a very bad character; it is very touchy and it is very spiteful — yes, it is very ill-natured. For I believe it is very conscious of its power and it feels clearly that if it gives itself wholly, there is nothing that will resist the momentum of its force. And like all people who have a weight in the balance,

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the vital also bargains: "I shall give you my energy, but you must do what I want. If you do not give me what I ask for, well, I withdraw my energy." And you will be flat as a pancake. And it is true, it happens like that.

It is difficult to regulate it. Yet naturally, when you have succeeded in taming it, you have something powerful in hand for realisation. It is that which can carry by storm the biggest obstacles. It is that which is capable of turning an idiot into an intelligent person—it alone can do so; for if one yearns passionately for progress, if the vital takes it into its head that one must progress, even the greatest idiot can become intelligent! I have seen this, I am not speaking from hearsay; I have seen it, I have seen people who were dull, stupid, incapable of understanding, who understood nothing—you could go on explaining something to them for months, it would not enter, as though one were speaking to a block of wood—and then all of a sudden their vital was caught in a passion; they wanted simply to please someone or get something, and for that one had to understand, one had to know, it was necessary. Well, they set everything moving, they shook up the sleeping mind, they poured energy into all the corners where there was none; and they understood, they became intelligent. I knew someone who knew nothing practically, understood nothing, and who, when the mind started moving and the passion for progress took possession of him, began to write wonderful things. I have them with me. And when the movement withdrew, when the vital went on strike (for sometimes it went on strike, and withdrew), the person became once again absolutely dull.

Naturally it is very difficult to establish a constant contact between the most external physical consciousness and the psychic consciousness, and oh! the physical consciousness has plenty of goodwill; it is very regular, it tries a great deal, but it is slow and heavy, it takes long, it is difficult to move it. It does not get tired, but it makes no effort; it goes its way, quietly. It can take centuries to put the external consciousness in contact

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with the psychic. But for some reason or other the vital takes a hand in it. A passion seizes it. It wants this contact (for some reason or other, which is not always a spiritual reason), but it wants this contact. It wants it with all its energy, all its strength, all its passion, all its fervour: in three months the thing is done.

So then, take great care of it. Treat it with great consideration but never submit to it. For it will drag you into all kinds of troublesome and untoward experiments; and if you succeed in convincing it in some way or other, then you will advance with giant strides on the path.

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"The force that comes down into one who is doing Yoga and helps him in his transformation, acts along many different lines and its results vary according to the nature that receives it and the work to be done. First of all, it hastens the transformation of all in the being that is ready to be transformed. If he is open and receptive in his mind, the mind, touched by the power of Yoga, begins to change and progress swiftly. There may be the same rapidity of change in the vital consciousness if that is ready, or even in the body. But in the body the transforming power of Yoga is operative only to a certain degree; for the receptivity of the body is limited. The most material plane of the universe is still in a condition in which receptivity is mixed with a large amount of resistance. But rapid progress in one part of the being which is not followed by an equivalent progress in other parts produces a disharmony in the nature, a dislocation somewhere; and wherever or whenever this dislocation occurs, it can translate itself into an illness. The nature of the illness depends upon the nature of the dislocation."

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Why is the receptivity of the body limited?

Because in the physical world, in order that things do not get mixed up, it was necessary that it should be somewhat fixed. If, for example, your body were so subtle and plastic that suddenly it began to melt just like that, in the presence of another person, it would be quite annoying! Or when you come nearer, if both were to get mixed up, it would be rather unpleasant! So, because of this, there was a greater concentration, a kind of fixity in the

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force to separate (it is indeed for the sake of separating) one individuality from another. And this fixity is just what prevents the body from progressing as rapidly as it could and should. And as one grows up and reaches one's normal height and constitution, one becomes still more rigid. For children have this plasticity of growth, they are changing all the time, they are visibly changing. Therefore so long as they are young and are growing and developing, they have a certain plasticity in them, but when you are over forty and as generally in life you then sit down and think that you have reached your goal and are about to gather the fruit of your labour, you become dry and hard like wood and even like stone in the end. And as the body is no longer able to adapt itself to the movement of inner transformation, it drags, it ages and cannot keep pace any more, it dries up.

After death, does the inner being continue to progress?

That depends altogether upon the person. For everyone it is different. There are people—for example, writers, musicians, artists—people who have lived on intellectual heights, who feel that they still have something further to do, that they have not finished what they had undertaken to do, have not reached the goal they had fixed for themselves, so they are ready to remain in the earth atmosphere as long as they can, with as much cohesiveness as possible and they try to manifest themselves and continue their progress in other human bodies. I have seen many such cases, I have seen the very interesting case of a musician who was a pianist (a pianist of great worth), who had hands which were a marvel of skill, accuracy, precision, force, rapidity of movement, indeed, it was absolutely remarkable. This man died relatively young with the feeling that if he had continued to live he would have continued to progress in his musical expression. And such was the intensity of his aspiration that his subtle hands maintained their form without being dissolved, and each time he met anyone a little receptive and passive and a good

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musician, his hands would enter the hands of those who were playing—the person who was playing at the time could play well but in an ordinary way; but at that moment he became not merely a virtuoso but a wonderful artist during the time he played. It was the hands of the other that were making use of his. This is a phenomenon I know. I have seen the same thing in the case of a painter: it was also a matter of hands. The same thing with regard to some writers, and here it was the brain that kept quite a precise form and entered the brain of someone who was sufficiently receptive and suddenly made him write extraordinary things, infinitely more beautiful than anything he had written before. I saw that taking hold of someone. It was in the case of a composer of music—not one of those who execute, but who compose, like Beethoven, like Bach, like César Franck (but César Franck executed also). The composition of music is an extremely cerebral activity. Well, here also the brain of a great musician came in contact with one who was engaged in writing an opera and made him compose wonderful things and arranged on paper all the parts. He was busy writing an opera and it is extremely complex for the performers who have to bring out in the music the thought of the person who has composed; and that man (I knew him) when he received this formation had a blank paper before him and then he started writing; I saw him writing, putting lines, then some figures, on a big, very big page and when he reached the bottom, the orchestration of the Overture (for example, of a certain act) was completed (orchestration means the distribution of certain lines of music to each one of the instruments). And he was doing it simply on a paper, merely by this wonderful mental power. And it was not only his own: it was coming to him from a musical mind that incarnated in him.... Whilst I was there I saw him writing in front of me a page like that: it took him about half an hour or three-quarters of an hour. And he got such a reputation that even big well-known musicians brought him their works for orchestration. He did it better than anyone, and just in that way on his paper.

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He had no need to hear the music or anything. Afterwards, it was tried out and it was always very good. There were so many violins, so many cellos, so many altos, all the instruments: some were playing this, others playing that, yet others playing other things, sometimes all together, at other times one after another (it is very complicated, not a simple thing), well, there, while playing, hearing or even reading (sometimes he took the score and read it) he knew which notes had to be distributed to which instrument, which notes had to be played by another, and so on. And he had very clearly the feeling of something entering into him and helping him.

Do these beings who want to manifest themselves keep the same desire when they are born once again?

No, it is not the same thing. It is not the whole being, it is the special faculty which remains in the earth atmosphere, does not leave it and go away, which remains in the earth atmosphere in order to continue manifesting itself. But the psychic being can very well return to the psychic world and it is the psychic being which takes a body again. I explained to you the other day that before leaving the physical body, the psychic being decides most often what its next rebirth will be, the environment in which it will take birth and what its occupation will be, because it needs a certain field for its experience. So it may happen that very big writers and very big musicians take birth another time in somebody quite imbecile. And you say: "What! it is not possible!" Naturally it does not always happen like that, but it may. There was a case in which the contrary happened: it was a violin player, the most wonderful of the century.... (*Mother tries to remember.*) Just wait, I knew his name and it is gone—it came back and is gone again. What was his name?... Ysayë! he was a Belgian and a violinist, truly the most wonderful violinist of the epoch. Well, that man had most certainly in him a reincarnation of Beethoven. Not perhaps a reincarnation of

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his entire psychic being, but in any case, that of his musical capacity. He had the appearance, the head of Beethoven, I saw him, I heard him (I did not know him, I knew nothing, I was at a concert in Paris and they were giving the concerto in D major), I saw him coming on the stage to play and I said: "Strange! How much this man looks like Beethoven, he is the very portrait of Beethoven!" Then it just started with a stroke of the bow, three, four notes.... Everything changed, the atmosphere was changed. All became absolutely wonderful. Three notes started off with such power, such grandeur, so wonderful it was, nothing stirred, all waited. And he played that from beginning to end in an absolutely unique manner with an understanding I have not met with in any other executant. And then I saw that the musical genius of Beethoven was in him.... But perhaps Beethoven's psychic being had taken body in a shoemaker or anybody else, one does not know! It wanted to have another kind of experience.

For what I saw in this man was a formation belonging to an earthly plane, it was mental-vital; and as Beethoven had disciplined his whole mental, vital and physical being around his musical capacity, that had remained in form, it was a living thing, and had incarnated in that man, just as it was, but not necessarily Beethoven's psychic being. In his former life it was the psychic being of Beethoven that had shaped all those other beings, the psychic being that had disciplined them around musical creation; but after his death, it cannot at all be said whether the psychic being remained there; it must have returned to the psychic world as is the usual rule. That however had been formed, had its own life, independent and existing in itself. It was formed for a certain manifestation and it remained to manifest itself. And as soon as it found a fit instrument, it entered there to manifest itself.

Can a psychic being take birth in two bodies?

It is not quite so simple as that.... The psychic being is the result of evolution, that is to say, evolution of the divine Consciousness

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which spread into Matter and slowly lifted up Matter, made it develop to return to the Divine. The psychic being was formed by this divine centre progressively through all the births. There comes a time when it reaches a kind of perfection, perfection in its growth and formation. Then, most often, as it has an aspiration for realisation, for a greater perfection to manifest yet better the Divine, it generally draws towards itself a being from the involution, that is to say, one of those entities belonging to what Sri Aurobindo calls Overmind, who comes then to incarnate in this psychic being. It can be one of those entities men generally call gods, some kind of deities. And when this fusion occurs the psychic being naturally is magnified and shares in the nature of the being incarnated in it. And then it has the power to produce emanations. These beings have the power to produce emanations, that is to say, they project out of themselves a part of themselves which becomes independent and goes into others to incarnate itself. So there can be not only two, but three, four or five emanations. That depends upon cases, it can happen thus. That is to say, one can have the same origin, psycho-divine, we might say. And generally when there are a number of emanations, the different persons feel themselves to be that being, and rightly so, for they carry in themselves something of that godhead: it is as though a part of the godhead has cast itself out of itself and become independent in another being. It is not a self-duplication but a kind of self-projection. (*To the child who put the question:*) Duplication gives the idea that what has been duplicated has lost a part of its capability: if you cut your body in two, only half of it will remain for you; but if you have the power to emanate something out of you, you remain quite whole, as you are, and at the same time, there is another Tara who is there in another person.... You understand? It is like that.

When the hands of the pianist entered the hands of another, would the one who lent his hands be able to play?

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I do not understand! The “hands” were what remained in the earth atmosphere of the dead pianist. So these hands which had been absolutely formed, had become like conscious, living and independent entities, entered the material hands, for they wanted to play actually on a piano. But when they played, they played through the hands of the other person, who might have been a good pianist but became a genius whilst those hands were there.

I thought that the other one was alive!

The other was alive? Which other? The first one... Ah! No!
(*Laughter*)

You have said: “The whole world is in a process of progressive transformation.”¹ Then why do men fight among themselves?

It is perhaps their way of progressing! (*Laughter*) You do not progress always in an apparently harmonious way. All who do Yoga know that it is not a thing that always goes on in peace and harmony, that sometimes there are inner battles, you have to give battle to enemies within you who want to prevent you from progressing. That means war. Well, when it is the whole earth that's progressing and there are things that resist and do not want to move, sometimes you have to give battle and that means war. You must not believe that progress consists in sitting down and meditating!... There are difficulties to be conquered. To conquer, what does it mean? — To fight

¹ “The action of the forces of Yoga hastens the movement of transformation of the being in those parts that are ready to receive and respond to the power that is at work upon it. Yoga, in this way, saves time. The whole world is in a process of progressive transformation; if you take up the discipline of Yoga, you speed up in yourself this process. The work that would require years in the ordinary course, can be done by Yoga in a few days and even in a few hours.”

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against something. When you fight, it means war. There are small wars, there are big wars; but what is this war of men upon earth, if seen, for example, by Titans to whom men are no bigger than ants?... When you look at a war of ants, you find it quite natural! You can even look at it with interest and smile and say: "Look, the ants are having a fight." Well, to the titanic forces of the universe, men fighting on earth are like ants fighting, it is nothing at all. You must not judge things according to the measure of human consciousness.... For man Nature is a monstrous thing. It is so formidable, all the forces at her disposal, all the movements she creates. And what we know is only what is happening on earth! You know, directly or indirectly, by a kind of speculative knowledge, what is happening in the rest of the universe; but these are conflicts and plays of forces that are formidable in proportion to human consciousness. These are things that in comparison with human duration last almost eternally. So, in time it is immensity, in space it is immensity, and for the human consciousness it is something almost incomprehensible. But to these forces, human dimensions and movements have truly almost the same proportions as (perhaps are even less than) the consciousness of the swarming ant-world for us; it is the same thing. There are Nordic legends — Swedish and Norwegian — about these mighty universal Titans who are like that. And so stories are told naturally so that children may understand. It is said that there were two Titans sitting on some summit in the universe, not on earth, and then one Titan breathed a sigh. Then a thousand years pass, and the other asks, "Why do you sigh?" Another thousand years pass and the first one replies: "I am bored!" Yet another thousand years pass.... They try to give an idea. Probably the Titans took some hundreds of years to say, "I am bored." It is a question of proportions!

Is it not possible, by yogic force, to prevent the body from being rigid?

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It is possible. When you do gymnastics, is it not to make your body less rigid? And you go on progressing: what you cannot do the first year, you are able to do after a few years. There are people who obtain an almost total suppleness, those, for example, who do Asanas. Yes, one can obtain almost complete suppleness. But an ordinary man, if he tried to do these exercises, would break something in him. Well, it happens like that. With the mind, it is the same thing. It is through gymnastic exercises that you make yourself supple. It is a question of discipline, of development.

Suppose a man endeavours in this life to become very intelligent, but if in the next life he is born an idiot, what is the use of all these efforts?

No, I spoke a little briefly, but it is not that. His psychic being is not stupid! Granting, for example, that the psychic being has had the experience of a man who was a writer and could translate his experience through books and speeches; thus he covered a particular field of experience due to the associations and circumstances in which this being lived. But there is a field of experience he misses. For example, he says: "I have lived with my brain, with the reactions of an intellectual to life, now I want to live with my feeling." For usually this over-activity of the intellect in ordinary life diminishes very much the capacity of feeling. Therefore in order to have another field of experience, of development, he renounces his intellectual height; he is no longer a genius, a writer of genius, he becomes an ordinary man, but with a remarkable heart, very kind, very generous. I said "idiot", but it is a question of comparison. It is not rare, for example, that a psychic being which has reached its maximum growth, after having enjoyed the experiences of a ruling authority (of all that the life of an emperor or king may bring) may want to be able to work in an obscure life, without being fettered all the time by governmental pomps, and may very well choose to be

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born in quite an ordinary environment, an ordinary bourgeois family, in the most mediocre conditions, so as to have that kind of incognito which will allow it to work without being hampered by all the necessities of governmental display that are binding on one who is at the head of a country. So if you look at the thing from one point of view, you say: "How is it? what is this downfall?" It is not a downfall. It is meeting the problem from another angle, from another point of view. For the consciousness (I mean the true consciousness, the divine consciousness) success or failure are the same, glory or mediocrity are the same. What is important is the growth of the consciousness. And certain conditions that appear very favourable to human beings can be very unfavourable for the growth of the consciousness.... You may look at yourself. Naturally, if you are careful to be always at the height of your being, you do not fall into this error. But with ordinary thought, with ordinary reaction, you judge everything by success or failure, but that is the last way of judging, for it is the most artificial, the most external, that which is the very contrary of truth. In human life as it is at present organised, not once in a million can one find the true value in the forefront, recognised. Usually a little *cabotinage* is always necessary. When a man gets success, great success, whatever it is, in whatever domain it may be, you can be sure that somewhere there is some "cabotinage".

What does cabotinage mean?

This is said of actors who show off in a comedy, but the word is used also in speaking of someone who over-estimates his value, who shows more than he has, displays more than he really has and who thinks above all of getting appreciated. That is the most important thing for him, to be appreciated.

How can memory be increased?

Widen your consciousness and your memory will increase.

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Consciousness is a much higher memory than the mechanical brain memory. I explained this to you one day, not so very long ago. I told you that the mechanical brain memory can forget — can mix up and deform things — but if you are able to establish in you once again the state of consciousness in which you were at a given moment, you have exactly the same experience. And that is the only true memory. And this depends entirely on the development of your consciousness.

You have said that on the material plane “receptivity is mixed with a large amount of resistance.”² What is this resistance?

You have resistances in your body, haven't you? When you want to do an exercise, can you do with your body whatever you want? And when you try to be in good health, does your body always obey? And when you want to learn your lesson, does your brain follow it without difficulty?... That is the resistance, it is all that refuses to progress. And I believe that unfortunately the amount of resistance is much greater than the amount of receptivity. One must work very hard to become receptive.

One does not know — it is perhaps something you will know one day, perhaps you will be told one day, perhaps one will be able to make you understand it — you cannot imagine the immense flood of force that is at your disposal! And generally you do not feel it even. When you feel it, something in you shrinks because it is too much and produces a kind of instinctive fear in your cells; and when you receive it, more than three-quarters of it is thrown away like an overfilled vessel! It gushes out, spills over, because you are not able to hold it. I have met a very large number of people who complained that they were receiving nothing, that is to say, they said they did not have the forces they needed. It was because they were absolutely incapable of

² *Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (16 June 1929).*

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receiving them, and there was a hundred thousand times more force than what they could receive. It is like that. You are all in a sea of tremendous vibrations, and you are not at all aware of it because you are not receptive. And there is such a resistance in you that if something succeeds in entering, three quarters of what enters is thrown out violently because you are not able to contain it.... I do not speak of this usually, but since we are talking about the subject, I am telling you. And perhaps one day I shall give you examples of it. It is something unbelievable. For example, just take the consciousness of the Forces, like the force of love, the force of understanding or the force of creation (for everything, it is the same: the force of protection, the force of growth, all that, and the power for progress, for everything); take Consciousness, simply this Consciousness which surrounds everything, enters into everything, which is everywhere, which is in everything.... Well, it is almost felt as a violence which seeks to impose itself upon the being that is unable to receive or bear it. And I am speaking of the very best; but in everyone there is a part more or less big, more or less important which does not yet have the goodwill, which is just on the border-line of bad will and does not want at any cost and rejects what is there. But if one were open and simply breathed in — nothing more, if one did that only — one would breathe in the Consciousness, the Light, the Understanding, the Force, the Love and all the rest. And all that is wasted upon Earth because the Earth is not ready to take it. *Voilà.*

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"Each spot of the body is symbolical of an inner movement; there is there a world of subtle correspondences. But this is a long and complex subject and we cannot enter into its details just now. The particular place in the body affected by an illness is an index to the nature of the inner disharmony that has taken place. It points to the origin, it is a sign of the cause of the ailment. It reveals too the nature of the resistance that prevents the whole being from advancing at the same high speed. It indicates the treatment and the cure. If one could perfectly understand where the mistake is, find out what has been unreceptive, open that part and put the force and the light there, it would be possible to re-establish in a moment the harmony that has been disturbed and the illness would immediately go."

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Why is "each spot of the body symbolical of an inner movement"?

Because the whole physical world is the symbol of universal movements. So our body is the symbol of our inner movements. The whole world, the whole physical world is like a crystallisation — it is a materialisation, a crystallisation — of the movements in other planes of the universe. It is like the end of a process, it is as though a projection on something that retains the image, fixes the image. Therefore, at every point it is the same thing as in the whole material universe.

The material is a plane, isn't it?

Yes, it is a final result. There is an increasing materiality and a

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decreasing materiality, and the physical plane is at the centre: it is like a screen on which all the intervening vibrations are projected and held, as upon a screen — it is an image, an image of all that is happening. We notice it because it is a thing done, something concrete. It is as though you viewed the whole universe as a movement of force and this movement of force were projected till it met a screen and on the screen it made an image, and this image on the screen is the physical world. And it is a mere image. The physical world which everyone takes as the only reality is simply an image. It is the image of all that happens in what we call the invisible. It becomes visible to us because there is a screen which intervenes and stops the vibrations and that produces an image. If there were no such screen the vibrations would move on and nothing would be seen. And yet all the movements would exist. But for us they would be invisible, if there were no screen to stop the vibrations.

For the ordinary consciousness it is the image alone that is true, and what happens behind it is more or less problematical, but in the true consciousness, all that happens behind or before is the true thing and what one sees externally is only an image, that is to say, a projection on a screen, of something which exists altogether independently. So, our body represents a small fragment in this set of images that is projected and it is a fragment which expresses exactly all the vibrations of the inner state corresponding to this little point that is the body.

What is the cause of illnesses in animals?

I think, as in men, so in animals, there are as many causes as there are illnesses. These are perhaps psychological movements, for animals have psychological movements. They are perhaps accidents, for there is a whole domain of accidents. In fact, scientists say that all diseases, even death, are always accidental. It is not a normal condition. So, for animals, it may be that, and it is perhaps also a psychological condition.

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For animals who live with man, it is a sure fact. What they have gained from this, these poor creatures, is to become as sensitive and unbalanced as men, without getting their intelligence! For example, animals possess a very sure instinct; you put a cow in a field where there are all kinds of grasses — good and bad, and some which are even poisonous; but never will a cow touch a bad and poisonous herb. Never. With the tip of its tongue it chooses quite surely what is good and leaves the rest aside. But if you cut the grass and mix up the good and bad together and you put that in the manger before the cow, it will eat up everything and poison itself, for it has a kind of trust — an ignorant trust — that what is placed there before it is for eating, and so it loses its instinct. Animals in their natural state do not ever overeat, they eat according to their hunger and if some food is left over and they do not want it to be eaten by others, they hide it, bury it; they hide it with great care so that they may find it again when they are hungry. But an animal living with man loses this instinct and eats not only all that is given but all that's left within its reach. I lived for some time in a small town in the south of France. There was a grocer there who kept goats and one of them had become quite greedy. He had just received a barrel of molasses — you know what molasses is?... How do you call it here? It is crude sugar, "jaggery". He had received a barrel of jaggery and he opened it — he opened the lid and forgot to put it back. And there it was and the goat was roaming around. The goat thought that it must be quite good since it was left there within its reach! It began to eat it and found it truly excellent. And it went on — as it had lost all its instinct — until literally it fell dead, having eaten too much. Well, a wild animal would never do that. These are the advantages of man's company!

No question?

Then we shall drop the subject. It seems this lady¹ was quite preoccupied with maladies.

¹ The one who put the questions in *Questions and Answers 1929–1931*.

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You said that this physical world was a projection of invisible worlds. Then why should the divine Emanations come into the physical world to transform it? They have only to do the work in the invisible planes; then the projections will be good.

That indeed is a serious question!... You know the image sometimes given to the universe: a serpent biting its tail? And it is taken as the symbol of the infinite, of the universe. Well, it is a fact. In the creation there is a progressive, a greater and greater materialisation. But we could take another image (I am taking an approximate image): the universe is a circle or rather a sphere (but for the convenience of explanation, let us take a circle). There is a progressive descent from the most subtle to the most material. But the most material happens to touch the point of origin of the most subtle. Then, if you understand the image, instead of going all the way round to change matter, it is much more easy to do the thing directly, for the two extremities meet — the extremely subtle and the extremely material touch, since it is a sphere. Hence, instead of doing all that (*Mother draws a circle*), it is much better to do this (*Mother touches the extreme material end of the circle*). In fact, psychologically it is that. The rest will follow quite naturally. If that is done (*Mother touches the same extreme material end*), all the rest will get settled as a matter of course. And it is not even like this! It is precisely for the convenience of work that all has been concentrated or concretised at one point so that instead of having to spread oneself out in the infinite to change things, one can work just on the point that serves as the symbol of the whole universe. And from the occult standpoint, earth (which is nothing from the astronomical standpoint; in the immensity of the astronomical skies, earth is a thing absolutely without interest and without importance), but from the occult and spiritual point of view, earth is the concentrated symbol of the universe. For it is much more easy to work on one point than in a diluted vastness. All

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those who do the work know this. Well, for the convenience and necessity of work, the whole universe has been concentrated and condensed symbolically in a grain of sand which is called Earth. And therefore it is the symbol of everything; all that is to be changed, all that is to be transformed, all that is to be converted is there. This means that if one concentrates on this work and does it there, all the rest will follow automatically, otherwise there will be no end — and no hope.

But that is also why this point appears as particularly bad! Because everything is concentrated. And that can be particularly good also. For always there are the two, the two opposites are together. And always the best borders on the worst, or the worst borders on the best (it depends on the side you look from). But it is because of the worst that you can find the best and it is because of the best that you can transform the worst — the two act and react upon each other.... That was published in the *Bulletin*: the “Evil Persona”.² It is always said that there is a dark double of all the stars and a luminous double of all the planets. In the occult way, it is said that there is a luminous earth. All that is the experience of the luminous earth. Sri Aurobindo has described the experience.

What experience?

² “What you say about the “Evil Persona” interests me greatly as it answers to my consistent experience that a person greatly endowed for the work has, always or almost always — perhaps one ought not to make a too rigid universal rule about these things — a being attached to him, sometimes appearing like a part of him, which is just the contradiction of the thing he centrally represents in the work to be done. Or, if it is not there at first, not bound to his personality, a force of this kind enters into his environment as soon as he begins his movement to realise. Its business seems to be to oppose, to create stumbling and wrong conditions, in a word, to set before him the whole problem of the work he has started to do. It would seem as if the problem could not, in the occult economy of things, be solved otherwise than by the predestined instrument making the difficulty his own. That would explain many things that seem very disconcerting on the surface.”

Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL Vol. 24, p. 1660

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It is an experience that I had and I wrote about it to Sri Aurobindo. He answered me saying that it was an experience of Vedic times, an experience that happened in the luminous double of the earth.... That will come out somewhere one day.³

³ The experience referred to is one which the Mother had on 26 November 1915. This has been described in her *Prayers and Meditations*. Sri Aurobindo's reply to the Mother, dated 31 December 1915, is published in *The Mother*, SABCL Vol. 25, p. 384.

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"There is a plane in the mind where the memory of everything is stored and remains always in existence. All mental movements that belong to the life of the earth are memorised and registered in this plane. Those who are capable of going there and care to take the trouble, can read in it and learn anything they choose. But this region must not be mistaken for the supramental levels. And yet to reach even there you must be able to silence the movements of the material or physical mind; you must be able to leave aside all your sensations and put a stop to your ordinary mental movements, whatever they are; you must get out of the vital; you must become free from the slavery of the body. Then only can you enter into that region and see. But if you are sufficiently interested to make this effort, you can arrive there and read what is written in the earth's memory."

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You have said that in order to go to the place where all mental movements belonging to earthly life are recorded and preserved, one must silence the movements of the material and physical mind... and put a stop to ordinary mental movements. If the movements are stopped, what is going to happen? We have to do something or other the whole day long.

No, just for that moment. Not permanently.

Mother, but if one forgets? There is some work to do: at two o'clock one must do this, and at half past ten one must do that; if one forgets...

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No, you don't understand. To go to that place, at the time of going you must be able to completely silence the mind (and all the other things I have mentioned), but just for going there. For example, you decide: "Now, I am going to read such and such a chapter of earth's history", then you lounge comfortably in an easy-chair, you tell people not to disturb you, you go within yourself and completely stop your mind, and you send your mental messenger to that place.... It is preferable to have someone who can guide you there, because otherwise you can lose your way and go elsewhere! And then you go. It is like a very big library with many many small compartments. So you find the compartment corresponding to the information you wish to have. You press a button and it opens. And inside it you find a scroll as it were, a mental formation which unrolls before you like a parchment, and you read. And then you make a note of what you have read and afterwards return quietly into your body with the new knowledge, and you may transcribe physically, if you can, what you have found, and then you get up and start your life as before.... This may take you ten minutes, it may take one hour, it may take half an hour, it depends upon your capacity, but it is important to know the way, as I said, in order not to make a mistake.

Why then don't we do that instead of reading books!

Because very few people would be able to do it, whereas many can read books (there are not many who understand them, but many can read them!). And this is still more difficult than understanding a book.

And if it were taught to children when they are quite young?

It is possible that this might be a better alternative to reading books!

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All that has happened upon earth — from the beginning of the earth till now, all the movements of the mind have been exactly inscribed, all of them. So when you need any accurate information about something, you have only to go there, you find your way. It is a very strange place; it is made as though of small cells, they are like small pigeon-holes; and so, following the shelves and some kind of... how to put it? There are libraries of that kind. Why, I saw a picture shown to us at the cinema, the picture of a library in New York. Well, it is arranged somewhat like that. It is a similar arrangement. It interested me because of that. But instead of being books, these are like small squares. They are all closed. You put your finger, press a button and the thing opens. And then something like a scroll comes out and you unroll it and can read it — all that is written about a subject. There are millions and millions and millions of these. And happily, in the mind, one can go down, one can go up, one can go right on the top. You do not need a ladder!

How does one read? As one reads a book?

Yes, it is a kind of mental perception. It corresponds to that. You see quite, quite well all the description or the information (that depends on what it is). Sometimes they are pictures: it is as though a picture had been preserved. Sometimes it is a story. Sometimes it is simply an answer to a question. All possible and imaginable things recorded mentally are there. You can find many corrections too (exactly of those facts that have been put in books and are not correct). And you need not walk on or climb up: you send along quite simply something like a concentrated mental consciousness and that goes forward and touches the thing. Only, if you do this without completely detaching yourself from your own mental activity, I am afraid you will see only what is in your own head! Instead of seeing the thing as it is, perhaps you take a walk in your own brain and see only what is there — it is a danger. You must be able to silence your

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head absolutely and be completely detached, not to have (for example, when you are looking for the solution of a problem), not to have already in your head the solution that seems to you right or the best or most profitable. That must not be there. You must become absolutely like a blank paper, with nothing on it. And you proceed in that way, with a very sincere aspiration to know the truth, without assuming beforehand that it will be like this or like that; because otherwise you will see only your own formation. The very first condition is that the head must keep completely silent during the time one is observing.

And in order to be more sure (but here one must be fully trained, one must have a very good education), in order to be altogether sure of reporting clearly the knowledge received without deforming it in any way, it is better to say what one sees and what one reads (we say "reads", but rather it is what one perceives), to say it as one perceives it, and it should be someone else who notes it down.... I repeat: You lie quietly stretched in your easy-chair, without moving and altogether quiet, and you send a messenger from your head. Now, someone should be sitting by your side and when you reach the place and open the door and pull out the manuscript (or whatever you like to call it), you begin, instead of reading only with your eyes that are absent, to describe what you see. You acquire the habit of speaking aloud and as you go on observing up there, you speak here. You narrate precisely your journey through those vast halls and how you reached that place and how it had a small mark that was the sign of what you wanted to see. Then you open that little place and pull out the scroll and start reading. And you read it out aloud. And the person who is there, sitting by your side, goes on noting down what you are reading. In this way there is no danger of the thing getting changed when you return. For, the experience is very clear and precise to that part of your being which is there at the moment, but when you come back into the material world as it is, almost always something escapes and this does not escape when you speak directly at the

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time you are at work. So all that means very many conditions to fulfil; it is not so easy as taking a book in the library and reading it! This is within the reach of everybody. That is a little more difficult to accomplish.

*What is the theory of relativity?*¹

(*Mother turns to a disciple and mathematician*) Pavitra! Will you please explain that to these children?

Pavitra: *It means that the description of the universe varies with each observer — to put it in one sentence.*

Is that all! Why is there so much fuss over this discovery?

Pavitra: *It is a revolution, Mother!*

It is a revolution? That what one sees depends on who sees? Ah! Well...

Pavitra: *What one measures depends upon the physical*

¹ “Although it may be true in a general way and in a certain sense that a Yogi can know all things and can answer all questions from his own field of vision and consciousness, yet it does not follow that there are no questions whatever of any kind to which he would not or could not answer. A Yogi who has the direct knowledge, the knowledge of the true truth of things, would not care or perhaps would find it difficult to answer questions that belong entirely to the domain of human mental constructions. It may be, he could or would not wish to solve problems and difficulties you might put to him which touch only the illusions of things and their appearances. The working of his knowledge is not in the mind; if you put him some silly mental query of that character, he probably would not answer. The very common conception that you can put any ignorant question to him as to some superschoolmaster or demand from him any kind of information past, present or future and that he is bound to answer, is a foolish idea. It is as inept as the expectation from the spiritual man of feats and miracles that would satisfy the vulgar external mind and leave it gaping with wonder.”

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universe, from the point of view of the physical sciences.

Physical sciences, yes. For measuring the universe, each one measures it in his own way.

Pavitra: *But then, complementary to that, it has been found that behind there is something independent of the observer.*

Ah! they have “discovered” that? (*laughter*) A still greater revolution!... (*loud laughter*) Good.

Mother, you have said² there are many intermediary planes between the mental and the supramental, and that if an ordinary man came in contact with one of these intermediate planes, he would be dazzled. Why then, since man is in such an undeveloped condition, do we speak of the descent of the supramental plane, instead of the descent of the intermediate planes?

For a very simple reason, because till now the whole physical, material world, the whole earth (let us take the earth) has been ruled by forces and the consciousness that come from what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind. Even what men call God is a force, a power coming from the Overmind and the whole universe was under the rule of the Overmind. To get there one has to pass through many intermediate planes and very few people can reach there without getting dazzled. But what Sri Aurobindo

² “Men are too easily inclined to believe that they have climbed into regions quite divine when they have only gone above the average level. There are many stages between the ordinary human mind and the Supermind, many grades and many intervening planes. If an ordinary man were to get into direct contact even with one of these intermediate planes, he would be dazzled and blinded, would be crushed under the weight of the sense of immensity or would lose his balance; and yet it is not the Supermind.”

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said is that now the time for the “rule” of the Overmind is coming to its end and is going to be replaced by the rule of the Supermind. All who have had spiritual experiences and have discovered the Divine and become united with Him, know what it is, the Overmind. But what Sri Aurobindo says is that beyond the Overmind there is something and that it is now the turn of this something to come and rule the earth, to manifest upon earth and rule the earth. Therefore, there is no need to speak of the Overmind, for many people have spoken about it already and have had the experience of it; whereas this is something new that is going to manifest itself in a new way and nobody has been aware of it before. That is why. The old accounts—there’s no lack of people who have experienced these things or described them, or of books written on the subject. There is no need to repeat once more what others have said. Sri Aurobindo came to say something new. And it is precisely because people are unable to come out of the experiences they have known and heard being spoken of, that they try to identify this Force which Sri Aurobindo called supramental with their experience of the intermediary worlds including the Overmind. For they cannot conceive that there could be something else.... Sri Aurobindo always said that his Yoga began where the former Yogas ended, that to be able to realise his Yoga it was necessary first of all to have reached the extreme limit of what the older Yogas had realised, that is to say, the perception of the Divine, the union, the identification with the Divine. But that Divine, Sri Aurobindo says, is the Divine of the Overmind which is already something quite unthinkable, in comparison with the human consciousness, because even to reach there one must pass through several planes and in these planes one feels dazzled.

There are beings of the vital, if they appeared to men, or to say things more exactly, whenever they have appeared to men, men have taken them for the supreme God—these vital entities! If you like, we shall call that a disguise but it is a very successful disguise, because those who saw it were thoroughly convinced

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that they had seen the supreme Godhead. And yet, they were but beings of the vital. And these entities of the Overmind, these overmental gods are mighty entities in comparison with our humanity. When human beings come in relation with them, they become truly bewildered.

There is however a kind of Grace which makes it possible for us to profit by the experience of others. It is something similar to the way of teaching the sciences. If each scientist had to do all over again all the experiments of the past in order to arrive at a new discovery, go over all that the others had found, he would have to spend his whole life doing that and there would be no time left to make his new discovery! Now one doesn't need to do all that: one opens a book and sees the results and starting from there can proceed further. Well, Sri Aurobindo wanted to do the same thing. He tells you where you can find the results of what others before him have found — the experiments they made and their results — and where you stand: historically where you stand in the spiritual history of the world. And then he takes you from there, and after the basis has been firmly laid for you, he makes you climb higher up the mountain.

So, in the Ashram, there should be only those who have reached the overmental level? Instead of that...

I don't want to speak of those who were there at the beginning, what they knew or did not know and their experience. But you all, my children, at what age did you come here? That was not an age to have realised the Overmind!

If you had around you people like Vivekananda, for example, your work would be more easy, wouldn't it? Instead of having unrefined stuff like us? (laughter)

Probably they would have been more refractory!... For what is most difficult is to convince someone who has already had a

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realisation. He believes he is above all progress.

Not necessarily. It is not necessarily someone who has some experience who is most advanced. He lacks an element of simplicity, modesty, and the plasticity that comes from the fact that one is not yet totally developed. As one grows, something crystallises in the head; it gets more and more fixed and unless you try very hard you finish by becoming fossilised. This is what usually happens to people, particularly those who have tried for some realisation and succeeded in it or those who have come to believe they have reached the goal. In any case, it was their personal goal. They have reached it, they have attained. It is done, they remain there; they settle there, they say "that's it." And they do no more any more. So, after that they may live ten years more, or twenty or thirty, they will not budge. They are there, they will stay there. Such people lack all the suppleness of stuff that's necessary for going further and progressing. They are stuck. They are very good objects to be put in a museum, but not for doing work. They are like samples to show what can be done but they are not the stuff to do more. For me personally, I admit I prefer for my work someone who knows very little, has not laboured too much, but who has a great aspiration, much goodwill and who feels in himself this flame, this need for progressing. He may know very little, may have realised still less, but if he has that within him, it is good stuff with which one can go very far, much further. For one must know the way (it is the same thing here as with your library), one must know the way to go. Well, usually in life when you climb a mountain or go to an unknown land, you look for a man who has been there, who is a guide, and you ask him to direct you. It is the same thing. If you follow the guide, you can go much quicker than someone else who has made much effort, found his own way and is usually quite proud of himself and, in any case, has the feeling of having come to the end, reached the goal he aimed at, finally arrived — and he stops, settles down. And he does not move any more.

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Naturally, at the beginning there were no children here and children were not accepted, children were all refused. It was only after the war that children were taken. But I do not regret that they have been accepted. For I believe there is much more stuff for the future among children who know nothing than among those grown-ups who believe they know everything.... I do not know if you have much knowledge of sculpture. But to do sculpture, you have to take some clay, soak it with water; it must be finely powdered clay, and you soak it with water and make a paste. You have to keep it wet all the time and you make a statue or whatever you want out of that. When it is finished, you fire it so that it sets. And after that—indeed after that—it cannot move any more. If you want to change something, you must break it and make another. For otherwise, as it is, it is rigid, as hard and stiff as stone.... Something similar happens in life. You must not attain something and then remain crystallised, fossilised, immobilised. For otherwise you have to break it, take it to pieces, or else you can do nothing with it any longer.

So long as one remains thus clay-like, very soft, very malleable, not yet formed, not aware of being formed, something can be done. And as long as one remains a child... it is a blissful state. I was saying this yesterday, children have only one idea, to become grown-ups, and they do not know that when they are grown up, they will have lost three-fourths of their worth which consists in being something which can still be developed, formed, something malleable, progressive, which need not be broken into bits so that it may progress. There are people who are compelled to take a whole turn around the mountain, in that way, from the foot to the top, and they take an entire lifetime to reach the top. There are others who know the road, the shortest cut that can be taken by which one can go straight to the top. And then, once up there, they are still full of youthfulness and energy and they can see the horizon and the next mountain. On the contrary, the others are conscious of having done a considerable

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work by turning round and round and spending their whole life to reach the summit. But as for you, my children, it is being tried here to take you quite at the bottom and make you go up by the funicular railway right to the top, the shortest cut. And when you are on the top, you will have the vision of the spaces before you and you will be able to choose the mountain you wish to climb.

Above all, do not be in a hurry not to be a child any more! One must be a child all one's life, as much as one can, as long as one can. Be happy, joyful, content to be a child and remain a child, plastic stuff for shaping. *Voilà*.

Can't you change someone who has already made progress? Can't one change men who are getting old?

It can be done, it can be done. It is being done. It can be done but it is much more difficult and the more they are convinced of having attained something, the more difficult it is.

That can be done, it has been done, but it is much more difficult. And sometimes it takes more time.

Why were children not accepted before the war?

Ah, my children, it is very simple. Because where there are children, you have to be busy most of the time with them only! Children are very absorbing creatures. Everything must be organised for them, everything must be arranged in view of their welfare, and the whole aspect of life changes. Children are most important personages. When they are there, everything turns around them. And the entire organisation of the Ashram has completely changed. Formerly, it was quite different. First of all there was a kind of austerity that cannot be imposed upon children. There are simplicities and austerties of life that can be imposed upon grown-up people, because they are told: "Take it or leave it: if you cannot bear it, if you do not like it, well,

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you may go away. This is what it should be like; if you do not want it, you may leave the place, the door is always open.” But with a child... What right have you to demand of a child things that have no normal relationship with its growth? Children must have reached a certain maturity before they are able to make a choice. You cannot compel them to do a thing before they have the capacity to choose. You have to give them quite naturally all that they need. And this changes life completely. And I knew that very well. I already had the experience of what the life of solitary people or a group of solitary people is like, and of a life in which children are admitted. It is absolutely, totally different. You have no right to demand of a person something when he has no free choice; and so long as a person is not formed, has not attained a certain maturity, you cannot make him choose. When one reaches this maturity, then one chooses. And the children here have not come of themselves. Most of you were not taller than a boot—when you came here, how old were you?... One cannot tell them: “You have chosen, therefore you have to take it or leave it, either you do this or you go away.” They have been brought here, hence it is one’s duty to give them what they need; and the needs of children are not at all the same as those of big people. It is much more complicated.

Now things are different, because now people are not told: “You are going to come here to do yoga”; they are told: “You are going to try to learn about the conditions under which earthly life can be bettered.” So people come and study. When one thinks he knows what he wants to learn, he goes away. It is not the same thing. And it is not the same conditions as when one comes with a definite and single aim like realising the Divine in his physical life and nothing else in the world counts for him but that. In order to choose you must at least know a little the elements to choose from. And for that you must have a certain inner formation, a certain culture. And you certainly do not have that when you are five years old—except some; some among you (more than one would believe) knew very well why they

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had come, although they could not formulate it in words. They felt it very intensely. And when their parents tried to take them away, they refused stubbornly, saying: "No, no, I want to remain here." Even at the age of five, although they could not know in their head the reason why, because the brain was not formed. But the psychic consciousness was there, and they could feel. Well, these children are of an infinitely higher stuff than that of people who have already had three-fourths of their head blunted by the education they have been given in ordinary schools and who come here quite convinced that they know many things, that they are well acquainted with life. They have a formed character and have acquired many bad habits. There, then.

Are remembrance and memory the same thing?

Not necessarily. Memory is a mental phenomenon, purely mental. Remembrance can be a phenomenon of consciousness. One can remember in all the domains of one's being: one can remember vitally, one can remember physically, one can remember psychically, one can remember mentally also. But memory is a purely mental phenomenon. Memory can, first of all, be deformed and it can also be effaced, one can forget. The phenomenon of consciousness is very precise; if you can take the consciousness back to the state in which it was, things come back exactly as they were. It is as though you relived the same moment. You can relive it once, twice, ten times, a hundred times, but you relive a phenomenon of consciousness. It is very different from the memory of a fact which you inscribe somewhere in your brain. And if the cerebral associations are disturbed in the least (for there are many things in your brain and it is a very delicate instrument), if there is the slightest disturbance, your memory goes out of order. And then holes are formed and you forget. On the other hand, if you know how to bring back a particular state of consciousness in you, it comes back exactly the same as it was. Now, a remembrance can also be purely

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mental and it may be a continuation of cerebral activities, but that is mental remembrance. And you have remembrances in feeling, remembrances in sensation....

The other day, you said: To enlarge your memory, you must widen your consciousness. Is it the same thing for remembrance?

I meant to say that a phenomenon of memory should be replaced by a phenomenon of consciousness. I do not know in what sense I used the word memory the other day. It can be only in this sense.

Memory in studying.

Well, yes, it is that. That is what I meant: replace a purely mental memory by states of consciousness. That is exactly what I wanted to say. For, if you try to learn a thing by heart, after a time you are sure to forget it. Or else there are holes: you remember one thing and you do not remember another. But if you associate a particular knowledge with a phenomenon of consciousness, you can always bring it back and the knowledge will come back as it was.

Voilà, au revoir my children.

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"The method by which you will be most successful depends on the consciousness you have developed and the character of the forces you are able to bring into play. You can live in the consciousness of the completed cure or change and by the force of your inner formation slowly bring about the outward change. Or if you know and have the vision of the force that is able to effect these things and if you have the skill to handle it, you can call it down and apply it in the parts where its action is needed, and it will work out the change. Or, again, you can present your difficulty to the Divine and ask of It the cure, putting confidently your trust in the Divine Power."

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What is this "consciousness of the completed cure"?

This does not mean that there is a specific consciousness of the completed cure. It means: "To live in a state of consciousness that's conformable to a complete cure." How shall I explain it?... You have in your mind a picture or an image or formation which realises in itself all the necessary relations and elements for the cure to exist and be total. This is called "having the consciousness of a complete cure". It does not mean that there is a state of consciousness which is in itself a complete cure, and that if you get this consciousness, well, you get the cure. It is not like that. Have you understood the difference?

"In some the aspiration moves on the mental levels or in the vital field; some have a spiritual aspiration. On the quality of the aspiration depends the force that answers

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and the work that it comes to do. To make yourself blank in meditation creates an inner silence; it does not mean that you have become nothing or have become a dead and inert mass. Making yourself an empty vessel, you invite that which shall fill it. It means that you release the stress of your inner consciousness towards realisation. The nature of the consciousness and the degree of its stress determine the forces that you bring into play and whether they shall help and fulfil or fail or even harm and hinder."

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What is the difference between mental aspiration, vital aspiration and spiritual aspiration?

In what way do you aspire in the mind and in the vital or aspire spiritually?

A mental aspiration means that the thought-power aspires to have knowledge, for instance, or else to have the power to express itself well or have clear ideas, a logical reasoning. One may aspire for many things; that all the faculties and capacities of the mind may be developed and placed at the service of the Divine. This is a mental aspiration.

Or you may have an aspiration in the vital; if you have desires or troubles, storms, inner difficulties, you may aspire for peace, to be quite impartial, without desire or preference, to be a good docile instrument without any personal whims, always at the Divine's disposal. This is a vital aspiration.

You may have a physical aspiration also; that the body may feel the need to acquire a kind of equipoise in which all the parts of the being will be well balanced, and that you may have the power to hold off illness at a distance or overcome it fast when it enters trickily, and that the body may always function normally, harmoniously, in perfect health. That is a physical aspiration.

A spiritual aspiration means having an intense need to unite

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with the Divine, to give oneself totally to the Divine, not to live outside the divine Consciousness so that the Divine may be everything for you in your integral being, and you feel the need of a constant communion with Him, of the sense of his presence, of his guidance in all that you do, and of his harmonising all the movements of the being. That is a spiritual aspiration.

Mother, does aspiration come from the psychic?

Not necessarily. Each part of the being can have its own aspiration.

How can the physical manage to aspire, since it is the mind that thinks?

As long as it is the mind that thinks, your physical is something that's three-fourths inert and without its own consciousness. There is a physical consciousness proper, a consciousness of the body; the body is conscious of itself, and it has its own aspiration. So long as one thinks of one's body, one is not in one's physical consciousness. The body has a consciousness that's quite personal to it and altogether independent of the mind. The body is completely aware of its own functioning or its own equilibrium or disequilibrium, and it becomes absolutely conscious, in quite a precise way, if there is a disorder somewhere or other, and (how shall I put it?) it is in contact with that and feels it very clearly, even if there are no external symptoms. The body is aware if the whole working is harmonious, well balanced, quite regular, functioning as it should; it has that kind of plenitude, a sense of plenitude, of joy and strength — something like the joy of living, acting, moving in an equilibrium full of life and energy. Or else the body can be aware that it is ill-treated by the vital and the mind and that this harms its own equilibrium, and it suffers from this. That may produce a complete disequilibrium in it. And so on.

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One can develop one's physical consciousness so well that even if one is fully exteriorised, even if the vital goes completely out of the body, the body has a personal, independent consciousness which enables it to move, to do all kinds of very simple things without the vital's being there, quite independently. The body can learn how to speak: the mind and the vital may be outside it, very far away, busy elsewhere, but due to the link joining them with matter, they can still find expression through a body wherein there is no mind or vital, and which yet can learn to speak and repeat what the others say. The body can move; I don't mean that it can exert much, but it can move. It can do small, very simple things. It can write, for instance, learn how to write as it can learn to speak. It does speak: a little (how to put it?) slowly, with a little difficulty, but still it can speak clearly (sufficiently clearly) for one to understand. And yet the mind and vital may have gone out altogether, may be completely outside. There is a body-consciousness.

And so, when one has developed this body-consciousness, one can have a very clear perception of the opposition between the different kinds of consciousness. When the body needs something and is aware that this is what it needs, and the vital wants something else and the mind yet another, well, there may very well be a discussion among them, and contradictions and conflicts. And one can discern very clearly what the poise of the body is, the need of the body in itself, and in what way the vital interferes and destroys this equilibrium most often and harms the development so much, because it is ignorant. And when the mind comes in, it creates yet another disorder which is added to the one between the vital and the physical, by introducing its ideas and norms, its principles and rules, its laws and all that, and as it doesn't take into account exactly the needs of the other, it wants to do what everybody does. Human beings have a much more delicate and precarious health than animals because their mind intervenes and disturbs the equilibrium. The body, left to itself, has a very sure instinct. For

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instance, never will the body if left to itself eat when it doesn't need to or take something which will be harmful to it. And it will sleep when it needs to sleep, it will act when it needs to act. The instinct of the body is very sure. It is the vital and the mind which disturb it: one by its desires and caprices, the other by its principles, dogmas, laws and ideas. And unfortunately, in civilisation as it is understood, with the kind of education given to children, this sure instinct of the body is completely destroyed: it is the rest that dominate. And naturally things happen as they do: one eats things that are harmful, one doesn't take rest when one needs to or sleeps too much when it is not necessary or does things one shouldn't do and spoils one's health completely.

Sometimes, Mother, when children are interested in something, they don't want to go to bed, then what should be done? Just a few minutes earlier they said they were sleepy, and then they start playing and say they don't want to go to bed.

They shouldn't be allowed to play when they are sleepy. This is exactly the intrusion of vital movements. A child who doesn't live much with older people (it is bad for children to live much among older people), a child left to itself will sleep spontaneously whatever it may be doing, the moment it needs to sleep. Only, when children are used to living with older people, well, they catch all the habits of the grown-ups. Specially when they are told: "Oh! you can't do this because you are too young! When you are older, you can do it. You can't eat this because you are small, when you are bigger you will be able to eat it. At this particular time you must go to bed because you are young...." So, naturally, they have that idea that they must grow up at any cost or at least look grown-up!

"The very intensity of your faith may mean that the

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Divine has already chosen that the thing it points to shall be done. An unshakable faith is a sign of the presence of the Divine Will, an evidence of what shall be.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (23 June 1929)

A dynamic faith and a great trust, aren’t they the same thing?

Not necessarily. One should know of what stuff the faith and the trust are made. Because, for instance, if you live normally, under quite normal conditions — without having extravagant ideas and a depressing education — well, through all your youth and usually till you are about thirty, you have an absolute trust in life. If, for example, you are not surrounded by people who, as soon as you have a cold in the head, get into a flurry and rush to the doctor and give you medicines, if you are in normal surroundings and happen to have something — an accident or a slight illness — there is this certainty in the body, this absolute trust that it will be all right: “It is nothing, it will pass off. It is sure to go. I shall be quite well tomorrow or in a few days. It will surely be cured” — whatever you may have caught. That is indeed the normal condition of the body. An absolute trust that all life lies before it and that all will be well. And this helps enormously. One gets cured nine times out of ten, one gets cured very quickly with this confidence: “It is nothing; what is it after all? Just an accident, it will pass off, it is nothing.” And there are people who keep it for a very long time, a very long time, a kind of confidence — nothing can happen to them. Their life is all before them, fully, and nothing can happen to them. And what will happen to them is of no importance at all: all will be well, necessarily; they have the whole of life before them. Naturally, if you live in surroundings where there are morbid ideas and people pass their time recounting disastrous and catastrophic things, then you may think wrongly. And if you think wrongly, this reacts on your body. Otherwise, the body as it is can keep

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this confidence till the age of forty or fifty — it depends upon people — some know how to live a normal, balanced life. But the body is quite confident about its life. It is only if thought comes in and brings all kinds of morbid and unhealthy imaginations, as I said, that it changes everything. I have seen instances like that: children who had these little accidents one has when running and playing about: they did not even think about it. And it disappeared immediately. I have seen others whose family has drummed into them since the time they could understand, that everything is dangerous, that there are microbes everywhere, that one must be very careful, that the least wound may prove disastrous, that one must be altogether on one's guard and take great care that nothing serious happens.... So, they must have their wounds dressed, must be washed with disinfectants, and there they sit wondering: "What is going to happen to me? Oh! I may perhaps get tetanus, a septic fever...." Naturally, in such cases one loses confidence in life and the body feels the effects keenly. Three-fourths of its resistance disappears. But normally, naturally, it is the body which knows that it must remain healthy, and it knows it has the power to react. And if something happens, it tells this something: "It is nothing, it will go away, don't think about it, it is over"; and it does go.

That of course is absolute trust.

Now, you are speaking of "dynamic faith". Dynamic faith is something different. If one has within him faith in the divine grace, that the divine grace is watching over him, and that no matter what happens the divine grace is there, watching over him, one may keep this faith all one's life and always; and with this one can pass through all dangers, face all difficulties, and nothing stirs, for you have the faith and the divine grace is with you. It is an infinitely stronger, more conscious, more lasting force which does not depend upon the conditions of your physical build, does not depend upon anything except the divine grace alone, and hence it leans on the Truth and nothing can shake it. It is very different.

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Sometimes children ask us why we are here. What should we tell them?

That depends upon their age, my child, and upon what they are. It depends upon their sincerity. You can't give the same answer to everyone.

But do the tiny tots sometimes ask?... Do the youngest ask why they are here?

Not the youngest — Purnima, Tarulata.

At that age, already it's the age when one questions and doubts.

The very tiny ones, if they ask this, it is wonderful. There is only one very simple answer to give them: "My children, it is because this is the divine will. It is due to the divine grace that you are here. Be happy, be calm, be at peace, do not question, all will be well." And when they grow older they already begin to reason, then it is no longer so well, no longer so easy. But that depends, as I said, that depends upon how intelligent they are, how great is their opening. There are those who are predestined, who are here because they should be here. With these it is easy. You have only to tell them: "My children, it is because you belong to a future which is being built up, and it is here that it is being built." For them it is very simple, it is true. There are those who are here because their parents are here, for no other reason. So it is difficult to tell them that, unless you tell them quite simply: "Because your father and mother are here."

But how can we understand?

Ah! that indeed depends upon you.

The first thing is to learn how to know by identity. That is indispensable when one has the responsibility for others. To learn how to guide other people, the first indispensable step is to know how to enter into their minds so as to know them

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— not to project one's thought, imagine what they are, but go out of oneself and enter into them, to know what is happening there. Then, in this way, one knows them because one is them. When one knows only oneself in others, that means one knows nothing. One may be completely mistaken. One imagines it is like this or that — one judges by appearances or else through mental preferences, preconceived ideas; that is to say, one knows nothing. But there is one condition in which one doesn't even need to know, to try to know what somebody is like: one can't do otherwise but feel what he is, for he is a projection of oneself. And unless one knows how to do that, one can never do what is necessary for people — unless one feels as they feel, thinks as they think, unless one is able to enter into them as though one were they themselves. That is the only way. If you try to know with a small active mind, you will never know anything — nor by looking at people and telling yourself: "Why, he does this in this way and that way, so he must be like that." That is impossible.

So, the first task of those who have a responsibility — for instance, those who are in charge of educating other children, taking care of others, from rulers to teachers and monitors — their first task is to learn how to identify themselves with the others, to feel as they do. Then one knows what one should do. One keeps one's inner light, keeps one's consciousness where it ought to be, very high above, in the light, and at the same time gets identified, and so one feels what they are, what their reactions are, what their thoughts, and one holds that before the light one has: one succeeds in thinking out perfectly well what should be done for them. You will tell each one what he needs to hear, you will act with each one as is necessary to make him understand. And that is why it is a wonderful grace to have the responsibility for a certain number of people, for that obliges you to make the most essential progress. And I hasten to tell you that ninety-nine times out of a hundred, people don't make it. But that is exactly why things are in such a bad way. Particularly those who have the responsibility of governing a country — this

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is the last thing they think about! They are very eager rather to keep their way of seeing and their way of feeling, and fiercely refrain from realising the needs of those over whom they rule. But indeed one can see that the result is not up to much; so far it is evident that one can't say that governments have been remarkable institutions. It is the same thing on all levels: there are small governments, there are big governments. But the laws are the same, for all. And unless, when giving a lesson, you are able, there and then, to take in the entire atmosphere, to gather the vibrations around people, put them all together, keep all that before you, and become aware of what you can do with this stuff (with the vibrations you can spread, the forces you can give out, those which will be received, those which will be assimilated), unless you do that, mostly you too are wasting your time. In order to do the least work, one must make a lot of progress.

"The supramental does not take interest in mental things in the same way as the mind. It takes its own interest in all the movements of the universe, but it is from a different point of view and with a different vision. The world presents to it an entirely different appearance; there is a reversal of outlook and everything is seen from there as other than what it seems to the mind and often even the opposite. Things have another meaning; their aspect, their motion and process, everything about them, are watched with other eyes. Everything here is followed by the supermind; the mind movements and not less the vital, the material movements, all the play of the universe has for it a very deep interest, but of another kind."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (23 June 1929)

In what does the supermind take interest?

It takes interest in the transformation of the world—in the descent of forces in the material world and its transformation, in

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its preparation so that it may be able to receive the supramental forces. And it is conscious of the difference between the world as it is and the world as it ought to be. Every moment it sees the gulf between what is and what should be, between the truth and the falsehood that is expressed. And constantly it keeps this vision of the Truth which broods over the world, so that as soon as there is a little opening, it may descend and manifest itself. And what to the ordinary awareness seems quite natural is for it usually a play of obscure, ignorant, altogether unconscious forces. And it does not find that at all natural. It finds that a detestable accident and tries with all its strength to remedy it. It seeks, looks, and if there is any receptivity anywhere, it intensifies its action. It does not see men in their outward appearance but as vibrations more or less receptive and more or less dark or luminous, and wherever it sees a light it projects its force so that it may have its full effect. And instead of treating each being like a pawn on a chess-board, a small, well-defined person, it sees how forces enter, go out, stir, move and make all things move, how vibrations act. And it sees those vibrations which ascend and lead to progress and it sees those vibrations which cast you further and further into the darkness, which make you go down. And at times someone comes to you with ready-made words which he has learnt generally from books, but nevertheless, full of aspiration and goodwill, and he is answered by a strong rebuff and told that he should try to be sincere—he does not understand. This is because the Force sees that there is no sincerity—the Force does not see the words, does not hear the words, doesn't even see the ideas in the head but only the state of consciousness, whether the state of consciousness is sincere or not. There are other instances of people who seem to be quite frivolous and stupid and busy with useless things, and suddenly one helps them, encourages them, treats them like friends and comrades, for one sees shining in the depth of all that a sincerity, an aspiration which may have a childish form outwardly but which is there and very pure at times. And so one

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does many things for them which people don't understand, for they cannot see the reality behind the appearance. That is why I say that it is in an entirely different way that the supermind is interested, an entirely different way that it sees, an entirely different way that it knows.

Isn't it more important to know oneself than to try to know others?

Very important, of capital importance! Besides, that's the field of work given to each one. It is this one must understand, that each one — this totality of substance constituting your inner and outer body, the totality of substance with which your being is built from the outermost to the inmost — is a field of work; it is as though one had gathered together carefully, accumulated a certain number of vibrations and put them at your disposal for you to work upon them fully. It is like a field of action constantly at your disposal: night and day, awake or asleep, all the time — nobody can take it away from you, it is wonderful! You may refuse to use it (as most people do), but it is a mass to be transformed that is there in your hands, fully at your disposal, given to you so that you may learn to work upon it. So, the most important thing is to begin by doing that. You can do nothing for others unless you are able to do it for yourself. You can never give a good advice to anyone unless you are able to give it to yourself first, and to follow it. And if you see a difficulty somewhere, the best way of changing this difficulty is to change it in yourself first. If you see a defect in anyone, you may be sure it is in you, and you begin to change it in yourself. And when you will have changed it in yourself, you will be strong enough to change it in others. And this is a wonderful thing, people don't realise what an infinite grace it is that this universe is arranged in such a way that there is a collection of substance, from the most material to the highest spiritual, all that gathered together into what is called a small individual, but at the disposal of a central

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Will. And that is yours, your field of work, nobody can take it away from you, it is your own property. And to the extent you can work upon it, you will be able to have an action upon the world. But only to that extent. One must do more for oneself, besides, than one does for others.

Is it possible to know others before knowing oneself?

Nothing is impossible. One can't say it is not possible. But if one is unaware of certain movements in oneself, it is certainly an anomaly to be conscious first of these in others. It is an anomaly. It may exist. There may be people so decentralised that they are more sensitive about others than in themselves. But still, usually they are considered a little morbid. This does not give them a very great inner equilibrium, they become unbalanced. There are people who are all at sea, they are like a cork upon the waves: it goes here and there, jumps this way and that. They have no line of consciousness.... It is not an enviable state. I don't think, truly, sincerely I don't think that it is possible to help anyone unless one has already helped oneself first. If you are unconscious, how do you expect to bring consciousness into others! This seems to me an insoluble problem. That is what people usually do, but that's no reason for approving it. This is exactly why, I believe, things go so wrong. It is like those who seeing others quarrelling rush forward and begin shouting louder than they to tell them, "Keep quiet!"

You said that to each individual is given a problem to solve. So each man upon earth has to live individually, for, in living collectively one has the difficulty of the collectivity also: it is not only one's own difficulty.

Yes, but man happens to be a social animal, and so, instinctively, he forms groups. But that also is why those who wished to go fast and did not feel themselves sufficiently strong retired into

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solitude. That is the reason, the justification of the ascetic who goes away into solitude, for he tries to cut himself off from the world. Only... there is an "only". One can do that physically to a certain extent, up to a point, cut oneself off from physical nature — not totally. It has been noticed, for instance, that ascetics who went away to sit under a tree in the forest, in a very short while became extraordinarily interested in all the animals living in the forest: it is the need of physical relationship with other living beings. It is possible that some do not need this, but it is a fairly general rule.

But solidarity does not stop there. There is a vital solidarity and a mental solidarity which you cannot prevent. There is, after all (though men are much more individualised than animals), there is a spirit of the species. There are collective suggestions which don't need to be expressed in words. There are atmospheres one cannot escape. It is certain (for I know this by experience), it is certain that there is a degree of individual perfection and transformation which cannot be realised without the whole of humanity having made a particular progress. And this happens by successive steps. There are things in Matter which cannot be transformed unless the whole of Matter has undergone transformation to a certain degree. One cannot isolate oneself completely. It is not possible. One can do the work, one can choose: there are people who have chosen to go into solitude and try to realise in themselves the ideal they saw — usually they reached a certain point, then stopped there, they could go no further. It has been thus historically. I was saying the other day: "There are perhaps people upon earth whom I don't know who have realised extraordinary things" but precisely because they have isolated themselves from the earth, the earth does not know them. This is just to say that nothing is impossible. It seems doubtful, is all that I can say. But it is impossible, even if one isolates oneself physically, to do so vitally and mentally. There is the vast terrestrial atmosphere in which one is born, and there is a sort of spirit or genius of the human race; well, this genius

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must have reached a certain degree of perfection for anyone to be able to go farther. It is not that one has to wait till all have done it, no; but it is as though all had to reach a certain level for one to be able to take one's spring and go farther.... Surely the individual will always be ahead of the mass, there's no doubt about that, but there will always be a proportion and a relation.

On what plane are men most united?

You mean "most interdependent"?

No, I mean a common will.

A common will? You must not mix up things. If you are telling me about the goodwill among human beings, this is in the psychic, there's no shadow of a doubt about it. But there is a kind of vital interdependence, quite considerable, more than the physical, I believe. For instance, the First World War was the result of a tremendous descent of the forces of the vital world (hostile forces of the vital world) into the material world. Even those who were conscious of this descent and consequently armed to defend themselves against it, suffered from its consequences. The world, the whole earth suffered from its consequences. There was a general deterioration from the vital point of view, I could say, which was inevitable even for those who consciously knew whence the force came, whence the deterioration came, and who could therefore fight against it consciously—they could not prevent certain effects being produced in the earth atmosphere. Naturally, men do not know what happened to them; all that they have said is that everything had become worse since the war. That was all that they could affirm. For example, the moral level went down very much. It was simply the result of a formidable descent of the vital world: forces of disorder, forces of corruption, forces of deterioration, forces of destruction, forces of violence, forces of cruelty.

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Why this descent?

Perhaps it was a reaction, for there was another Force coming down which wanted to do its work, and perhaps those forces did not want it—it disturbed their habits. It is like a government which fears that it will be thrown out and so intervenes violently in order to keep in power.

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Q. "If the Divine that is all love is the source of the creation, whence have come all the evils abounding upon earth?"

"All is from the Divine; but the One Consciousness, the Supreme has not created the world directly out of itself; a Power has gone out of it and has descended through many gradations of its workings and passed through many agents. There are many creators or rather 'formateurs', form-makers, who have presided over the creation of the world. They are intermediary agents and I prefer to call them 'Formateurs' and not 'Creators'; for what they have done is to give the form and turn and nature to matter. There have been many, and some have formed things harmonious and benignant and some have shaped things mischievous and evil. And some too have been distorters rather than builders, for they have interfered and spoiled what was begun well by others."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (30 June 1929)

You say, "Many creators or rather 'formateurs', form-makers, have presided over the creation of the world." Who are these 'formateurs'?

That depends. They have been given many names. All has been done by gradations and through individual beings of all kinds. Each state of being is inhabited by entities, individualities and personalities and each one has created a world around him or has contributed to the formation of certain beings upon earth. The last creators are those of the vital world, but there are beings of the Overmind (Sri Aurobindo calls this plane the Overmind), who have created, given forms, sent out emanations, and these

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emanations again had their emanations and so on. What I meant is that it is not the Divine Will that acted directly on Matter to give to the world the required form, it is by passing through layers, so to say, planes of the world, as for example, the mental plane — there are so many beings on the mental plane who are form-makers, who have taken part in the formation of some beings who have incarnated upon earth. On the vital plane also the same thing happens.

For example, there is a tradition which says that the whole world of insects is the outcome of the form-makers of the vital world, and that this is why they take such absolutely diabolical shapes when they are magnified under the microscope. You saw the other day, when you were shown the microbes in water? Naturally the pictures were made to amuse, to strike the imagination, but they are based on real forms, so magnified, however, that they look like monsters. Almost the whole world of insects is a world of microscopic monsters which, had they been larger in size, would have been quite terrifying. So it is said these are entities of the vital world, beings of the vital who created that for fun and amused themselves forming all these impossible beasts which make human life altogether unpleasant.

Did these intermediaries also come out of the Divine Power?

Through intermediaries, yes, not directly. These beings are not in direct contact with the Divine (there are exceptions, I mean as a general rule), they are beings who are in relation with other beings, who are again in relation with others, and these with still others, and so on, in a hierarchy, up to the Supreme.

If they came out of the Divine, why are they evil?

Evil? I think I have explained that to you once: just by not remaining under the direct influence of the Divine and not

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following the movement of creation or expansion as willed by the Divine; this rupture of contact is enough to produce the greatest of disorders, that of division. Well, even the most luminous, the most powerful beings may choose to follow their own movement instead of obeying the divine movement. And though in themselves they may be quite wonderful and if human beings saw them they would take them for the very Godhead, they can, because they follow their own will instead of working in harmony with the universe, be the source of very great evils, very great disorders, very great massive obstructions. But don't you see, the question is badly put, I laughed just now when I read the question.¹ It is a childish way of speaking. This person says: "If God is everything in the world, why are there evil things in the world?" Now, if she had told me that, I would have simply answered: there is nothing which is not God, only it is in a disorder. One must try to remedy it—God is not love alone, He is all things, and if that appears to us—to us—altogether wrong, it is because it is not arranged properly. There have been movements exactly of the kind I spoke to you about.

You may ask why it happened. Well, certainly it is not the mind, you know, which can say why it happened. It happened, that is all. In reality the only thing that concerns us is that it has happened. It is perhaps an accident to begin with.... If you look at the thing from a philosophical point of view, it is evident that the universe in which we live is a movement among many others and this movement follows a law which is its own (and which is perhaps not the same in the others), and if the Will was for the world to be built on the principle of choice, of the freedom of choice, then one cannot prevent disorderly movements from taking place until knowledge comes and the choice is enlightened. If one is free to choose, one can also choose bad things, not necessarily the good, for if it were a

¹ "If the Divine who is all love be the source of the creation, whence have come all the evils abounding upon earth?"

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thing decided beforehand, it would no longer be a free choice. You see, when such questions are put, the mind only answers and it reduces the problem, it reduces it to a more or less elementary mental formula; but that corresponds only very vaguely and superficially and incompletely with the reality of things.

To be able to understand, one must become. If you want to understand the why and how of the universe, you must identify yourself with the universe. It is not impossible but it is not very easy either, particularly for children.

This was one of the most childish questions that she put—altogether childish: “If He is just, why is there injustice? If He is good, why is there wickedness? If He is love, why is there hatred?” — But He is all! So He is not merely this or that, or only, exclusively this—He is all. That is, to be more correct, it should be said that all is He. There are notions about creation, very widespread upon earth, which have been accepted more or less for a long time in human thought, that are quite simplistic! There is “something” (truly speaking, one does not know what), and then there is a God who puts this something into form and creates the world out of it. So if you have such notions, you have a justifiable right to say to this God: “Well, you have indeed created a world, it’s a pretty one, that world of yours!” Although, according to the story, after seven days of labour, he declared that it was very good—but it was good for him. Perhaps it may have amused him immensely, but as for us who are in the world, we do not find it good at all! Don’t you see, the conception and the way of putting it are altogether childish. It is just like the story of the potter who puts his pot in shape—this God is a human being, formidable in proportions and power, but looking strangely like a man. It is man who makes God in his image, not God who makes man in his image! So each time a question is put in an incomplete or childish way, it is impossible to give an answer to it truly, for the question is badly put. You say something, you affirm it. But what right have you to assert it? Because you affirm that, you conclude: “Since that

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is this, how does it happen that it is so?" But "that is this" is your statement. It does not mean that it is so!

There is only one single solution to the problem — not to make any distinction between God and the universe at the origin. The universe *is* the Divine projected in space, and God *is* the universe at its origin. It is the same thing under one aspect or another. And you cannot divide them. It is the opposite conception to that of the "creator" and his "work". Only, it is very convenient to speak of the creator and his work, it makes explanations very easy and the teaching quite elementary. But it is not the truth. And then you say: "How is it that God who is all-powerful has allowed the world to be like this?" But it is your own conception! It is because you yourself happen to be in the midst of a set of circumstances that seems to you unpleasant, so you project that upon the Divine and you tell him: "Why have you made such a world?" — "I did not make it. It is you yourself. And if you become Myself once again, you will no longer feel as you do. What makes you feel as you do is that you are no longer Myself." This is what He could tell you in answer. And the fact is that when you succeed in uniting your consciousness with the divine consciousness, there is no problem left. Everything appears quite natural and simple and all right and exactly what it had to be. But when you cut yourself off from the origin and stand over against Him, then truly everything goes wrong, nothing can go right!

But if you ask for a logic that pushes things to the extreme end, you question how it is that the Divine has tolerated parts of his own self to be separated from him and all this disorder to be created. You may say that. And I then will reply: "If you want to know, it is better to unite yourself with the Divine, for that is the only way of knowing why He has done these things." It is not by questioning Him mentally, for your mind cannot understand. And I repeat it, when you reach such an identification, all problems are solved. And this feeling that things are not all right and that they should be otherwise, comes just because there

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is a divine will for a constant unfolding in perpetual progress and things that were must give place to things that shall be and shall be better than what the others were. And the world that was good yesterday is no longer good tomorrow. The whole world that could appear absolutely harmonious and perfect at one time, well, today it is discordant, no longer harmonious, because now we conceive and see the possibility of a better world. And if we were to find it all right we would not do what we ought to do, that is, make the effort needed for it to become better.

There comes a time when all these notions appear so childish! And this happens solely because one is shut up within oneself. With this consciousness which is your own, which is like a grain of sand in the infinite vastness, you want to know and judge the infinite? It is impossible. You must first of all come out of yourself, and then unite with the infinite and only afterwards can you begin to understand what it is, not before. You project your consciousness — what you are, the thoughts you have, the capacity of understanding you have — you project this upon the Divine and then say: "That is all wrong." I quite understand! But there is no possibility of knowing unless you identify yourself. I do not see how, for example, a drop of water could tell you what the ocean is like. That's how it is.

"When one takes up the human body, one accepts along with it a mass of these general suggestions, race ideas, race feelings of mankind, associations, attractions, repulsions, fears."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (30 June 1929)

When one takes up a human body, is it necessary to accept suggestions of fear?

It seems more inevitable than necessary!... One doesn't even perceive that one is accepting them. We said the other day that

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when a psychic being enters a body, it is as though it fell on its head — it is a little stunned for a time. So during this period it is under the influence of these suggestions without even knowing it. But as soon as it wakes up, it can come out of that; it is not at all necessary to accept them. Only, one must know that they are suggestions. One must be able to separate oneself from the purely human consciousness, the body consciousness. And once you can look at it from above, you can free yourself from these suggestions quite well. You can free yourself from all suggestions, but for that you must rise above them. If that were not possible, it would be impossible to do yoga.

But you do not become aware of it, it is a constant thing. For example, there is that formidable collective suggestion of death. But how can you get rid of that idea unless you are able to create in you an immortal consciousness? Once you have created in you the immortal consciousness, you can be freed of the suggestion. Otherwise it is not possible. And you are not aware of it because you live in it quite normally — you are full of the movements and ideas belonging to the human race, which are not personal to you at all. You are not aware of them because they are very intimately bound up with your consciousness. But the moment you can free yourself from this human consciousness and enter a domain where, for example, life in the body becomes almost an accident — it can be here, it can be there, it can be over there — you are no longer tied to the body. You look at it and say: it is almost like an accident (it may be a choice also, but most often it is an accident). Then, from that moment you are no longer tied down, for you are conscious in a being which is no longer merely, exclusively human. But till that moment you are not even aware. You have no means of becoming aware. And if you come to the purely mental domain, there are such strong ideas; for example, that the infinite cannot be within the finite, that what begins will surely have an end — ideas of this kind which seem wonderfully luminous, and yet are idiocies. But all that belongs to the collective human mentality and there

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is nothing more difficult than to drive this out of the head of people who think themselves very clever.... Perhaps you have not yet put these problems to yourselves because you have not yet begun studying philosophy, but when you begin, you will see. And this will be given to you as immortal truths which cannot be touched! Yet this is nonsense. One day I would like... (*turning to Nolini*) You don't have the *Advent* here? It is in the *Advent*, that text of Sri Aurobindo's. One day we shall translate it together from English into French. He has made a wonderful observation upon logic and reason²... And all that never even crossed your mind: that these are collective suggestions and one must come out of them. Not only does it not appear to you as slavery, but it appears to you as an illumination. Well, it's not that at all!

Mother, sometimes we are terribly afraid. What should we do in such a case?

Ah! that depends on the nature of the fear. Is it a fear without a cause or is it based on a cause? Because the remedy differs.

It is based on a cause.

Ah! For example, when someone is ill, one is afraid of catching the illness....

No, someone is dead.

And one is afraid to die.

There are two remedies. There are many, but two at least are there. In any case, the use of a deeper consciousness is essential.

² Perhaps the reference is to the following Aphorism of Sri Aurobindo quoted in the *Advent* of August 1953:

“Logic is the worst enemy of Truth, as self-righteousness is the worst enemy of virtue; for the one cannot see its own errors nor the other its own imperfections.”

Thoughts and Aphorisms, SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 84

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One remedy consists in saying that it is something that happens to everyone (let us take it on that level), yes, it is a thing that happens to everybody, and therefore, sooner or later, it will come and there is no reason why one should be afraid, it is quite a normal thing. You may add one more idea to this, that according to experience (not yours but just the collective human experience), circumstances being the same, absolutely identical, in one case people die, in another they do not — why? And if you push the thing a little further still, you say to yourself that after all it must depend on something which is altogether outside your consciousness — and in the end one dies when one has to die. That is all. When one has to die one dies, and when one has not to die, one does not die. Even when you are in mortal danger, if it is not your hour to die, you will not die, and even if you are out of all danger, just a scratch on your foot will be enough to make you die, for there are people who have died of a pin-scratch on the foot — because the time had come. Therefore, fear has no sense. What you can do is to rise to a state of consciousness where you can say, "It is like that, we accept the fact because it seems to be recognised as an inevitable fact. But I do not need to worry, for it will come only when it must come. So I don't need to feel afraid: when it is not to come, it will not come to me, but when it must come to me, it will come. And as it will come to me inevitably, it is better I do not fear the thing; on the contrary, one must accept what is perfectly natural." This is a well-known remedy, that is to say, very much in use.

There is another, a little more difficult, but better, I believe. It lies in telling oneself: "This body is not I", and in trying to find in oneself the part which is truly one's self, until one has found one's psychic being. And when one has found one's psychic being — immediately, you understand — one has the sense of immortality. And one knows that what goes out or what comes in is just a matter of convenience: "I am not going to weep over a pair of shoes I put aside when it is full of holes! When my pair of shoes is worn out I cast it aside, and I do not weep." Well, the

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psychic being has taken this body because it needed to use it for its work, but when the time comes to leave the body, that is to say, when one must leave it because it is no longer of any use for some reason or other, one leaves the body and has no fear. It is quite a natural gesture — and it is done without the least regret, that's all.

And the moment you are in your psychic being, you have that feeling, spontaneously, effortlessly. You soar above the physical life and have the sense of immortality. As for me, I consider this the best remedy. The other is an intellectual, common-sense, rational remedy. This is a deep experience and you can always get it back as soon as you recover the contact with your psychic being. This is a truly interesting phenomenon, for it is automatic. The moment you are in contact with your psychic being, you have the feeling of immortality, of having always been and being always, eternally. And then what comes and goes — these are life's accidents, they have no importance. Yes, this is the best remedy. The other is like the prisoner finding good reasons for accepting his prison. This one is like a man for whom there's no longer any prison.

Now, a third thing also one must know, but for this one has to be a mighty yogi. For this means knowing that death is not an inevitable thing, it is an accident which has been occurring till now (which seems in any case to have always occurred till now), and that we have put it into our head and our will to conquer this accident and overcome it. But it is so terrible, so formidable a battle against all the laws of Nature, against all collective suggestions, all earthly habits, that unless, as I have said, you are a first-rate warrior whom nothing frightens, it is better not to begin the battle. You must be an absolutely intrepid hero, for at every step, at every second you have to fight a battle against all established things. So it is not a very easy thing. And even as an individual it is a battle against oneself, because (I think I have already told you this once), if you want your physical consciousness to be in a state which admits of physical

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immortality, you must be free to such an extent from everything which at present represents the physical consciousness that it becomes every second a battle. All feelings, all sensations, all thoughts, all reflexes, all attractions, all repulsions, all existing things, all that forms the fabric of our physical life must be overcome, transformed and freed from all their habits. This is a battle of every second against thousands and millions of enemies. Unless you feel you are a hero, it is better not to try. Because this solution, well... I do not know, but I believe I was asked this question once before: "Has anyone succeeded so far?" To tell you the truth I don't know, for I have not met such a person.... I do not have the feeling that anyone has succeeded till now. But it is possible. Only, he or she who has done it has not declared it, at least, not till now.

The other two solutions are safe and sure and within your reach. Now, there is a small remedy which is very very easy. For it is based on a simple personal question of one's common sense.... You must observe yourself a little and say that when you are afraid it is as though the fear was attracting the thing you are afraid of. If you are afraid of illness, it is as though you were attracting the illness. If you are afraid of an accident, it is as though you were attracting the accident. And if you look into yourself and around yourself a little, you will find it out, it is a persistent fact. So if you have just a little common sense, you say: "It is stupid to be afraid of anything, for it is precisely as though I were making a sign to that thing to come to me. If I had an enemy who wanted to kill me, I would not go and tell him: 'You know, it's me you want to kill!' " It is something like that. So since fear is bad, we won't have it. And if you say you are unable to prevent it by your reason, well, that shows you have no control over yourselves and must make a little effort to control yourselves. That is all.

Oh! There are many ways of curing oneself of fear. But in reality everyone finds his own way, the one good for him. There are people to whom you have simply to say: "Your fear is a

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weakness”, and they would immediately find the means to look at it with contempt, for they have a horror of weakness. There are others, you tell them: “Fear is a suggestion from hostile forces, you must push it away, as you drive off hostile forces”, and this is very effective. For each one it is different. But first of all you must know that fear is a very bad thing, very bad, it is a dissolvent; it is like an acid. If you put a drop of it on something, it eats into the substance. The first step is not to admit the possibility of fear. Yes, that’s the first step. I knew people who used to boast about their fear. These are incurable. That is, quite naturally they would say, “Ah, just imagine, I was so frightened!” And then what! It is nothing to be proud of. With such people you can do nothing.

However, when once you recognise that fear is neither good nor favourable nor noble nor worthy of a consciousness a little enlightened, you begin to fight against it. And I say, one man’s way is not another’s; one must find one’s own way; it depends on each one. Fear is also a terribly contagious collective thing—contagious, it is much more catching than the most contagious of illnesses. You breathe an atmosphere of fear and instantly you feel frightened, without even knowing why or how, nothing, simply because there was an atmosphere of fear. A panic at an accident is nothing but an atmosphere of fear spreading round over everybody. And it is quite curable. There have been numerous cases of a panic being stopped outright simply because some people refused the suggestion and could counteract it with an opposite suggestion. For mystics the best cure as soon as one begins to feel afraid of something is to think of the Divine and then snuggle in his arms or at his feet and leave him entirely responsible for everything that happens, within, outside, everywhere—and immediately the fear disappears. That is the cure for the mystic. It is the easiest of all. But everybody does not enjoy the grace of being a mystic.

Sometimes there are latent powers in us of which we are

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*unaware. To do a work, how is one to know whether
one is capable of doing it or not?*

How can one know whether one is capable of doing it or not! By *trying*. That's the best thing. And if you do not succeed immediately, persevere. And you must know that if a strong urge, a very strong urge to do something comes to you, that means this work has something to do with you and you are capable of doing it. But one can have powers which are so well hidden that one has to dig long before finding them. So you must not get discouraged at the first setback, you must persist.

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When a true artist concentrates and sees the Divine in himself, can he use art to express the Divine?

And why not? Whom do you call an artist, first of all? A painter, a sculptor—Is that all? What else? What meaning do you give to the word “artist”? Of whom do you think when you speak of an artist? Of a painter or a sculptor?

Someone who can draw.

Yes, a painter, someone who can draw, it is the same thing. Of a painter, a sculptor, that's all? Painter and sculptor? Not of a musician or a writer or... I am asking you because the answer would be different according to the instances....

I had thought of someone who can draw.

For instance, there were in the Middle Ages — there still are today, but they were already there in the Middle Ages — men who made stained-glass windows, designs with pieces of coloured glass and in various forms. In the churches, in cathedrals, there were always stained-glass windows. Instead of ordinary windows, there were these coloured panes which made designs. It is a wonderful material, for there is the sun behind (in any case the full light), and these glasses were transparent; so they gave out a colour which was as though self-luminous, and these men made designs, made pictures with these coloured glasses cut out, you know, in special forms and painted in different colours. And that indeed was art. In all the cathedrals, the big churches, there were stained-glass windows; some of them were quite marvellous. And they expressed, for instance, the life of a

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saint or scenes from the life of Christ or... all kinds of things like that.

So, what is your question? Put it clearly.

Whether one can express the Divine himself...

Whether one can express the Divine himself in art? But in what can one express Him? I mean, what exactly do you call “expressing the Divine”? In words? In teachings? In books, finally? Or how else? Who has expressed the Divine completely in the material world?... It is only when the material world is transformed that it will be possible to express the Divine in his purity. And I don’t see what difference there can be between art and any other activity. It is something which has the capacity to become fused, but not entirely, and it remains (how to put it?) an instrument for giving a form. And I don’t see what difference this makes, whatever may be the form. If one can express the Divine with words, one can express Him with colours, express Him with sounds, express Him with forms. But in none of these instances is the expression perfect, for the union is not perfect. But when the world is transformed and the Divine is able to manifest Himself without being deformed, the expression will be perfect. But for the moment all expressions are on the same plane. None of them is better than any other. One mode of expression (I mean in itself) is not better than another. There is always *something* of the human personality, the being in form, which is there to give a limitation or deformation to what has to be expressed.

Art is just one activity like all others. Truly speaking, I was too polite to tell that lady¹ this, but I thought: “Why do you make distinctions like that, all this is the same thing.” Do you catch what I mean?

¹ The one who asked the question in the conversation of 28 July 1929: see *Questions and Answers 1929–1931*.

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When one is identified with the Divine, does one see Him in the form one thinks He has?

Usually. It is very rare — unless one is able to get rid of one's mental formation completely — it is very rare to see Him quite objectively. Besides, Sri Aurobindo always used to say that the relation with the Divine depended on what one wanted it to be. Everyone aspires for a particular form of relation, and for him the relation takes that form.

Then, what is it in truth?

Probably something that escapes form totally — or that can take all forms. There is no limitation to the expression of the Divine. He can express Himself without form and He can express Himself in all forms. And He expresses Himself in everyone according to each one's need. For even if somebody succeeds in becoming sufficiently impersonal so as to identify himself completely with the Divine, at that moment he will not be able to express it. And as soon as he is in a condition to express it, there will be something of the limited personality intervening and through this the experience has to pass. The moment of the experience is one thing and the expression of this experience is another. It may be simultaneous: there are people who while having the experience express what they feel in some form or other. Then it is simultaneous. But that does not prevent that which has the experience in its purity and that which expresses it from being two fairly different modes of being. And this difference is enough for one to be able to say in truth that it is impossible to know the Divine unless one becomes the Divine.

As for expressing Him, there is always a shifting; it always causes something like this (*gesture of changing levels*), whatever the mode of expression.

There remains only one field in which the experience has not been totally achieved, that is the purely material field. And

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there, it may be asked if truly, when the divine Consciousness descends into the body, the transformations will not be sufficient for there to be a possibility of integral expression.... But that is yet to come; it has not yet been done. And so long as it is not done, one cannot know. For even in the highest mental expression there is something which intervenes, due to the physical body. For the inspiration to come right down to the paper, for instance, well, despite everything, it must pass through very material vibrations which may change it. But if these very vibrations are transformed, then in that case it is possible that the outer expression is absolutely identical with the inner; that is, the corporeal manifestation truly becomes a manifestation of the divine essence.

Is that all?

Aren't the incidents of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana true?

True, in what sense? Whether it all really happened on earth like that? Hanuman and the monkeys and the?... (*laughter*) I can't tell. I have the feeling that it is symbolical; that, for instance, when one speaks of Hanuman, this represents the evolutionary man, and Rama is the involutionary being, the one who comes from above. But...

What do you mean by the involutionary and evolutionary being?

The evolutionary being is the one that's the continuation of the animals, and the other is a being from higher worlds who, when the earth was formed, materialised itself upon earth—it does not come from below, it has come from above. But in the evolutionary being there is that central light which is the origin of the psychic being, which will develop into the psychic being, and when the psychic being is fully formed, there is a moment

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when it can unite with a being from above which can incarnate in it. So this being from above which descends into a psychic being is an involutionary being — a being of the Overmind plane or from elsewhere.

That is all?

Was Anatole France's "jongleur" an artist?

I don't know. That depends (that's just what I was asking Parul), it depends on the definition you give to the word "artist".

If you ask me, I believe that all those who produce something artistic are artists! A word depends upon the way it is used, upon what one puts into it. One may put into it all that one wants. For instance, in Japan there are gardeners who spend their time correcting the forms of trees so that in the landscape they make a beautiful picture. By all kinds of trimmings, props, etc. they adjust the forms of trees. They give them special forms so that each form may be just what is needed in the landscape. A tree is planted in a garden at the spot where it is needed and moreover, it is given the form that's required for it to go well with the whole set-up. And they succeed in doing wonderful things. You have but to take a photograph of the garden, it is a real picture, it is so good. Well, I certainly call the man an artist. One may call him a gardener but he is an artist.... All those who have a sure and developed sense of harmony in all its forms, and the harmony of all the forms among themselves, are necessarily artists, whatever may be the type of their production.

You did not finish telling us about Rama and Hanuman.
(Laughter)

I did not finish? But yes, I said... Oh! because he asked what difference there was between an involutionary and an evolutionary being. But that's enough as it is. Once you know that you have the key to the whole story. Besides, I don't know whether there

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is a single authentic text or many texts of the Ramayana. For I have heard different versions. There are different versions, aren't there? Above all, for two very important facts (*Mother turns to Nolini*) concerning the end: the defeat and death of Ravana, and then the death of Sita. I have heard it narrated very differently, with different significances, by different pandits. According to their turn of mind, if I may say so, some who were very very very orthodox told me certain things and others who were not orthodox told me something very different. So I don't know if there are several texts or whether it was their own interpretation.

(Nolini) *There are several texts. There is one text in the North and another in the South.*

Ah! as for Buddhism. The people of the South and the North have different kinds of imagination. The southern people are generally more rigid, aren't they?... I don't know, but for Buddhism, the Buddhism of the South is quite rigid and doesn't allow any suppleness in the understanding of the text. And it is a terribly strict Buddhism in which all notion of the God-head in any form whatsoever, is completely done away with. On the other hand, the Buddhism of the North is an orgy of gods! It is true that these are former Buddhas, but still they are turned into gods. And it is this latter that has spread into China and from China gone to Japan. So, one enters a Buddhist temple in Japan and sees... There is a temple where there were more than a thousand Buddhas, all sculptured—a thousand figures seated around the central Buddha—they were there all around, the entire back wall of the temple was covered with images: small ones, big ones, fat ones, thin ones, women, men —there was everything, a whole pantheon there, formidable, and they were like gods. And then too, there were little beings down below with all kinds of forms including those of animals, and these were the worshippers. It was... it was an orgy of images. But the Buddhism of the South has the austerity of

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Protestantism: there must be no images. And there is no divine Consciousness, besides. One comes into the world through desire, into a world of desire, and abandoning desire one goes out of the world and creation and returns to Nirvana — even the nought is something too concrete. There is no Creator in Buddhism. So, I don't know. The Buddhism of the South is written in Pali and that of the North in Sanskrit. And naturally, there is Tibetan Buddhism written in Tibetan, and Chinese Buddhism written in Chinese and Japanese Buddhism in Japanese. And each one, I believe, is very very different from the others. Well, probably there must be several versions of the Ramayana. And still more versions of the Mahabharata — that indeed is amazing!

(Nolini) *Of the Ramayana also.*

Then texts have been added later.

Did it exist, Mother, the Mahabharata?

I suppose something did exist. In all these things, there is “something” that's true and then what has been made of it. These are two very different things. But in all religions, everywhere, it is the same thing: there is something which is there, something exists, and then one makes quite a different thing of it. That's the difference between history and legend — but history itself is a legend.

The same story, even taken quite objectively, when it is repeated several times, changes; and so after thousands of years it is altogether deformed. Which are the original texts — I mean the first recognised original texts — of the Mahabharata? It was related orally for a very long time, wasn't it? So you can imagine how it could have changed. These were oral traditions for a very long time. But who wrote the first version?

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(Nolini) *Vyasa.*

Ah!

(Nolini) *At first there were 36,000 verses. Now it is more than a lakh or two.*

Oh! Oh! it has grown: from 36,000 it has become quite inflated!
But the Gita — are there several versions?

(Nolini) *No.*

But the Gita is a part of the Mahabharata.

(Nolini) *Yes.*

Is the Ramayana more recent?

(Nolini) *No.*

Is it of the same period? And is the author known?

(Nolini) *Valmiki.*

Yes, and this has not changed so much.

(Nolini) *Not as much as the other. Not so much as the Mahabharata.*

But there are differences. There is one tradition which says that Ravana died deliberately, that it was deliberately he chose the role of the Asura and that he died willingly in order to shorten his “stay” outside the Divine. He dissolved into Rama when he died, saying that thus he had succeeded sooner in uniting with him definitively. Which version is this? Is it orthodox or not?

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(Nolini) *Everything is orthodox!*

It is orthodox. The idea (it is an idea, isn't it?) is that the Asuras have chosen to be Asuras because they will be dissolved by the Divine and thus return more quickly, unite more swiftly with the divine essence than the gods or sages who take a big round of labour before being able to return to the Divine. The Asuras, on the other hand, having chosen to be very wicked, will be destroyed much more quickly, they will return much faster. It's one way of looking at it! (*Laughter*)

In the same way, I have heard two versions (but as I said, one was broad-minded and the other extremely orthodox) about the end of Sita; one said that Sita chose to be swallowed up in the earth to prove her innocence, whilst the very orthodox version said that it was just because she was not innocent that she was swallowed up! (*Laughter*)

*Flowers fell from the skies, didn't they?*²

Ah! that again is another story.... I heard the Ramayana from a man called Pandit, and he was the son of a pandit and had come to Paris to study Law. But he had remained orthodox, as orthodox as one could be, it was tremendous! And he had with him a Ramayana translated into English, with pictures, and he showed it to me. And he told me the story. And then, when he came to the end he told me that. So I said: "What do you mean?" He told me: "You understand, for an Indian, if a woman has lived even for a few hours in another man's house, she is impure...." Oh! it is terrible... So, it was because she was impure that she was swallowed up.... I remember, he was quite short. He was from a Bombay family — not Bombay proper but from that side. He was a Gujarati. I believe he spoke Gujarati.

² According to the texts, it seems, flowers fell from the skies after Sita's disappearance, proving her innocence.

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And then the other version, I heard that from... that man was called Shastri. He was another pandit. He was in Japan. There we are, then.

Is that all? No questions? You... Be quick, it is late.

In one of your writings you have said that beauty is universal and that one must be universal in order to see and recognise it.

Yes. I mean one must have a universal *consciousness* in order to see and recognise it. For instance, if your consciousness is limited to one place, that is, it is a national consciousness (the consciousness of any one country), what is beautiful for one country is not beautiful for another. The sense of beauty is different. For example (I could make you laugh with a story), I knew in Paris the son of the king of Dahomey (he was a negro — the king of Dahomey was a negro) and this boy had come to Paris to study Law. He used to speak French like a Frenchman. But he had remained a negro, you understand. And he was asked (he used to tell us all kinds of stories about his life as a student), someone asked him in front of me: "Well, when you marry, whom will you marry?" — "Ah! a girl from my country, naturally, they alone are beautiful...." (*Laughter*) Now, for those who are not negroes, negro beauty is a little difficult to see! And yet, this was quite spontaneous. He was fully convinced it was impossible for anyone to think otherwise.... "Only the women of my country are beautiful!"

It is the same thing everywhere. Only those who have developed a little artistic taste, have travelled much and seen many things have widened their consciousness and they are no longer so sectarian. But it is very difficult to pull a person out of the specialised tastes of his race — I am not even speaking now of the country, I am speaking of the race. It is very difficult. It is there, you know, hidden right at the bottom, in the subconscious, and it comes back without your even noticing it, quite spontaneously,

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quite naturally. Even on this very point: the woman of your race is always much more beautiful than the woman of other races — spontaneously, it is the spontaneous taste. That's what I mean. So, you must rise above that. I am not even speaking of those who find everything that's outside their own family or caste very ugly and bad. I am not speaking at all of these people. I am not even speaking of those for whom one country is much more beautiful than another. And yet, these people have already risen above the altogether ordinary way of thinking. I am not even speaking of a question of race.... It is very difficult, one must go right down, right down within oneself into the subconscious — and even farther — to discover the root of these things. Therefore, if you want to have the sense of beauty in itself — which is quite independent of all these tastes, the taste of the race — you must have a universal consciousness. Otherwise how can you have it? You will always have preferences. Even if these are not active and conscious preferences, they are subconscious preferences, instincts. So, to know true beauty independent of all form, one must rise above all form. And once you have known it beyond every form, you can recognise it in any form whatsoever, indifferently. And that becomes very interesting.

So that's all. *Au revoir*, my children.

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"True art is a whole and an ensemble; it is one and of one piece with life. You see something of this intimate wholeness in ancient Greece and ancient Egypt; for there pictures and statues and all objects of art were made and arranged as part of the architectural plan of a building, each detail a portion of the whole. It is like that in Japan, or at least it was so till the other day before the invasion of a utilitarian and practical modernism. A Japanese house is a wonderful artistic whole; always the right thing is there in the right place, nothing wrongly set, nothing too much, nothing too little. Everything is just as it needed to be, and the house itself blends marvellously with the surrounding nature. In India, too, painting and sculpture and architecture were one integral beauty, one single movement of adoration of the Divine."

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (28 July 1929)

Mother, I did not understand what you have said: "True art is a whole and an ensemble; it is one and of one piece with life."

What I have said? Nothing else but that true art is the expression of beauty in the material world; and in a world entirely changed spiritually, that is to say, one expressing completely the divine reality, art must act as a revealer and teacher of this divine beauty in life; that is to say, an artist should be capable of entering into communion with the Divine and of receiving inspiration about what form or forms ought to be used to express the divine beauty in matter. And thus, if it does that, art can be a means of realisation of beauty, and at the same time a teacher of what beauty ought to be, that is, art should be an element in the

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education of men's taste, of young and old, and it is the teaching of true beauty, that is, the essential beauty which expresses the divine truth. This is the *raison d'être* of art. Now, between this and what is done there is a great difference, but this is the true *raison d'être* of art.

Have you understood? A little!

Why are today's painters not so good as those of the days of Leonardo da Vinci?

Because human evolution goes in spirals. I have explained this.¹ I said that art had become an altogether mercenary affair, obscure and ignorant, from the beginning of the last century till its middle. It had become something very commercial and quite remote from the true sense of art. And so, naturally, the artistic spirit does not come! It followed bad forms, yet it tried to manifest to counteract the degradation of taste which prevailed. But naturally, as with every movement of Nature in man, some having gone to one extreme, others went to the other extreme; and as these made a sort of servile copy of life—not even that, in those days it was called “a photographic view” of things, but now one can no longer say that, for photography has progressed so much that it would be doing it an injustice to say this, wouldn't it? Photography has become artistic; so a picture cannot be criticised by calling it photographic; nor can one call it “realistic” any longer, for there is a realistic painting which is not at all like that—but it was conventional, artificial and without any true life, so the reaction was to the very opposite, and naturally to another absurdity: “art” was no longer to express physical life but mental life or vital life. And so came all the schools, like the Cubists and others, who created from their head. But in art it is not the head that dominates, it is the feeling for beauty. And they produced absurd and ridiculous and

¹ See *Questions and Answers 1929–1931* (28 July 1929).

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frightful things. Now they have gone farther still, but that, that is due to the wars — with every war there descends upon earth a world in decomposition which produces a sort of chaos. And some, of course, find all this very beautiful and admire it very much.

I understand what they want to do, I understand it very well, but I cannot say that I find they do it well. All I can say is that they are trying.

But it is perhaps (with all its horror, from a certain point of view), it is perhaps better than what was produced in that age of extreme and practical philistinism: the Victorian age or in France the Second Empire. So, one starts from a point where there was a harmony and describes a curve, and with this curve one goes completely out of this harmony and may enter into a total darkness; and then one climbs up, and when one finds oneself in line with the old realisation of art, one becomes aware of the truth there was in this realisation, but with the necessity of expressing something more complete and more conscious. But in describing the circle one forgets that art is the expression of forms and one tries to express ideas and feelings with a minimum of forms. That gives what we have, what you may see (I believe we have reproductions of the most modern painters in the University Library). But if one goes a little farther still, this idea and these feelings they wish to express and express very clumsily — if one returns to the same point of the spiral (only a little higher), one will discover that it is the embryo of a new art which will be an art of beauty and will express not only material life but will also try to express its soul.

Anyway, we have not yet come to that, but let us hope we shall reach there soon. So that's all.

Why does evolution go in spirals instead of being a constant progress?

It is a constant progress. But if you made it in a straight line,

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you would cover only a single part — the world is a globe, it is not a line.

If it were a cylinder!

Even for a cylinder, if you drew only one line, one part of the cylinder would escape you altogether. This movement in a spiral is precisely to try and make everything enter this phenomenon of evolution — so that not only one thing may advance whilst the others remain behind. And so, according to the centre where the progress is concentrated, one seems to move away from one thing and enter into another. But in the long run, when one evolves consciously, one does not forget one thing in order to do another. What is bad at present is forgetfulness; it is that when following a certain activity for a realisation, one forgets all the others or they go into the background, they have no longer any intensity. But this is a human shortcoming which can be corrected — it ought to be corrected.

Do all progress in a spiral, and all together or separately?

I fear it is not very harmonious, for the world seems to me rather chaotic! If indeed the march were totally organised, it would be a harmonious development, and if one could see where one is going — having the line of what has been done, one could prolong these lines and see what would come. But for the moment this is open only to an élite. And the mass follows the movement, and all the movements are not homogeneous and simultaneous — certain things are slower to put into line and movement than others. So, even a little difference like this suffices for it to create an immense difference in the movement.

There is even a considerable number of spirals intersecting and giving the impression of contradiction. If one could follow in its totality the movement of universal progress, one would see that there is such a great number of spirals which intersect, that

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finally one does not know at all whether one is advancing or going back. For, at the same moment some things are going up and others falling back into the darkness, and all these are not absolutely independent of one another. There is a kind of coordination, so that instead of imagining a spiral like that, we should have to think of spherical spirals. If this could be described, all these spirals taken together would form an immense globe. And it is at the intersection of these spirals that there are moments of progress. But before the progress is coherent, total, there must be an inner organisation of life, different from that of Nature, arranged in accordance with a plan. For Nature — her plan is only made with an aspiration, a decision and a goal. And the road seems quite fantastic, following the impulses of every minute — trials, set-backs, contradictions, progress and demolition of what has already been done; and it is such a chaos that one can understand nothing there. She has the air of somebody doing things impulsively — giving out certain impulses and destroying them, beginning others again, and going on and on like that. She makes and unmakes, she remakes and again demolishes, she mixes, destroys, constructs and all this at the same time. It is incomprehensible. And yet, she evidently has a plan, and herself goes towards a certain goal which is very clear to her but quite veiled to human consciousness.... It is very interesting. If one could construct something like that, it would give an idea: a globe made of intersecting spirals of different colours, and each representing one aspect of Nature's creation. And these aspects are made to complete one another — but so far they are rather in competition than collaboration, and it seems she is always obliged to destroy something in order to make another, which makes for a terrible wastage, and a still greater disorder. But if all this were seen in its totality, it would be extremely interesting. For it is an extremely complex criss-crossing, in all possible directions, of a spiralling ascent.

Now, for your question, there could be another answer. What I have said just now is also exactly the same for art, it

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also follows an evolution and at a certain moment seems to drift away from its goal and at others it draws close to a greater height. But there is something else, that is a social point of view: there is a period, like the Age of Louis XIV for example, in which what predominated was the sense of artistic creation, and this sense seems to have given a certain perception of beauty at that moment; but afterwards social evolution brought in other needs and other ideas, and now, for more than a century it is commercialism which is uppermost in the world, and there is nothing more in contradiction with art than commerce. For it is precisely the vulgarisation of something which ought to be exceptional. It is putting within everybody's range something which could be understood only by an élite. And as we are in an age of mechanisation and commercialism, it is a time altogether uncongenial for a blossoming of art. And probably this is why art, not finding the conditions necessary for its full flowering, tries to seek another outlet and enters the mental and vital field for its expression. That is the reason. When the time comes to shake off, so to say, to reject this mercantilism and to wake up to a more beautiful reality, then art too will be reborn in a greater consciousness of harmony.

Is self-complacency an obstacle to art?

Yes, it is even an obstacle to intelligence. Fatuity is one of the greatest of human stupidities. There is a very great difference between having faith in what can be done, the will to realise it, the certitude of the possibilities open in creation (and also the certitude that these possibilities will be realised), and self-complacency; these are two things which turn their backs completely on each other. To be convinced that nothing is impossible if one puts in the time, energy, will, trust, sincerity and all else, is very essential, but to be self-satisfied in any way whatever is always, without exception, a stupidity. And this is one of the things that takes you farthest away from the divine realisation,

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for it makes you foolish. And it is at the same time one of the things most contrary to the goodwill of Nature, for Nature laughs at you immediately. You become an object of ridicule at once. For, in truth, there is no human being who is something by himself. He is only a possibility created by the Divine and one which can be developed only by the Divine, which exists only by the Divine, and which should live only for the Divine. And so, in this I do not see any place for self-complacency; for, as we are nothing in ourselves but what the Divine makes of us, and as we can do nothing by ourselves except what the Divine wants to do through us, I don't see what satisfaction one can have in that. One can only have the feeling of one's perfect powerlessness. Only, what is very bad is to have this the wrong side out — for there is always a wrong side and a right to every state of consciousness — and, fundamentally, it is the same vanity which makes you say: "I can do nothing, I am good for nothing, I am incapable of doing anything whatsoever"; that, that is the wrong side of "I can, I am great, I have all sorts of powers in me." It is the same thing. One is the shadow and the other the light, but they are exactly alike: one is no better than the other. And if really one were aware of being nothing at all, one would not bother to know what one is like. That would already be something. But truly, sincerely, I tell you, and I have a sufficiently long experience of life, I know nothing so grotesque as people who are satisfied with themselves. It is truly ridiculous. They make themselves utterly ridiculous. There are people like that; some of them came to see Sri Aurobindo telling him all that they were capable of, all that they had done and all they could do, all that they had realised — and so Sri Aurobindo looked at them very seriously and replied: "Oh! you are too perfect to be here. It would be better for you to go away."

"Music too is an essentially spiritual art and has always been associated with religious feeling and an inner life. But, here too, we have turned it into something

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independent and self-sufficient, a mushroom art, such as is operatic music. Most of the artistic productions we come across are of this kind and at best interesting from the point of view of technique. I do not say that even operatic music cannot be used as a medium of a higher art expression; for whatever the form, it can be made to serve a deeper purpose. All depends on the thing itself, on how it is used, on what is behind it. There is nothing that cannot be used for the Divine purpose—just as anything can pretend to be the Divine and yet be of the mushroom species.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (28 July 1929)

What do you mean by “mushroom species”?

Don't you know what a mushroom is? how mushrooms grow? Mushrooms spring up anywhere and seem not to belong to any cultivation. The idea is of a kind of spontaneous growth which has no roots in the totality of creation. These are things which do not belong to a whole, which are as though extraneous. Instead of mushrooms I could have said parasites on trees. You know there are parasites on trees, like the mistletoe on the oak; here too I have seen them on certain trees; I have seen plants grow clinging to the tree, plants which lived on the life of the tree, which did not have their own separate life, their own roots, which did not take their food directly from the soil; they clung to another plant, as though they made use of others' work. The others work to obtain the food and these cling upon them and live by it. Really, how parasites live on animals!

I don't know, I thought I went into great detail. But I have said enough about it for those who know.... In the old days, I mean in the artistic ages, as for instance in Greece or even during the Italian renaissance (but much more in Greece and Egypt), buildings were made for public utility. Mostly too, in Greece and Egypt, a kind of sanctuary was built to house their

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gods. Well, what they tried to do was something total, beautiful in itself, complete. And in that they used architecture, that is to say, the sense of harmony of lines, and sculpture to add to architecture the detail of expression, and painting to complete this expression, but all this was held in a coordinated unity which was the created monument. The sculpture formed a part of the building, the painting was a part of the building. These were not things apart, just put there one knew not why — they belonged to the general plan. And so, when these people made a temple, for example, it was a whole wherein were found almost all the manifestations of art, united in a single will to express the beauty they wished to express, that is, a garment for the god they wished to adore. All the beautiful periods of art were of this kind. But precisely, these days, though not quite recently — at the end of the last century, art became commercial, mercenary, and pictures were made to be sold; they were painted on canvas, a frame was put and then, without any definite reason, a picture was put here or another there, or else some sculpture was made representing one thing or another, and it was put no matter where. It had nothing to do with the house in which it was placed. It did not fit in. Things could be beautiful in themselves but they had no meaning. It was not a whole having cohesion and attempting to express something; it was an exhibition of talent, cleverness, the ability to make a picture or a statue. So too the architecture of those days, it had no precise meaning. One did not build with the idea of expressing the force one wanted to incarnate in that building; the architecture was not the expression of an aspiration or of something that uplifts your spirit or the expression of the magnificence of the godhead one wanted to house. They were nothing else but mushrooms. They put up a house here, a house there, made this and that, pictures, statues, objects of all kinds. So, on entering a house one saw, as I have just told you, a bit of sculpture here, a bit of painting there, show-cases with a heap of bizarre objects having no connection with one another. And wherefore all this? To make a sort of exhibition, a show

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of art-objects which had nothing to do with art and beauty! But that — one must understand the deep meaning of art to feel to what an extent this was shocking. Otherwise, when one is accustomed to it, when one has lived in that period and that milieu, it seems quite natural — but it is not natural. It is a commercial deformation.

There is only one justification, that is to make it a means of education. Then it becomes a museum. If you make a museum, it is a historical sampling of all that has been done. It serves to give you a historical knowledge of things. But a museum is not something beautiful in itself, far from it! For an artist it is something quite shocking. From the point of view of education it is very good, for specimens of all kinds of things have been collected there in a single place; and in this way you may learn, acquire erudition. But from the point of view of beauty, it is frightful.

And so there was an attempt, later, to return (for instance, at the beginning of this century — I am speaking of the first years of this century) an attempt to create what was called “decorative art”, that is, to try to get back to a vision of the ensemble and to make, when arranging a house, a coordinated whole in which things were in a certain place because they were meant to be there, and where every object had not only its *raison d'être* but its exact place and could not be displaced. An ensemble was created, a whole. So that was already a little better. They were trying.

Here (in India), it is altogether different, for there is a tradition of art which has remained, the whole country is full of things which were made at a fine moment of the artistic history of the country. One lives in its midst. One has hardly undergone the after-effects of what happened in the rest of the world, above all in Europe. Only those parts of India which are a little too anglicised have lost the sense of beauty. There are certain schools in Bombay, schools of artists, which are frightful. And then, there was that attempt of the Calcutta School to revive Indian art, but that was only on a very small scale. From the point of view of

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art what you have most within your reach are the old creations, the old temples, old pictures. All that was very good. And that had been made to express a faith. And it was done precisely with a sense of the whole, not in disorder.

You have followed very little of this movement of art I am speaking about, which is related to European civilisation, it has not been felt much here—just a little but not deeply. Here, the majority of creations (this is a very good example), the majority of works, I believe even almost all the beautiful works, are not signed. All those paintings in the caves, those statues in the temples—these are not signed. One does not know at all who created them. And all this was not done with the idea of making a name for oneself as at present. One happened to be a great sculptor, a great painter, a great architect, and then that was all, there was no question of putting one's name on everything and proclaiming it aloud in the newspapers so that no one might forget it! In those days the artist did what he had to do without caring whether his name would go down to posterity or not. All was done in a movement of aspiration to express a higher beauty, and above all with the idea of giving an appropriate abode to the godhead who was evoked. In the cathedrals of the Middle Ages, it was the same thing, and I don't think that there too the names of the artists who made them have remained. If any are there, it is quite exceptional and it is only by chance that the name has been preserved. Whilst today, there is not a tiny little piece of canvas, painted or daubed, but on it is a signature to tell you: it is Mr. So-and-so who made this!

It is said that a synthesis of western and eastern art could be made?

Yes. One can make a synthesis of everything if one rises sufficiently high.

What will come out of it?

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If it is necessary, it will be done. But fundamentally, these are things in the making. For, the advantage of modern times and specially of this hideous commercialism is that everything is now mixed up; that things from the East go to the West, and things from the West to the East, and they influence each other. For the moment this creates a confusion, a sort of pot-pourri. But a new expression will come out of it—it is not so far from its realisation. People cannot intermix, as men today are intermixing, without its producing a reciprocal effect. For instance, with their mania of conquest, the nations of the West which conquered all sorts of countries in the world, have undergone a very strong influence of the conquered countries. In the old days, when Rome conquered Greece it came under the influence of Greece much more than if it had not conquered it. And the Americans—all that they make now is full of Japanese things, and perhaps they are not even aware of it. But since they occupied Japan, I see that the magazines received from America are full of Japanese things. And even in certain details of objects received from America, one now feels the influence of Japan. That happens automatically. It is quite strange, there always comes about a sort of equilibrium, and he who made the material conquest is conquered by the spirit of the vanquished. It is reciprocal. He made the material conquest, he possesses materially, but it is the spirit of the conquered one who possesses the conqueror.

So, through mixing... The ways of Nature are slow, obscure and complicated. She takes a very long time to do a thing which could probably be done much more rapidly, easily and without wastage by means of the spirit. At present there is a terrible wastage in the world. But it is getting done. She has her own way of mixing people.

Is it intentional?

Not the way men understand “intentional”. But it is certainly the expression of an intention and a goal towards which one is

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going. Only, all depends on the amount of consciousness. For a man this seems a confusion, for he can see only details, and it appears to be a terrible loss of time, because for him the idea of time is limited to the duration of his person. But Nature has eternity before her. And it is all the same to her to waste, for she is like someone who had a huge cauldron; she throws things in and makes a mixture, and if that does not succeed she throws all this out, for she knows that by taking back the same things she will make another mixture. And that is how it is. Nothing is lost, for it comes into use again all the time. Forms are broken and the substance is taken back, and it goes on constantly like that. It is made, it is unmade, it is turned inside out — what harm can it do her to try a hundred thousand times if it so pleases her! For there is nothing that is wasted, except her work. But her work is her pleasure. Without work she would not exist.

It is a pleasure for her, not for people!

No, certainly, I quite agree. I find it a little too cruel an amusement. *Voilà.*

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Before beginning the class Mother spoke for a few minutes about the “sphere with spirals” which the children had constructed to give an idea of what She had explained the preceding week:

... The sphere is touched only by a part of the curve, the rest is evolved inside. It cannot be made. This one is opaque. But it was... there was at the centre of the sphere an intersection of all the spirals.

What you have done there makes it flat, the way it is done. It is flat. As I saw it, the edge was touched by a section of the curve. Each curve has one part of the edge as section. And the colours were seen distinctly and one could see right through.... I think you could do this geometrically. The whole surface is taken up by one section of the curve of the spiral.

Pavitra: Are these spirals on the surface of the sphere or inside?

No, the spirals are inside.

Hence towards the centre.

They are intersecting. Their direction is such that the whole sphere is formed by sections of each spiral.

Is the whole of the inside of the sphere filled with spirals?

The whole inside was naturally full of spirals. But as there was no substance (there were only spirals), one could see through. They were not so joined up as to make an opaque mass. And

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one could follow: the colours were brilliant, they were luminous. One could follow the line inside. And so it should be inferred that they were countless.

Were they drawing closer inwards forming smaller and smaller curves?

Not regularly as to have all the first rounds at the centre. It was not a series of spirals beginning with the first circle and working towards the centre.

And beginning again from the centre outwards?

No, not at all. The finishing-point was not the same as the starting-point. Still, in this way, seen from far, it gave that impression a little. It was much more complex than that. And then there were none of those dull things.

Mother, what do the colours represent?

Here you have three greens and only one blue. That one is blue, but greenish blue. Then there are two browns, one black and one grey, two reds... These colours are dead colours, aren't they? They can be given a particular meaning.

There was no black.

After reading the part of the conversation of 4 August 1929 on sacrifice and self-giving, the Mother continues:

"The spiritual life reveals the one essence in all, but reveals too its infinite diversity; it works for diversity in oneness and for perfection in that diversity. Morality lifts up one artificial standard contrary to the variety of life and the freedom of the spirit. Creating something mental, fixed and limited, it asks all to conform to it. All

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must labour to acquire the same qualities and the same ideal nature. Morality is not divine or of the Divine; it is of man and human. Morality takes for its basic element a fixed division into the good and the bad; but this is an arbitrary notion. It takes things that are relative and tries to impose them as absolutes; for this good and this bad differ in differing climates and times, epochs and countries.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (4 August 1929)

In the past, why did men offer human sacrifices in temples?

I don't quite understand the question. Why should they not do it! There is not much difference between killing a goat and killing a man. I don't know. In any case, what has come down to posterity and what really happened may be two very different things. When they spoke of sacrifice, it was perhaps only symbolic. Certain religions, we are told, have massacred men by thousands. It is possible, it is the same instinct which makes men destroy things. And these were certainly religions which tended towards destruction. Now, there are many different cases, and if someone asks why people offered material sacrifices, one should first be sure about it. As for me, I am not sure of it. It is possible. It depends on the way one looks at life. And in any case, if one arrogates to oneself the right to make use of another man's existence to offer a sacrifice to the Divine, or if one looks at it in a certain way, it is a pretty bad attitude. I was saying at the beginning I don't see why one should make a difference between any other animal and a human animal. It is a very strange thing.

In the majority of religions, I believe it used to be as it still is here in the temple of the headless Kali¹ — it is an extremely dark

¹ In whose honour, every year, men wring the necks of a huge number of chickens.

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and ignorant affair. It comes from a sort of unhealthy fear of a monstrous god who needs either blood or force or no matter what in order to be satisfied and not to do harm. And all this comes from a dread and a conception of the Divine which is a monstrosity. But should it be admitted, there would be only one tolerable sacrifice, the sacrifice of oneself. If one wants to sacrifice something to the Divine, I don't see by what right one can seek the life of another, be it human being or animal, to offer it in one's own stead. If one wants to sacrifice, it is one's own self one must sacrifice, not others. And as the movement itself is sufficiently ugly and obscure and unconscious, I don't see why there should be such a difference between sacrificing a goat and sacrificing a human being. From the goat's point of view it is an intolerable idea — if a goat were to be asked why....

Men have strange ideas about their own importance in the world and the respective worth of their person. It does not make much difference. If they are told, "You have no right to take the life of another", it is acceptable; but then do not offer sacrifices, or if you want to sacrifice, sacrifice your own self; if you believe there is a terrible God who needs to be given blood or whatever else it may be, vital forces to satisfy him, do it. But by what right are you going to take the life of others to give it? That is an intolerable tyranny. Even were it only all those chickens one kills! But I believe there is another reason for that — it is that people can enjoy a good feast! It is simply an opportunity to swallow a considerable amount of food.

I don't know, for me it does not make a great difference.

Is it possible to feel the divine Presence even when one is surrounded by a bad atmosphere, a mental and vital disturbance?

Provided the atmosphere is not within oneself! For if so, it is difficult. And yet! We have had frequent instances of people who used to lead a more than doubtful life and who had revelations.

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There is the instance of a drunkard who, in his drunkenness, suddenly had a contact with the Divine—which, moreover, changed his life and, I must tell you, prevented him from drinking in future. But still, at the time he had the revelation of the divine Presence, he was in an intoxicated state. I don't think—here again we fall back into the same things—I don't think the Divine is a moralist. It is man who is a moralist, not the Divine. If it happens that, just then, at that moment, there is a concurrence of events and perhaps an opening in the being, the Divine, who is always present, manifests himself. On the other hand, for the sage or the saint who is quite infatuated with his own importance and his own worth, and full of pride and vanity, there is not much chance that the Divine will manifest in him, for there is no place for the expression of the Divine! There is no place except for the important personality of the wise man and his moral worth.

Naturally, there is a state in which one may be perfectly pure, perfectly wise, and be in contact with the Divine! But then, that means that one has reached a certain degree of perfection and lost the sense of one's personal importance and personal worth. I believe that's most important. The greatest obstacle to the contact with the Divine is pride and the sense of one's personal worth, one's personal capacities, personal power—the person becomes very big, so big that there is no place for the Divine.

No, the one truly important thing is the intensity of the aspiration. And this intensity of aspiration comes in all kinds of circumstances.

There are two things we must not confuse: certain necessities (which are purely necessities if one wants to succeed in completely controlling physical matter), and then moral notions. These are two very different things. One may, for instance, refrain from poisoning one's body or besotting one's brains or annulling one's will because one wants to become master of one's physical consciousness and capable of transforming one's body. But if one does these things solely because one thinks one will gain moral merit by doing so, that will lead you nowhere,

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to nothing at all. Because it is not meant for that. One does it for purely practical reasons: for the same reason, for instance, that you are not in the habit of taking poison, for you know it will poison you. And then, there are some very slow poisons taken by people (they think, with impunity, because the effect is so slow that they cannot discern it easily), but if one wants to succeed in becoming entirely master of one's physical activities and capable of putting the light into the reflexes of one's body, then one must abstain from these things — but not for moral reasons: for altogether practical reasons, from the point of view of the realisation of the yoga. One must not do this with the idea of gaining merit, or the idea that because you will gain merit God will be very pleased and come and manifest within you! It is not at all that, not at all! Perhaps even, He feels closer to him who has made mistakes, who is conscious of his faults and has the sense of his weakness, and aspires sincerely to come out of it all — He feels perhaps closer to him than to one who has never made a mistake and is satisfied with his external superiority over other human beings. In any case, that does not make a great difference. What does make a lot of difference is the sincerity, the spontaneity, the intensity of the aspiration — the need, that need which seizes you and which is so powerful that nothing else in the world counts.

As I have said elsewhere about surrender and sacrifice, if one regrets something, that means that one is not in a spiritual state of consciousness. If one regrets that one can no longer satisfy one's desires, that means the desires are at least as important as, if not more than, the thing one aspires for. You may say, "Desires are something of which I am quite conscious, whilst if I give up my desires with the idea of getting the Divine, I am yet not sure that I shall have Him; hence I call this a sacrifice." But I, I call that bargaining! It is bargaining with the Divine. One tells Him, "Give and take; I, I give You the joy I have in satisfying my desires, You must give me in exchange the joy of feeling You within myself, else it is not just." — This is not self-giving, this is bargaining.

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This is something I have heard so often, so often: "I have sacrificed so many things, I have made so much effort, have taken so much trouble, and now see, I have nothing in exchange." All that I can answer is, "No wonder!"

Can a very proud person have a great aspiration?

Why not? The very proud person may receive blows and become sensible; besides, when he receives a blow, that may awaken him a little! Then he has an aspiration. And if it is someone who has intensity in his nature and some strength, well, then his aspiration is powerful.

And without receiving blows?

That may happen. Only in that case it will be very mixed up. In all instances it will be very mixed — but always everything is mixed. A long time is necessary for things to become clear. One may begin anywhere at all, at any stage whatever and in any condition. One can always begin. Only, in some cases it takes a very long time. For the mixture is such that with every step forward one takes half a step back. But there is no reason for this. Fundamentally, as it is the true *raison d'être* of life and of individual existence to become aware of the Divine, that may emerge anywhere at all, at any moment whatsoever. If there is the least possibility, it springs up. Naturally, if one is perfectly satisfied, then that is an obstacle, because one sleeps in self-satisfaction. But that cannot last. In life, in the world as it is at present, an egoistic satisfaction, a personal satisfaction cannot last, and — as long as it lasts, yes, one may grow hard, not aspire at all. But it does not last.

Anything else?

Nobody has anything to say?

Then, *au revoir* my children, good-night!

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Mother is about to begin reading the first pages of *Quelques Paroles, Quelques Prières.*

The first texts were written in 1912. Many of you were not yet born. It was a small group of about twelve people who met once a week. A subject was given; an answer was to be prepared for the following week. Each one brought along his little work. Generally, I too used to prepare a short paper and, at the end, I read it out. That is what is given here—not all, only these two. These two first ones. Later, it was something else. The others appeared in *Words of Long Ago*.

There were four meetings. The subject for the first meeting was: What is the aim to be achieved, the work to be done, the means of achievement? And here is my answer:

Mother reads the text of 7 May 1912:¹ “*The general aim to be attained is the advent of a progressing universal harmony.*”

This is the Supermind.

I did not know Sri Aurobindo at that time and he had not written anything yet.

“... *To become the perfect representatives on earth of the first manifestation of the Unthinkable in his three modes, his seven attributes and twelve qualities...*”

What do you call the “three modes, seven attributes and twelve qualities”?

¹ For a different English translation of the complete text, see *Words of Long Ago*, CWM, Vol. 2, pp. 49–50.

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I no longer remember. The three formed modes—love, light and life—which correspond to Sachchidananda. The seven attributes... I have a list somewhere. There is an old tradition which says that the world was created seven times, that is, the first six times it returned into the Creator. This is the idea of *pralaya*.² It is said that this happened six times and that we are now the seventh creation, and that this is the last one. It is the one which will persist, and it is the “creation of Equilibrium”. All these creations I have also noted down somewhere, it is written down. I no longer know their order. There are six creations, one after another, created in accordance with this special mode, found imperfect and withdrawn into the Origin, recreated and withdrawn into the Origin—six times thus. And it is a progressive order. When one knows that order, one understands the principle of each creation. Well, this tradition said that the principle of our latest creation, at present, is the principle of Equilibrium, and that this is the last. That means the world will not go back again into *pralaya*, and there will be a perpetual progress. And this is the creation of Equilibrium.

Consequently, now, there is no longer anything good or bad: there is what is in equilibrium and what is not in equilibrium. There is imbalance and balance. That's all. And what I have said there was based upon that.

The twelve qualities—that is something else still. That too is noted somewhere. In order that the world may continue, it must realise a perfect equilibrium of all its elements by means of these twelve qualities, all present there. And then it will be a world which, whilst progressing indefinitely, will constantly be in harmony, and hence will not be open to destruction.

*“... To give to the world once again, under a new form
adapted to the present state of its mentality, the eternal*

² The end of a world preceding a new creation.

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word. This will be the synthesis of all human knowledge... ”

You speak here of “the eternal word”?

I am using “word” in the sense of truth. There is an eternal Truth which is eternally true, but which finds expression in definite forms, and these definite forms are changing, fluctuating; they may become distorted; and to have the truth one must always go back to the source, which is... it may be called the eternal word, that is, the creative Word. It is a truth which is eternal, which manifests itself through all possible words and ideas. I use “word” in a literary sense—it is what is called elsewhere the creative Word. It is the origin of all speech and all thought.

I did not understand “the aim to be achieved”.

The aim to be achieved? What have I said? It is the harmonisation of the earth, I think, isn’t it?

“In regard to the earth, the means of achieving this aim is the realisation of human unity by the awakening in all and the manifestation by all of the inner Divinity who is one.

In other words: to create unity by establishing the kingdom of God which is in all.

Hence, the most useful work to be done is:

1) For everyone individually the becoming aware in oneself of the divine Presence and one’s identification with it.”

Yes, you do not understand? I have said it fifty thousand times already, haven’t I? ... Ah, you understand now? (laughter)

“2) The individualisation of states of being which have so far never been conscious in man and, consequently,

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putting the earth into touch with one or several sources of universal force which are yet sealed to it.”

“The individualisation of states of being which have so far never been conscious in man”, that is to say, there are superposed states of consciousness, and there are new regions which have never yet been manifested on earth, and which Sri Aurobindo called supramental. It is that, this was the same idea. That is, one must go into the depths or the heights of creation which have never been manifested upon earth, and become conscious of that, and manifest it on earth. Sri Aurobindo called it the Supermind. I simply say these are states of being which were never yet conscious in man (that is, that man has so far never been aware of them). One must get identified with them, then bring them into the outer consciousness, and manifest them in action. And then, I add (exactly what I foresaw — I did not know that Sri Aurobindo would do it, but still I foresaw that this had to be done):

“3) To speak to the world, under a new form adapted to the present state of its mentality, the eternal word.”

That is, the supreme Truth, Harmony. It was the whole programme of what Sri Aurobindo has done, and the method of doing the work on earth, and I had foreseen this in 1912. I met Sri Aurobindo for the first time in 1914, that is, two years later, and I had already made the whole programme.

“4) Collectively, to found the ideal society in a place suited to the flowering of the new race, that of ‘the Sons of God’.”

Where did you decide to found the Ashram?

Where did I decide to do it?... I never decided anything at all! I had simply said that it had to be done. I did not have the

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least idea, except that I had a great desire to come to India. But still, I did not even know if it corresponded to something. I had decided nothing at all. Simply, I had seen that state, what had to be done.

Then the children come back to the conversation of 4 August 1929:

"The ordinary social notions distinguish between two classes of men,—the generous, the avaricious. The avaricious man is despised and blamed, while the generous man is considered unselfish and useful to society and praised for his virtue. But to the spiritual vision, they both stand on the same level; the generosity of the one, the avarice of the other are deformations of a higher truth, a greater divine power. There is a power, a divine movement that spreads, diffuses, throws out freely forces and things and whatever else it possesses on all the levels of nature from the most material to the most spiritual plane. Behind the generous man and his generosity is a soul-type that expresses this movement; he is a power for diffusion, for wide distribution. There is another power, another divine movement that collects and amasses; it gathers and accumulates forces and things and all possible possessions, whether of the lower or of the higher planes. The man you tax with avarice was meant to be an instrument of this movement. Both are important, both needed in the entire plan; the movement that stores up and concentrates is no less needed than the movement that spreads and diffuses."

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What do you mean by "soul-type"?

What is the sentence?... (Mother looks at the text) Ah! it is the

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spirit of the type; just as we said that behind each animal type there was a spirit of the type, so behind each type of man there is a spirit of the type. This is what I call soul-type. It is a soul-type which may be progressive, but which is indestructible.

The soul-type corresponds, individually or in groups, to the *dharma* of things. Sometimes it is also called the truth of things, of each thing.

Is generosity a deformation of the truth?

Yes, all human qualities are deformations of a truth which is behind them. All that you call either qualities or defects are always a deformation of something which is behind, and which is neither this nor that but something else. But I say, moreover, what truth is found behind generosity: it is the movement of the spreading forces. But in order that these forces may spread, they must first become concentrated. So there is a sort of movement of pulsation: the forces are concentrated, then they spread, and then they are again concentrated and again spread.... But if you always want to spread out without ever concentrating, after a certain time you have nothing left to spread. For the forces — all forces — it is the same thing. I have written, besides, (or rather I shall write some time) that money is a force, it is nothing but that. And that is why nobody has the right to own it personally, for it is only a force, just like all other forces of Nature and the universe. If you take light as a force, it would never occur to anyone to say: "I possess the light", and to want to shut it up in his room and not give it to others! Well, with money people are so stupefied as to imagine that it is something they can possess and keep, as though it belonged to them, and make something personal of it. It is exactly the same thing. I am not speaking of money as paper, naturally, because that would be just like the light you put in a lamp, you may own the lamp, and so you say: "It is my light." Money, your notes, your coins, that is *your* money. But that is not money. This is a force which is

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behind all that, the power of exchange which is money. That does not belong to anybody. It belongs to everyone. It is something which is alive only if it circulates. If you want to heap it up, it decays. It is as though you wanted to enclose water in a vase and keep it always; after some time your water would be absolutely putrefied. With money it is the same thing. And people have not yet understood that. Later on I shall write about it.

That won't last always.

When there is avarice for material things...

Avarice for *all* things — there is an avarice for spiritual things also. There are misers who want to keep all the forces for themselves and never give them. But I have just told you the truth about it: one must have the power to accumulate in order to have the power of spreading. If you have only one of the two, that causes an imbalance. And it is then that it becomes avarice or wastage. One must have both in a balanced, rhythmic movement — the equilibrium we just spoke about. For it would be quite easy to prove that in fact at present equilibrium is the true thing: one must be neither here nor there, that is what Buddha called "the middle path". The middle path is the path of equilibrium. And so one must know how to manage as when rope-walking with a stick to keep one's balance.

But the most generous man in the world could give nothing if he had nothing to begin with. Hence, if it is not he who has accumulated, it is someone else who has accumulated for him. But if he has nothing in his pocket, he cannot distribute anything! That is evident. And the power of accumulation is as important as the power of distribution. It is only when these two things become egoistic that they are deformed, altogether deformed, and lose all their value.

Voilà, my children.

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"In rebirth it is not the external being, that which is formed by parents, environment and circumstances,—the mental, the vital and the physical,—that is born again: it is only the psychic being that passes from body to body. Logically, then, neither the mental nor the vital being can remember past lives or recognise itself in the character or mode of life of this or that person. The psychic being alone can remember; and it is by becoming conscious of our psychic being that we can have at the same time exact impressions about our past lives.

Besides, it is much more important for us to fix our attention upon what we want to become than upon what we have been."

Words of the Mother, CWM, Vol. 15, p. 124

If it is not the mind, vital or physical which take birth again but only the psychic being, then the vital or mental progress made before is of no value in another life?

It happens only to the extent the progress of these parts has brought them close to the psychic, that is, to the extent the progress lies in putting all the parts of the being successively under the psychic influence. For all that is under the psychic influence and identified with the psychic continues, and it is that alone which continues. But if the psychic is made the centre of one's life and consciousness, and if the whole being is organised around it, the whole being passes under the psychic influence, becomes united with it, and can continue — if it is necessary for it to continue. Indeed, if the physical body could be given the same movement — the same movements of progress and the same capacity to ascend that the psychic being has — well, it wouldn't

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be necessary for it to decompose. But that indeed is the difficulty.

And only that which is in contact with the psychic lasts, and only what can last can remember, for the rest disappears, is again dissolved into small pieces and utilised elsewhere — as the body is dissolved again to dust and used elsewhere. It goes back to the earth, plants use the soil, men eat the plants. It is in this way that it goes on. And then it returns to the earth and begins again. That's the way Nature progresses. In order to progress she makes a heap of forms, then, when that seems no longer important or necessary to her, she demolishes them, takes up all the elements again, chemical or other, and reconstitutes something else, and so it goes on changing all the time, coming and going. And she finds that very good, for she sees very far, her work extends over centuries, and a small human life is nothing, just a breath in eternity. So she takes up, shapes; she takes a certain time, it's fun for her, she finds it very good; and then, when it is no longer so good, she demolishes it — she takes up, mixes everything, begins another form, makes something else. And so perhaps with this process which is evidently very slow, finally the whole of matter progresses. It is possible — always in this way, intermingling, breaking up, remixing, breaking up again. Essentially, it is as though one made a heap of small objects and then destroyed them, remade something from the dust, remade other toys, and again broke them, and remade others out of that. Each time one adds something so that it mixes well. And then, one day, perhaps all that will produce something. In any case, she is in no hurry. And when we are in a hurry, she says: "Why are you in such a haste? It is sure to happen one day. You don't need to worry, it will surely come. Wait quietly." Then we tell her: "But it is not I who am waiting!" — "Ah! that's because you call 'I' that thing which comes and goes away. If you were to call consciousness — the one, eternal and divine consciousness — if you were to call that 'I', then you would see everything, you would witness everything. Nobody prevents you from doing it! It is only because you identify yourself with this (*indicating the*

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body). You have only to stop identifying yourself with that.”

“Justice is the strict logical determinism of the movements of Universal Nature.

“Illnesses are this determinism applied to the material body. The medical mind, basing itself upon this ineluctable Justice, strives to bring about the conditions which should lead logically to good health.

“The moral consciousness acts in the same way in the social body and tapasya in the spiritual domain.

“The Divine Grace alone has the power to intervene and change the course of Universal Justice.

“The great work of the Avatar is to manifest the Divine Grace upon earth. To be a disciple of the Avatar is to become an instrument of the Divine Grace. The Mother is the great dispensatrix — through identity — of the Divine Grace with a perfect knowledge — through identity — of the absolute mechanism of Universal Justice.

“And through her mediation each movement of sincere and confident aspiration towards the Divine calls down in response the intervention of the Grace.

“Who can stand before You, O Lord, and say in all sincerity: ‘I have never made a mistake?’ How many times in a day we commit faults against Your work, and always Your Grace comes to efface them!

“Without the ceaseless intervention of Your Grace, who would not oftentimes have come under the merciless blade of the Law of Universal Justice?

“Each one here represents an impossibility to be resolved, but as for Your Divine Grace all things are possible. Your work will be, in the detail as in the ensemble, the accomplishment of all the impossibilities transformed into divine realisations.”

Words of the Mother, CWM, Vol. 14, pp. 83–84

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What is the meaning of “Justice is the strict logical determinism of the movements of Universal Nature”?

You know the law of determinism, don't you? You have not studied philosophy at all? (*Turning to a professor*) Pavitra, explain what determinism is to them. Try to be brief and clear.

Pavitra: I think determinism is this: when something happens, it always has the same effect.

If it is the same thing — on condition it is identically the same thing. Are there two identical things in the universe? No.

Nolini: The same cause produces the same effect.

Yes. The same cause produces the same effect. That is the principle on which science is founded. But I have used the word here in a little more general and precise a way at once. I mean that each thing (whether the same or not) always produces an effect and that this effect produces still another and that other produces yet another and so on — always a cause produces an effect and each effect becomes the cause of another effect, and so on, indefinitely. And so justice means that each thing, as Nolini said, the same cause always produces the same effect automatically. And hence one cannot say a word, make a movement without its being the cause of something else. And this something else is the cause of yet another thing. And all this follows automatically and strictly, and that is universal justice.

An act carried out has always a consequence and this consequence brings along another and so on. And this is absolutely ineluctable. That is universal justice. You have a bad thought, it has a result. And that result has yet another. And you cannot escape it except through the intervention of Grace. Grace is exactly something which has the power of changing all that. But only the Grace can change it. It is so strict a law and so terrible

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that once one has entered within it, one cannot get out. And the moment one is upon earth, one enters into this. The whole earthly existence is like that, constructed in this way. And each thing one does, each thing one says, each thing one thinks, each thing one feels has a consequence. And this consequence brings another, and so on. Now, if one wants to have a more practical point of view, one may take examples and say: "If you do this, it will automatically produce that." For instance, in societies organised by men, if you commit a crime, you will be punished for your crime. In your own conscience, if you make a mistake, you suffer for the mistake you have made. And in the law as man has made it, it is always said that to be ignorant of the law is no excuse. If you are ignorant of the law, you are punished. If you make a mistake without knowing that it is a mistake, that does not protect you, you are punished. Well, in Nature it is the same thing. If you take poison without knowing that it is poison, it will poison you all the same. Do you understand?... Unless the Grace intervenes. And as the Grace is omnipotent, it can change everything. That is what I have explained. But without the Grace there is no hope. For precisely it is ignorance that's the constant factor of mankind.

I was thinking today how many deplorable and frightful experiences man has had to go through before knowing how to make use of Nature's things. It is possible that there was just this Grace which made him find things instinctively; but if he had to learn his lesson... I thought about that because... there are a certain number of fruits on the trees: there are fruits which are good, and then others which are poisoned — this is not written upon the tree. Now, there is always someone to tell you: "No, do not eat this, this will poison you." But if there were nobody to tell you that, how would you know? — By eating it and poisoning yourself. And then it would be somebody else who would have the benefit of your experience.

I thought of that because some fruits, when ripe, are excellent; they have a great nourishing power, they are very useful.

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But if they are not ripe they poison you. And it is the same fruit. Take, for instance, the avocado, (butterfruit, I think), take the butterfruit; if you eat an unripe butterfruit (you won't eat it because it tastes very bad), but if you eat an unripe butterfruit, it poisons you radically, whilst as soon as it is ripe, it is excellent. Now, in some countries as in South America or certain parts of Africa, these trees grow as high as the tallest mango trees. And all the fruits hang down in the same way. Somebody who comes along not knowing the tree, not knowing anything and without anyone to warn him, takes the fruit, cuts it, eats it and dies. Then someone else comes by a month later, all the fruits are ripe; he takes them, eats them, finds himself well nourished—it is excellent, it is wonderful. Now, somebody tells him: "Ah! how is it you have eaten that fruit, and the other man is dead...." So how many experiences are necessary to learn that it is because one ate the unripe fruit and the other the ripe. And when it is not ripe, it is bad and when ripe, good.

And we benefit by all the experiences of those who were upon earth before us. But if we had to come to a country about which we knew nothing, and had to learn everything by ourselves, we would have very unpleasant experiences. There are other fruits like that, this is not the only one, there are many such. For example, the fig—the unripe fig—if you touch the white juice that oozes from the fig—but it's awful—you have boils all over the mouth and become quite ill, and you get ulcers in the stomach also. But when the fig is ripe and you take care not to touch the white juice, it is a perfect food. I could give you a great many examples of this kind. But now we know this because we have been told. Those who told us learnt it from others. But who first made the experiment, who learnt all that, all the things in Nature?... There are many, there are countless things in Nature. Well, take plant life in Nature, we don't yet know everything today. For instance, some people tell you: "The remedy is always there along with the illness, in Nature; Nature has made it thus." I don't know if this is strictly so, but in any

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case, in a way it works, it is true. It is said, for instance, that if a snake has its hole somewhere, you may be sure you will find beside it a plant which will cure you if bitten. But which plant? There are so many there and who will teach you? There are people who go up to the mountains in the moonlight and collect herbs which cure diseases generally considered incurable. How have they learnt that? Who has made the experiment?

And mushrooms?...

Ah! yes, it is the same thing. You have side by side, just next to one another, a mushroom that's an excellent food and another which will send you to the other world immediately. We benefit by an accumulated knowledge. And I dare say much of this knowledge must have been lost, for many men have discovered things like these and never noted them down; and we too, we may make discoveries but don't always take care to note them down and make them accessible to others. And Nature is an almost infinite field of study and discovery.

Pavitra: *Those who discovered explosives — how many died and how many had accidents....*

That's man, it is his own fault. If he had not meddled with that, it would not have happened.

Often he may have touched it accidentally, without knowing it, without doing it on purpose.

But it is still an explosive. It is always the fault of another man, isn't it?

Those who studied chemistry and alighted upon explosives.

If they didn't know what it was, yes. For instance, you take some

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potassium chlorate, quite harmless, white, pretty, crystallised, charming. But then you take a hammer and start hitting it with all your might, and suddenly it explodes. Yes, it is like that.

But the number of plants—nobody has ever known and nobody will probably ever know the number of different plants there are upon earth. Yet when a list is made of the number of plants men know and use, it is ridiculously small. I believe, when I was in Japan, the Japanese used to tell me that Europeans eat only three hundred and fifty types of different plants, whilst they use more than six hundred. That makes a considerable difference. They used to say: "Oh, how you waste your food! Nature produces infinitely more than you know; you waste all that." Have you ever eaten (not here, but in Europe) bamboo sprouts?... You have eaten bamboo sprouts? You have eaten palm-tree buds? Coconut buds?—That, indeed, makes a marvellous salad, coconut buds. Only, this kills the tree. For a salad, one kills a tree. But when there is a cyclone, for instance, which knocks down hundreds of coconut trees, the only way of utilising the catastrophe is to eat all the buds and make yourself a magnificent dish. Haven't you ever eaten coconut buds? As for me, I was not surprised, for I had eaten bamboo sprouts before they sprang up from the ground — somewhat like the asparagus. It is quite a classical dish in Japan. And their bamboos are much more tender than the bamboos here. Their bamboos are very tender and their sprouts are wonderful.

Still, that's how it is. It seems in Europe one knows how to use only three hundred and fifty varieties of vegetables from the vegetable kingdom, whilst in Japan they use six hundred of them and more. But perhaps if people knew, they would not die of hunger, at least those who live in the countryside. *Voilá*.

In any case, things are like that. We don't know how it would be if it were only justice reigning over the world. But I believe it wouldn't be fun! For, as I have said, there is not a single person who can stand before the Lord and tell him: "I have never made a mistake." And when I speak of making a

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mistake, ignorance is not an excuse; for whether you touch the fire through ignorance or knowing it, the difference is rather in favour of the stupidity of touching it when one knows, for one can take precautions. But when one touches the fire through ignorance, without knowing, one burns oneself completely. And then one can't tell Nature: "Oh! I should not have been burnt, for I did not know that it burnt." It burns, nobody will listen to you!

Does the intervention of the Grace come through a call?

When one calls? I think so. Anyway, not exclusively and solely. But certainly, yes, if one has faith in the Grace and an aspiration and if one does what a little child would when it runs to its mother and says: "Mamma, give me this", if one calls with that simplicity, if one turns to the Grace and says "Give me this", I believe it listens. Unless one asks for something that is not good for one, then it does not listen. If one asks from it something that does harm or is not favourable, it does not listen.

What is the cause of this effect? of the call?

Perhaps one was destined to call. That is: Did the hen produce the egg or the egg the hen? I don't know whether it is the Grace which makes you call the Grace or whether because the Grace is called the Grace comes. It is difficult to say.

Essentially, it is quite possible that what is most lacking is faith. There is always a tiny corner in the thought which doubts and debates. So that spoils everything. It is only just when one is in an absolutely critical situation, when the mind realises that it can do nothing, absolutely nothing, when it stands there quite stupid and incapable, then, at that moment, if one aspires for a higher help, the aspiration has exactly that kind of intensity which comes from despair, and that takes effect. But if your thought continues to argue, if it says: "Yes, yes, I have aspired, I

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have prayed, but God knows if this is the moment, and whether it will come and whether it is possible”, well, then it is finished, it doesn’t work. This is one of the commonest of things. People are told: “If you want to advance in the yoga, you must have no desires”. One goes even a little further and says: “You must not have any needs.” One goes a little further still and says: “Never ask anything from the Divine.” Well, I don’t know, more than ninety-nine times out of a hundred, people’s reaction is: “Ah! if I don’t ask, I won’t have what I need.” They don’t see that they cut the whole movement at the very root! They don’t have faith. “I need this....”

I am not even discussing the idea of need, for it is quite arbitrary. I knew a Dutch painter who had come here, and done Sri Aurobindo’s portrait (it seems this portrait is still existent). This Dutch painter was practising a yoga. And so, one day, he told me this: “Oh! as for me, I think I can do without anything. Truly I believe one can reduce one’s needs to a minimum. But all the same, I must have a tooth-brush.” I had not yet lived in India at that time, otherwise I would have told him: “There are millions of people who have never had a toothbrush and whose teeth are quite clean. This is not the only way of keeping one’s teeth clean.” But at that time he was quite convinced that one could do without everything except keeping one’s mouth clean. And for him, to keep one’s mouth clean meant having a tooth-brush. That gives a very exact picture of what goes on in people’s minds. They cling to something and think they need it. And surely it is a complete ignorance, for perhaps there is a real necessity like that of having a clean mouth (that seems to be in any case quite necessary), but that association of the tooth-brush with the necessity of having a clean mouth is quite arbitrary. For it is not so very long ago that tooth-brushes were invented.

There was someone else also who told me: “Oh! I can absolutely do without anything at all”— we were speaking of a walking-tour with a minimum of baggage on the back (when

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you are compelled to carry it for miles on end, four or five kilometres a day, you try to reduce the weight of your bag as much as possible); so we discussed about what was indispensable and had to be put in the bag. He said his tooth-brush. Another told me he needed a piece of soap (usually this spins round very simple tiny things of this kind). But here how many people there are who have never used soap, and that doesn't prevent them from being clean! There are other ways of being clean. That's how it is, one is fixed in all kinds of small ideas and believes these are indispensable needs. And then, if you travel a little around the world, you notice that what is a need for you is for others something they don't even know of, something they have never seen in their life, which doesn't exist and hasn't the slightest importance of any kind. Hence it is not indispensable. It is just the result of an education and life in a particular environment. And these things are quite relative, and not only relative but transitory.

Voilà.

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You have said: “It is in proportion to our trust in the Divine that the Divine Grace can act for us and help.”¹ If someone has no trust in the Divine, but calls very sincerely when he is in difficulty, in danger, what will happen to him?

How can he call? The two things are contradictory. If he has no trust, he won't even think of the Divine! He won't think of calling. It is contradictory. He thinks of calling exactly in proportion to his trust.... So?

You have said here: “To smile at an enemy is to disarm him.”² “Smile” means what? One ought not to smile at an enemy!

One ought not to!... What I have stated here is an experience. It is the record of an experience which I expressed in general terms. But if, at a particular moment, somebody comes along with the blackest intentions, if one smiles at him, he is completely disarmed, he can do nothing any longer. But one must smile sincerely. One must not just grin or simper and think one... (*laughter*) I take “smile” in a rather complete meaning. That is to say, if one can be sufficiently master of oneself and above things, in a much higher consciousness which can see from above—even that which appears the most terrible and most dramatic to the ordinary human consciousness makes you smile as at a childishness. And so, if one is in that consciousness in which one can smile at everything (for one understands the causes of everything, and one also sees the forces working in

¹ *Words of the Mother*, CWM, Vol. 14, p. 92.
² *Ibid.*, p. 178.

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all things), if one can be in that consciousness and then smile at what happens, immediately things change. Only, this is not a little external and social smile: it must be the psychic being which smiles.

Doesn't the Divine help if he is not called?

It is not altogether like that.... The divine Consciousness works always, everywhere and in the same way. The divine Grace is active everywhere, and in all circumstances in the same way. And so on. But according to your personal attitude, you create within yourself the conditions for receiving what is done or not receiving it. And trust — indeed, trust in the Truth, trust in the Grace, trust in the divine Knowledge — this puts you in that state of receptivity in which you can receive these things. Whilst, if you have no trust... you may still try to receive something — there are people, for instance, who fling a sort of challenge, they throw a challenge at the Divine and tell him: "Here's the situation such as it is, I am in these conditions which seem to me at least inextricable, it is impossible to get out of them. But if the Divine pulls me out of the difficulty, I shall put my trust in him." There are many people — they do not formulate it like this but many feel and think in this way. Well, this is the worst of all possible conditions. Generally it puts you into a complete hole. And it is exactly the state most opposed to trustfulness. And besides, it is quite a vulgar bargaining: "If you do this for me, I shall have faith that you exist. I am going to try and see if you really exist and whether you are what they say. Do this, and we are going to see clearly if you succeed. Then I shall trust in you." And many people do that, even without being aware of it. Any number of men say: "How can I have trust in the Divine? I have such a lamentable and unhappy life!" That is to say, they limit the divine Consciousness to their little personal needs.

If one has the trust, does the help come automatically?

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Even an atom of sincerity suffices, and it comes. And if, truly, one calls very sincerely (not just calling and at the same time saying, "We are going to see now if it is going to succeed"—that naturally is not a very good condition), but if one calls very sincerely and sincerely needs the answer, one waits and it *always* comes. And if one can silence one's mind and be a little quiet, one even perceives the coming of the help and what form it takes.

From where do the gods come?

That means?... "From where" means what? What is their origin? Who has formed them?... But everything, everything comes from the one Origin, from the Supreme, the gods also.

There is a very old tradition which narrates this. I am going to tell you the story as one does to children, for in this way you will understand:

One day "God" decided to exteriorise himself, objectivise himself, in order to have the joy of knowing himself in detail. So, first of all, he emanated his consciousness (that is to say, he manifested his consciousness) by ordering this consciousness to realise a universe. This consciousness began by emanating four beings, four individualities which were indeed altogether very high beings, of the highest Reality. They were the being of consciousness, the being of love (of Ananda rather), the being of life and the being of light and knowledge—but consciousness and light are the same thing. There we are then: consciousness, love and Ananda, life and truth—truth, that's the exact word. And naturally, they were supremely powerful beings, you understand. They were what are called in that tradition the first emanations, that is, the first formations. And each one became very conscious of its qualities, its power, its capacities, its possibilities, and, suddenly forgot each in its own way that it was only an emanation and an incarnation of the Supreme. And so this is what happened: when light or Consciousness separated

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from the divine Consciousness, that is, when it began to think it was the divine Consciousness and that there was nothing other than itself, it suddenly became obscurity and inconscience. And when Life thought that all life was in itself and that there was nothing else but its life and that it did not depend at all upon the Supreme, then its life became death. And when Truth thought that it contained all truth, and that there was no other truth than itself, this Truth became falsehood. And when love or Ananda was convinced that it was the supreme Ananda and that there was no other than itself and its felicity, it became suffering. And that is how the world, which was to have been so beautiful, became so ugly. Now, that consciousness (if you like to call it the Divine Mother, the Supreme Consciousness), when she saw this she was very disturbed, you may be sure, she said to herself: "This has really not succeeded." So she turned back to the Divine, to God, the Supreme, and she asked him to come to her aid. She said to him: "This is what has happened. Now what is to be done?" He said: "Begin again, but try to manage in such a way that the beings do not become so independent! ... They must remain in contact with you, and through you with me." And it was thus that she created the gods, who were quite docile and not so proud, and who began the creation of the world. But as the others had come before them, at every step the gods met the others. And it was in this way that the world changed into a battlefield, a place of war, strife, suffering, darkness and all the rest, and for each new creation the gods had to fight with the others who had gone ahead: they had preceded them, they had plunged headlong into matter; and they had created all this disorder and the gods had to put straight all this confusion. That is where the gods came from. They are the second emanations.

Mother, the first four who changed, was it by chance or was it deliberately?

No. What is chance?

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It is said also—that is the continuation of the story or rather its beginning—that the Divine wanted his creation to be a free creation. He wanted all that went forth from him to be absolutely independent and free in order to be able to unite with him in freedom, not through compulsion. He did not want that they should be compelled to be faithful, compelled to be conscious, compelled to be obedient. They had to do it spontaneously, through the knowledge and conviction that that was much better. So this world was created as a world of total freedom, freedom of choice. And it is in this way that at every moment everyone has the freedom of choice—but with all the consequences. If one chooses well, it is good, but if one chooses ill, ah well, what's to happen happens—that is what has happened!

The story may be understood in a much more occult and spiritual sense. But it is like all the stories of the universe: if you want to narrate them so that people may understand, they become stories for children. But if one knows how to see the truth behind the symbols, one understands everything. Even with what I have told you, which seems like a little story for children, even like that, if you understand what I have told you and the meaning of what I have told you, you can have the secret of things.

There are traditions which say that it is an “accident”, in the sense that it could have been otherwise. But it happened like that. It is true, it came about like that. Only, it was quite understandable that, every one of these elements having its origin in the Supreme, being quite close to the Emanation at that moment, quite close to the Origin, carried in itself the consciousness of its divinity and superiority, necessarily, since this is not a creation made with something foreign to the Divine: it is simply the Divine who has emanated himself, as though he were looking at himself—he objectivises himself in order to become aware of all that he is; instead of being in an inner static state of concentration in which all is unmanifested, he projects that outside himself

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“in order to see”, as though he wanted to see all that is within him, that is, all the infinity of possibilities. So, all was possible. It happened like that — it could have happened otherwise. Besides, nothing tells you that alongside our universe such as it is, there do not exist others which are so different that there cannot be any relation between one universe and another. It can very well be that our universe is not the only exteriorisation of the Divine. Ours is such as we know it; there may be others which are in much less sorry a state than this one! Besides, it is lamentable only in its appearance. If you go behind the appearance, you become aware that it is not lamentable at all. It is only one way of seeing.

“Each time that we have made a decisive step in our spiritual progress, the invisible enemies of the Divine always try to take their revenge, and when they cannot injure the soul they strike the body. But all their efforts are in vain and will finally be defeated, for the Divine Grace is with us.”

Words of the Mother, CWM, Vol. 15, p. 22

What are these “invisible enemies of the Divine”?

They are precisely those four persons who have naturally put forth innumerable emanations, which have again put forth others, which have made formations. And so there are millions and millions and millions of them, and it is these who have formed between themselves a certain habit and have the logic to preserve it and persist in not wanting any other rule than theirs to govern. These are what are called in India the Asuras, the beings of darkness. It is through a sort of logic that they are like that. They began by going wrong, they continue. Now, I must say, there are some among them who change their mind. But this is mentioned in the Gita also; I believe they speak of those who will be converted, and then of those who absolutely refuse

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any conversion, who prefer to disappear, to be destroyed rather than be converted. And that's how it is. Some are of one kind, others of another.

Which are “the others” who have been converted?

Ah, you know that? You have a good memory. There is one of them who has been converted, and who even collaborates, he is the one of Consciousness and Light.

If he is converted, the difficulty must go of itself.

Naturally, but his power remains. This becomes a formidable being.

You said that consciousness had changed into inconsciousness. But when consciousness is converted, inconsciousness must go?

It becomes once again consciousness and light — it becomes once more what it was.

Hasn’t it become that again?

But I have just said a minute ago that when it became inconscious or darkness, it produced innumerable formations — emanations, formations, creations. And its conversion does not mean that all the rest follow. They obey that same law of freedom, freedom of choice. They may be converted or not. There are those who are converted, there are those who refuse. And I believe that in fact there are many more who refuse.

But the one who does the greatest harm is the “Lord of Falsehood”. He it is indeed who is the biggest obstacle in the universe, this constant negation of the truth. And he has a very strong hold on the terrestrial world, on the material world. Besides, here (on the earth), those who see him, see him as an

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absolutely marvellous, splendid being. He entitles himself the “Lord of the Nations”, and he appears formidable, luminous, powerful, very impressive.... Historically, he was the inspirer of certain heads of State, and he proclaims himself the Lord of the Nations because it is he who governs the peoples. He is evidently, at the source, the supreme organiser of these last two wars. It was on that occasion that he manifested himself as the Lord of the Nations. And he declared, besides, that he would never be converted. And he knows that his end will come — naturally, he will try to make it as late as possible. And he declared that he would destroy all he could before being destroyed.... We may expect all possible catastrophes.

In February you gave a message saying “a new light shall break upon the earth”³, and just after that [on 5 March 1953], Stalin died. Does this signify anything?

That would truly be a small result. The death of Stalin (unfortunately not any more than the death of Hitler) has not changed the present state of the world. Something more than that would be necessary. For this is like the assassin who is guillotined: when his head is cut off, his spirit remains behind and is projected outside him. It is a vital formation and it goes and takes shelter in one of the benevolent spectators, who suddenly feels a criminal instinct in himself. There are many men like that, specially very young criminals who when questioned have acknowledged this. They have been asked: “When did this desire to kill come to you?” and the frequent reply is: “It got hold of me when I saw so-and-so executed.”

So, this is of no use, the death of this one or that other. That does not help very much — the thing goes elsewhere. It is only one form. It is as though you did something very wicked with

³ The reference is to a message given to the Bengali journal *Srinvantu*:
“Let the Light of the Truth be born upon earth from today and for ever.”

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a particular shirt on and then threw away your shirt and said: "Now, I shall no longer do harm." You continue with another shirt on!

If life has been converted into death, why doesn't it itself die?

Because it protects itself well. What you say is quite true, but it takes good care not to incarnate on earth. And in the vital world there is no death, it does not exist there. It is in the material world that this exists, and it takes very good care not to incarnate.

Was Stalin predestined to be what he was?

Stalin? I am not quite sure that he was a human being... in the sense that I don't think he had a psychic being. Or perhaps he did have one — in all matter, in every atom there is a divine centre — but I mean a conscious psychic being, formed, individualised. I don't think so. I believe it was a direct incarnation of a being of the vital world. And that was the great difference between him and Hitler. Hitler was simply a man, and as a man he was very weak-minded, very sentimental — he had the conscience of a petty workman (some said of a petty shoemaker), in any case of a little workman or a little school-master, something like that, a very small conscience, and extremely sentimental, what is called in French "fleur bleue", very weak.

But he was possessed. He was rather mediocre by nature, very mediocre. He was a medium, a very good medium — the thing took hold of him, besides, during spiritism séances. It was at that moment that he was seized by those fits which were described as epileptic. They were not epileptic: they were attacks of possession. It was thus that he had a kind of power, which however was not very great. But when he wanted to know something from that power, he went away to his castle, and there, in "meditation", there truly he invoked very intensely what he

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called his “god”, his supreme god, who was the Lord of the Nations. And everything seemed to him magnificent. It was a being... it was small — it appeared to him all in silver armour, with a silver helmet and golden plume! It was magnificent! And a light so dazzling that hardly could the eyes see and bear that blaze. Naturally it did not appear physically — Hitler was a medium, he saw. He had a sort of clairvoyance. And it was at such times that he had his fits: he rolled on the ground, he drivelled, bit the carpet, it was frightful, the state he was in. The people around him knew it. Well, that being is the “Lord of the Nations”. And it is not even the Lord of the Nations in its origin, it is an emanation of the Lord of the Nations, and a very powerful emanation.

If it chooses to disappear, would that be a loss of power for the Divine?

What? What are you saying! Disappear where? What do you call disappearing? — Disappear where? You know the story of the Ramayana. What did Ravana choose? You know that? Very well, this is what is called choosing to disappear: that is to say, he has no longer any individuality.

What happened to Ravana after his death we are not told.

We are not told? To me it has been told. It is said that Ravana chose to disappear into the Supreme, and that he was completely dissolved in Him, that is, he lost his individuality, he was no longer a separate being, he returned to the Origin, he was dissolved in the Supreme. And even before doing it, he had chosen to play that part, his part as a hostile being, because the road is much shorter than for those who are devotees and obey. One goes much more rapidly, for, one day, the Divine decides that it is enough, and he just destroys them. He cannot go out of

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the Divine, for all is divine! He may lose his individuality, that is, may be fused, dissolved into the Supreme.

Besides, nothing disappears, it is the form which disappears but the constituent elements continue. Everything is eternal, for everything is the Divine, and nothing can go out of the Divine, for everything is divine. But the forms disappear. And it is through this identification with the form that the impression of death comes; but the constituent elements are eternal, for all is eternal. It is the form which disappears.

So, some of those beings prefer to be just completely dissolved and to disappear totally like that, into the infinite, the oneness (that is, they lose their personal consciousness, they have no longer any personal consciousness, they exist no longer as a personal consciousness), they prefer that, rather than having a personal consciousness which gives itself to the Divine and becomes by this very fact consciously and personally immortal. They like dissolution and personal disappearance better than conversion, that is, self-giving.

Why?

Through pride, I suppose. It is always pride. Fundamentally, from the very beginning it is pride — but almost all the religions have said it. It is pride, that is, a sort of consciousness of one's power and one's importance.

You said that these four emanations were parts of the Supreme. Then how can they have another consciousness than His?

Another consciousness? But there is no other consciousness! The very principle of emanation is an objectivisation of a part of himself, which potentially keeps the qualities of the emanator. But if this emanation is made (as they were made) with a will to give freedom of choice, as I said, these emanations

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can either follow that freedom and independence or continue to keep the connection with the emanator, for there is a freedom of choice. That strength and force which they hold in themselves is quite sufficient to give them the impression of their importance and power. If they themselves, of their own will, choose not to remain in contact, in a relation of surrender to the Supreme, if they choose to use the amount of power and consciousness and force they contain in themselves to do what they must do independently, by that very fact they cut themselves off from their source—but in spite of that the constituent elements of their being are those which belonged to the Source. And it is because of this that, even if they cut themselves off voluntarily, there is in the very depth of the consciousness a link which is indestructible. It is the link of identity. But in the outer manifestation, as they were emanated with this essential quality of freedom of choice, well, they are free to choose to do this or that. That is why, even in the worst criminal, there is somewhere in the depths, somewhere, the divine light. I believe you have read that passage of Vivekananda where he says (I don't know the exact words), that the criminal must be told: "Awake, awake, being of light, and shine forth!"

Just a while ago, when I told you I shall narrate the story to you as one does to children, that is precisely because I narrated it as if it were a material story. And narrated thus, it becomes a child's story. But these things must be seen in their own domain, which is a spiritual domain and not a material one. Things do not happen as they would here.

But still, yes! What happens here is symbolically the same thing, in the sense that the child who is born is nothing else but a little piece of his mother, even materially, altogether materially, for during almost... completely during a few hours, about two days, and to a lesser extent though still very perceptibly during at least two months, this link of substance is so great that it feels really like a physical material prolongation of herself, but outside herself. That is just the element of emanation. Well, this

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does not prevent children, when they grow up, from becoming quite independent of their parents and at times completely different, but at the source, at the beginning, it is the same thing. It is simply the same matter, absolutely the same, simply exteriorised, that's all.

And for the emanations, it is the same phenomenon, but instead of being on a material plane it is on the highest spiritual plane. And what happens here is a symbol of what happens up above.

Well, doesn't it ever occur to you to say: "How is it that this child whose father and mother are so good, so honest, so generous, so truthful, how is it that he is such a rascal?" You may wonder at it, but it does not seem anything impossible. So, this is the same thing. Fundamentally, all depends on the inner constitution of the being. There are no two beings who are exactly alike; there are no two constitutions which are the same. And all depends on the inner organisation, the integral organisation of the being, on the order in which the elements are organised and what their inner relation is—even as the external form differs because the cells are not organised in the same way. But as this is a phenomenon you constantly see, in the midst of which you are born, which you see every day, it seems quite natural to you. But it is the same thing. It seems quite natural to you that a child is different from its mother and father—and yet this is the same thing. And in an emanation of the Supreme, to begin with, one part is necessarily different from the whole, though it may potentially contain the whole, but the whole is not expressed. And as the whole is not expressed, it is perforce different from the whole, for the inner organisation is different. There then, I think that is enough.

We have almost touched philosophy.

Au revoir, my children.

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"We are always surrounded by the things of which we think."

Words of the Mother, CWM, Vol. 14, p. 343

This is very important.

If you think of nasty things, you will be surrounded by nasty things.

"To get over our ego is not an easy task.

"Even after overcoming it in the material consciousness, we meet it once more—magnified—in the spiritual."

Ibid., p. 258

How can one meet one's ego in the spiritual consciousness?

There is a spiritual ego even as there is a physical, vital and mental ego. There is a spiritual ego. There are people who have made a great effort to overcome all their egoism and all their limitations, and attained a spiritual consciousness; and there, they have all the vanity and the sense of their importance and contempt for those who are not in the same condition as they. Indeed, all that is ridiculous and bad in the ego, they find there once again. There are many, many like that. They have overcome what was there in the physical or vital consciousness but the very effort they have made to master themselves and this victory they have gained give them the sense of their extreme importance. So they become puffed up and assert their authority.

This happens so frequently that it is not even noticed.

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I didn't understand this: "The so-called forces of Nature are nothing but the exterior activities of beings out of proportion with man by their size and by the powers at their disposal."

Words of the Mother, CWM, Vol. 15, p. 11

Didn't understand?... For instance, take the wind which blows; now scientists will tell you: "These are manifestations of forces of Nature, and it is the result of such and such a phenomenon", they will speak about heat and cold, high and low, etc., and they will tell you: "That's the cause of the wind's blowing, these are currents of air produced in the atmosphere." But it is not this. There are entities behind, only they are so huge that their form eludes us. It would be like your asking an ant to describe the form of a man—it couldn't, could it? It sees at the most the tiny end of the little finger and it takes a walk on the foot—it is a great journey, and it would not know what a man's form would be like. Well, it is almost the same thing. These forces which bring about wind, rain, earthquakes, etc. are manifestations of—call them gestures, if you like—of movements of certain beings so formidably huge that we hardly see the end of their foot and don't realise their size.

Still, the spiritual ego is better than the ordinary ego, isn't it?

It is much more dangerous than the ordinary one! For one is not aware that it is the ego. Outwardly, when one is egoistic, not only does one know it oneself but others make you realise it still more, and circumstances prove it to you every moment. But there, as unfortunately you meet people who respect you highly, you are not even aware that you are terribly egoistic.

Very dangerous. Spiritual vanity is much more serious than physical vanity.

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Then, Sweet Mother, with the ego can one realise the Divine?

Not at the moment one unites with Him. It is evident that at that moment the ego disappears. But that state does not last. Or in any case we can put it in another way: those who have brought along their ego with them cannot keep the consciousness for long. They become aware of themselves again whilst having the experience. It is that which is most terrible. They look at themselves having the experience and admire themselves. And they feel they are exceptional beings, much higher than others, and then that becomes deplorable.

Here, you have said: “Whether Thou choosest for me life or death, happiness or sorrow, pleasure or suffering, all that comes to me from Thee will be welcome.”

Does the Divine give suffering or sorrow?

Well, my child, that text, you know what it is: it is Radha's prayer to Krishna. And so, it is such a personification of divine forces that one is obliged to extend human feelings to the Divine in order to be able to express oneself. To understand it in its true form a whole long explanation would be required, and then it is no longer artistic—it becomes dogmatic or in any case didactic. It is to give the idea that all is in the Divine and all is divine. And necessarily, if one changes the state of consciousness and is identified with the Divine, that changes the very nature of things. For example, what seemed pain or sorrow or misery—one becomes aware quite on the contrary that it is an opportunity for the Divine's growing closer to you, and that from this event perhaps one may draw a still greater joy than that experienced from something satisfying. Only, you must understand it like that, in that spirit and with that consciousness, for otherwise, if taken in the ordinary sense, it is the very contradiction of the principle that all is divine.

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The same thing, exactly the same vibration, according to the way in which it is received and responded to, brings either an intense joy or considerable despair, exactly the same, according to the state of consciousness one is in. So there is nothing of which it could be said: it is a misfortune. There is nothing that could be called suffering. All that is necessary is to change one's state of consciousness. That is all. Only (I have written this somewhere, I don't know where now), if you yourself succeed in changing your state of consciousness and enter this condition of bliss, you can see others still quarrelling, fighting, being unhappy, suffering and feeling miserable, and you yourself feel that everything is so harmonious, so wonderful, so sweet, so pleasant, and you say: "Well, why don't they do what I do?" But the trouble is that everybody is not ready to do that! And for those who remain in the ordinary consciousness, for them suffering is something very real.

Now, there are people who don't care to be happy all alone and agree to renounce this perfect bliss in order to help others to walk a little farther on the path.

Attitudes in the world — attitudes towards virtue — are very subjective. And what may succeed with one may not do so with another. And every one must follow his own path. That is why it is always difficult to say to people: "Do what I do." This is what all gurus usually say: "Do as I do and you will reach the goal." All that one may say is: "Do as I do and you will be like me."

(*Silence*)

Ah! I wanted to ask you a question. We said at the beginning: one is surrounded by what one thinks about. You understand quite well what this means? (*Turning to a child*) Every time you think of something, it is as though you had a magnet in your hand and were attracting that thing towards yourself — you understand. Now, there are people who have a very, very

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bad habit of always thinking about all possible catastrophes, and are in a sort of constant apprehension about some calamity befalling them the next moment. I know many like that, there are some here. And so, those people have as though a magnet in their hands to attract calamities, not only upon themselves but upon others also. That lays a big responsibility upon them. And if one can't stop all the time from thinking about something—some have a head that runs on and they haven't found a way of stopping it—well, why not make it run on the right lines instead of letting it run on the others! Once your head begins to run, let it run on all the good things that can happen. If it is obliged to turn round and round, well, turn then to the good side! That is, if somebody is ill, instead of saying: "What is going to happen, perhaps this is going to be very serious, and if it is that disease... and a calamity comes so quickly", instead of all that, if one thinks: "Oh! that is nothing, illnesses are outer illusions translating some deeper vibrations which are not seen, that is why one doesn't speak about them, but that's how it is. And these deeper vibrations may come and set in order what has been disturbed. And this imbalance, this illness or bad thing that has come, well, it will be absorbed by the Grace and will disappear, no trace of it will remain, except that of things agreeable and pleasant." One may continue to think in this way uninterruptedly.... People always need to make their mind run, run, run, but then make it run on the right lines, you will see that it has an effect. For instance, let it go like this: that I shall learn better and better, shall know better and better, become healthier and healthier, and all difficulties will vanish, and wicked people will become sweet and good, and ill people will be cured, and houses which should be built will be built, and those things which should disappear will disappear, but giving place to better things, and the world will move in a constant progress, and at the end of that progress there will be a total harmony, and so on, and continue thus.... You can go on endlessly. But then you will have around you and around

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your head all kinds of pretty things. Those who perceive the atmosphere see certain inky stains, like an octopus there, yes, like that, with its tentacles to try and upset your mind — instead of that, one will see happy formations, formations of light or rays of sunlight or perhaps beautiful pictures, all that. One will see beautiful things — there are painters who do that and they always capture the thoughts.

Sweet Mother, you have said: “Each meditation ought to be a new revelation, for in each meditation something new happens.”¹ After the meditation, is one conscious of what has happened?

But that's exactly the thing; I say: pay attention and become conscious. If one is very attentive, one becomes conscious. One must be very concentrated and very attentive, then one becomes conscious.

Mother, suffering comes from ignorance and pain, but what is the nature of the suffering and pain the Divine Mother feels for her children — the Divine Mother in Savitri?

It is because she participates in their nature. She has descended upon earth to participate in their nature. Because if she did not participate in their nature, she could not lead them farther. If she remained in her supreme consciousness where there is no suffering, in her supreme knowledge and consciousness, she could not have any contact with human beings. And it is for this that she is obliged to take on the human consciousness and form, it is to be able to enter into contact with them. Only, she does not forget: she has adopted their consciousness but she remains in relation with her own real, supreme consciousness. And thus, by joining

¹ *Words of the Mother*, CWM, Vol. 14, p. 52.

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the two, she can make those who are in that other consciousness progress. But if she did not adopt their consciousness, if she did not suffer with their sorrow, she could not help them. Hers is not a suffering of ignorance: it is a suffering through identity. It is because she has accepted to have the same vibrations as they, in order to be able to enter into contact with them and pull them out of the state they are in. If she did not enter into contact with them, she would not be felt at all or no one could bear her radiance.... This has been said in all kinds of forms, in all kinds of religions, and they have spoken very often of the divine Sacrifice, but from a certain point of view it is true. It is a voluntary sacrifice, but it is true: giving up a state of perfect consciousness, perfect bliss, perfect power in order to accept the state of ignorance of the outer world so as to pull it out of that ignorance. If this state were not accepted, there would be no contact with it. No relation would be possible. And this is the reason of the incarnations. Otherwise, there would be no necessity. If the divine consciousness and divine force could work directly from the place or state of their perfection, if they could work directly on matter and transform it, there would be no need to take a body like man's. It would have been enough to act from the world of Truth with the perfect consciousness and upon consciousness. In fact that acts perhaps but so slowly that when there is this effort to make the world progress, make it go forward more rapidly, well, it is necessary to take on human nature. By taking the human body, one is obliged to take on human nature, partially. Only, instead of losing one's consciousness and losing contact with the Truth, one keeps this consciousness and this Truth, and it is by joining the two that one can create exactly this kind of alchemy of transformation. But if one did not touch matter, one could do nothing for it.

Did Savitri foresee what she was going to do?

She said so. You have not read it? She had even been told that

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she would be alone. And she said: I am ready to be alone. You have not read it? It is in the canto they recited last year.²

*Did she know she would meet the “Mother of Sorrows”,
the “Mother of Might”?*

Indeed she did. It is said all along that she knew all that was going to happen. It is written clearly. Indeed, to each of them she says clearly: I shall bring to you what you need. Consequently, she knows it. Else she would not say so. If she did not know it, how could she say so?

*In Savitri the “Mother of Sorrows” says:
“Perhaps when the world sinks into a last sleep,
I too may sleep in dumb eternal peace.”*

Savitri, Book VII, Canto 4

Ah! that, that is the human consciousness. It is the human consciousness. It is the idea of the human consciousness that when all suffering will be over, well, “I shall sleep”. It is indeed of this that Sri Aurobindo speaks. When there is this aspiration for a supreme peace, one feels that if there were a *pralaya* and the world disappeared, well, at least there would be peace. But the phrase itself is self-contradictory, for if there were a *pralaya*, there would be no more peace to be felt — there would be nothing at all any longer!

But this is just one of the contradictions of the human consciousness: “As long as the world is there and suffering there, I shall suffer with the world. But if ever the world enters into peace, disappears in the peace of Non-Being, then I too shall rest.” It is a poetic way of saying that as long as misery is there in the world, I shall suffer with the world. Only when it ceases to be there, it shall cease for me also.

² Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book VII, Canto 4, recited at the School Annual function of 1 December 1953.

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Then what will the “Mother of Sorrows” do? What else can she do?

She will be the “Mother of Delight”.

Savitri represents the Mother’s Consciousness, doesn’t she?

Yes.

What does Satyavan represent?

Well, he is the Avatar. He is the incarnation of the Supreme.

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Sweet Mother, you have said: "... Many methods have been prescribed for attaining this perception [of the psychic being in us] and ultimately achieving this identification [with the psychic being]. Some methods are psychological, some religious, some even mechanical."

On Education, CWM, Vol. 12, p. 4

Will you give some examples of this?

Mechanical, these are the Asanas, Hathayoga. It is done with this intention. Religious, these are for those who believe in a particular religion and pray and perform religious ceremonies. When one believes in a religion — no matter which — one abides by the discipline of the religion and prays and asks, one undergoes the discipline according to the teaching and observing the beliefs of the religion. The psychological method is Yoga. To seek within oneself through introspection what is permanent, what is constant. That's all.

"Your aim should be high and wide, generous and disinterested."

Ibid., p. 3

What does this mean?

You are asking what that means! High?... For instance, there are those whose aim is to make a fortune, and there are those whose aim is to find a cure for a disease. That of making one's fortune is obviously more self-seeking and lower than the one of finding a remedy for an illness. There are those who have for their aim in life a comfortable and quiet living, with a family and children,

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wanting the best in the best of possible worlds. That is a pretty low aim, in any case quite an ordinary one. There are those who seek the betterment of the whole of society or those who study to make new discoveries, like Mr. and Mrs. Curie, for example, who discovered radium. That is a higher aim. "Disinterested", that means what is not for one's own small personal profit, for one's personal pleasure, but solely for helping others. Naturally, the highest aim is to unite with the Divine and fulfil His work, but that, that's right at the top of the ladder. In this first chapter I took good care not to say anything of this kind, for I wrote it intentionally for everybody, even for those who have no mystical conception. But still, it goes without saying that the discovery of the Divine in oneself and uniting with Him and accomplishing His work is the highest and most disinterested aim, and the least selfish.

What adjectives have I used?

High and wide, generous and disinterested.

Yes. Wide, it is something that's not limited to a small purely personal consciousness and its small purely selfish advantages, something embracing a whole—which may be a group, a nation, a continent or the entire earth. For man an action working on the entire earth is surely a wide action.

After that you have said: "This will make your life precious to yourself and to all."

Yes. If you are useless, it is not precious, if you are useful, it becomes precious! There is nothing more disgusting than to be busy with all the little details of a narrow personal existence. One feels empty, hollow, useless. One has no interest in life. There are people all shut up in their little family, and if the baby coughs, they spend hours in fretting, if the dinner is not well-cooked, they quarrel, or if the gentleman has lost his job and is

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looking for another, he laments: "How shall I feed my family?"
— That's existing like an earth-worm in a hole.

In everybody, is the psychic always pure or has it to be made pure?

It is always pure. But it is either more or less individualised and independent in its action. What is psychic in the being is always pure, by its very definition, for it is that part of the being which is in contact with the Divine and expresses the truth of the being. But this may be like a spark in the darkness of the being or it may be a being of light, conscious, fully formed and independent. There are all the gradations between the two.

Usually is it veiled?

It is the outer consciousness that is not in contact with it, for it is turned outwards instead of being turned inwards — for it lives amidst all the external noises and movements, in what it sees, what it does, what it says, instead of looking within, into the depths of the being and listening to the inner inspirations.

Has the psychic any power?

Power? It is usually the psychic which guides the being. One knows nothing about it because one is not conscious of it but usually it is that which guides the being. If one is very attentive, one becomes aware of it. But the majority of men haven't the least idea of it. For instance, when they have decided, in their outer ignorance, to do something, and instead of their being able to do it, all the circumstances are so organised that they do something else, they start shouting, storming, flying into a rage against fate, saying (that depends on what they believe, their beliefs) that Nature is wicked or their destiny baleful or God unjust, or... no matter what (it depends on what they believe).

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Whilst most of the time it is just the very circumstance which was most favourable for their inner development. And naturally, if you ask the psychic to help you to fashion a pleasant life for yourself, to earn money, have children who will be the pride of the family, etc., well, the psychic will not help you. But it will create for you all the circumstances necessary to awaken something in you so that the need of union with the Divine may be born in your consciousness. At times you have made fine plans, and if they had succeeded, you would have been more and more encrusted in your outer ignorance, your stupid little ambition and your aimless activity. Whilst if you receive a good shock, and the post you coveted is denied to you, the plan you made is shattered, and you find yourself completely thwarted, then, sometimes this opposition opens to you a door on something truer and deeper. And when you are a little awake and look back, if you are in the least sincere, you say: "Ah! it wasn't I who was right — it was Nature or the divine Grace or my psychic being who did it." It is the psychic being which organised that.

Is it the psychic will which wants the being to be identified with the Divine?

Yes, surely. It is the will of the psychic. It is also the very reason of its existence. It is for that it is there. For example, in the mind certain activities (and even at times in the physical and vital) certain activities awaken to the influence of the psychic without even knowing it. That is why those parts adhere to it and begin to aspire also for the divine knowledge, the divine union, the relation with the Divine.

How does the psychic manifest the truth?

I have said that it manifests the truth?

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“We give the name ‘psychic’ to the psychological centre of our being, the seat within us of the highest truth of our existence, that which can know this truth and set it in movement.”

On Education, CWM, Vol. 12, p. 4

Oh! the truth of our existence — not just the Truth. The truth of the being, that is, the central *raison d'être* of an existence. It is that, indeed, which organises circumstances so that the truth of the being may be expressed or the superficial outer being be led to turn round within — not find any support outside, for instance, and turn within to have a support; it finds the psychic support.

“The body has a wonderful capacity of adaptation and endurance. It is able to do so many more things than one usually imagines. If, instead of the ignorant and despotic masters that govern it, it is ruled by the central truth of the being, you will be amazed at what it is capable of doing. Calm and quiet, strong and poised, at every minute it will be able to put forth the effort that is demanded of it, for it will have learnt to find rest in action and to recuperate, through contact with the universal forces, the energies it expends consciously and usefully.”

Ibid., p. 7

How can one have “rest in action”?

That comes from a kind of certitude of inner choice. When one aspires for something, if at the same time one knows that the aspiration will be heard and answered in the best way possible, that establishes a quietude in the being, a quietude in its vibrations; whilst if there is a doubt, an uncertainty, if one does not know what will lead one to the goal or if ever one will reach it or whether there is a way of doing so, and so on, then one gets disturbed and that usually creates a sort of little whirlwind

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around the being, which prevents it from receiving the real thing. Instead, if one has a quiet faith, if whilst aspiring one knows that there is no aspiration (naturally, sincere aspiration) which remains unanswered, then one is quiet. One aspires with as much fervour as possible, but does not stand in nervous agitation asking oneself why one does not get immediately what one has asked for. One knows how to wait. I have said somewhere: "To know how to wait is to put time on one's side." That is quite true. For if one gets excited, one loses all one's time — one loses one's time, loses one's energy, loses one's movements. To be very quiet, calm, peaceful, with the faith that what is true will take place, and that if one lets it happen, it will happen so much the quicker. Then, in that peace everything goes much better.

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If the mind “is incapable of finding knowledge”¹ what part of the being finds knowledge?

One must enter the knowledge which belongs to the supramental region.

But in order to bring it down?

Every time something attracts this knowledge (something which is evidently ready to receive it), it comes.

It does not come down into the mind, Sweet Mother?

Yes, it descends into the mind. Into a higher part of the mind or rather into the psychic. One may have knowledge from the psychic — though it is of another kind and is not formulated as in the mind. It is a sort of inner certitude which makes you do the right thing at the right moment and in the right way, without necessarily passing through the reason or mental formation.

For instance, one may act with a perfect knowledge of what should be done, and without intervention — the least intervention — of the reasoning mind. The mind is silent: it simply looks on and listens in order to register things, it does not act.

Here you have said: “Knowledge belongs to a much higher domain than that of the human mind, far above the region of pure ideas.”

On Education, CWM, Vol. 12, p. 5

Sweet Mother, what do you mean by “pure ideas”?

¹ *On Education, CWM, Vol. 12, p. 5.*

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We have already spoken about this once, and not so long ago. Pure ideas are those which are translated into numerous thoughts. One idea may give birth to many thoughts, and can be expressed in many different ways; and yet it remains what it is.

Sometimes we look fixedly at a point; one forgets everything at that moment and if there is a noise one is disturbed. What is this state?

Concentration! It is exactly the very principle of concentration. Can you do it spontaneously?

Yes, many times.

Indeed, that's very good!

Yes, Sweet Mother, but what I thought at that moment I cannot capture.

Ah!... If you are suddenly pulled out from it, thought vanishes?

Yes.

That's because you enter a state of consciousness which is different from your ordinary state of consciousness and probably the link between the two is not established very well. That takes time. It is as though one had to build a bridge. Otherwise one takes a sudden jump to one side or the other, and then in jumping one forgets what was there. One leaves behind the experience one had. But if the thing is done methodically, that is, if every day one keeps a particular time for this, and meditates for ten or fifteen minutes in order to establish a contact between that and the outer life, well, after some time one succeeds and then one remembers, and this becomes very useful. It is very useful. And

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if your power of concentration is complete, then there is not a problem you cannot solve—I don't mean arithmetic problems (*laughter*), I mean problems about leading one's life, about decisions to be taken, psychological problems which need solving. There is not one that can resist this power of concentration.

And in fact it is very convenient to take a point: one looks steadily at the point, and so steadily that at a certain moment one becomes the point. One is no longer somebody looking at the point; one is the point. And then, if you continue with sufficient strength and quietness, without anything disturbing you, you may suddenly find yourself before a door which opens and you pass to the other side. And then you have the revelation.

Since when have you been doing this? This has always happened? Or is it recent?

I don't know.

You don't know? Perhaps you were doing it and were not aware of it!

I didn't know.

But you don't do it deliberately? It just comes upon you, takes hold of you?

Yes.

Ah! this is perhaps also one of the reasons why you don't remember.

(Another child) *Sweet Mother, when one passes into the region of knowledge, is it necessary to pass through the intermediary regions?*

Intermediary? But you see, if one does it by a methodical discipline, generally one is obliged to pass from one plane to another:

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one wakes up in a particular plane, and then there one enters a sort of sleep and wakes up in another plane, and so on. And if one does it this way, then one remembers, for one does it with one's conscious will and witnesses the working—these movements for quietening the being, precisely, in order to enter somewhere and see what is happening there, and the movement of taking notes of what is happening and preparing oneself for another higher opening, all this establishes conscious contact between the different parts of the being, and then one can have experiences without forgetting anything, and even at will.

But there are some rather uneducated people, for instance, who suddenly develop a faculty and have a direct experience somewhere in the higher mind or the psychic being or in some other part of the being. There are many reasons for this: it may be the result of former lives, it may be a phenomenon of consciousness of this life, it could be many things. In any case, for it to be fully useful, it should be done with the will to use it for one's progress and become conscious of the different parts of the being in order to be able to do what one ought to do to the best of one's ability. For instance, I have known people who were absolutely ignorant and uneducated but had a gift of vision, and a remarkable gift: they were put into trance and saw marvellously and described things—they knew how to see and describe all they saw whilst they were seeing it. But when they came out of that condition, they were absolutely ordinary beings without any education and intelligence. Yet that was a marvellous gift. That means there are beings who can make the greatest progress from the spiritual point of view, and even the intellectual, and who yet are apparently and in their outer life quite ordinary. There are others—I have known some who had an absolutely marvellous spiritual realisation, who lived constantly in the divine Presence and yet never had a vision in all their life! And they used to complain about it.... It is a question of temperament, destiny, and probably of the work one has to do, for evidently one can't do everything — physically

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it is impossible. Consequently one must choose.

When the body falls ill, do the mind and vital also fall ill?

Not necessarily. Illness (I have explained this to you) comes usually from a dislocation between the different parts of the being, from a sort of disharmony. Well, it can very well happen that the body has not followed a certain movement of progress, for instance, that it has remained behind, and that, on the other hand, the other parts of the being have progressed, and so that disequilibrium, that rupture of harmony creates the illness, and the mind may be in a very fine state and the vital also. There are people who have been ill for years — with terrible, incurable diseases — and who have kept their mental capacity marvellously clear and progressed mentally. There is a French poet (a very good poet) called Sully Prudhomme; he was mortally ill; and it was then that he wrote his most beautiful poems. He remained charming, amiable, smiling — amiable with everyone, and yet his body was going to pieces. That depends on people. There are others still — as soon as they feel the least bit ill, everything is upset from top to bottom — they are then good for nothing. For each one the combination is different.

It is said there is a relation between the body and the mind. If the mind is not quite all right, then what?

But certainly there is a relation between the body and the mind! There is even more than a relation: it is a very close tie, for most of the time it is the mind which makes the body ill. In any case, it is the principal factor.

And if the body is not well?

That depends on people, I told you. There are people — as soon

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as the least thing happens to their body, their mind is completely upset. There are others still who may be very ill and yet keep their mind clear. It is rarer and more difficult to see a mind that's upset and the body remaining healthy — it is not impossible but it is much rarer, for the body depends a great deal on the state of the mind. The mind (I have written it there in the book) is the master of the physical being. And I have said the latter was a very docile and obedient servant. Only one doesn't know how to use one's mind, rather the opposite. Not only does one not know how to use it, but one uses it ill — as badly as possible. The mind has a considerable power of formation and a direct action on the body, and usually one uses this power to make oneself ill. For as soon as the least thing goes wrong, the mind begins to shape and build all the catastrophes possible, to ask itself whether it could be this, whether it could be that, if it is going to be like that, and how it will all end. Well, if instead of letting the mind do this disastrous work, one used the same capacity to make favourable formations — simply, for example, to give confidence to the body, to tell it that it is just a passing disturbance and that it is nothing, and if it enters a real state of receptivity, the disorder will disappear as easily as it has come, and one can cure oneself in a few seconds — if one knows how to do that, one gets wonderful results.

There is a moment for choice, even in an accident. For instance, one slips and falls. Just between the moment one has slipped and the moment one falls there is a fraction of a second. At that moment one has the choice: it may be nothing much, it may be very serious. Only, the consciousness must naturally be wide awake and one must be in contact with one's psychic being constantly — there is no time to make the contact, one must *be* in contact. Between the moment one slips and the moment one is on the ground, if the mental and psychic formation is sufficiently strong, then there is nothing, nothing will happen — nothing happens. But if at that moment, the mind according to its habit becomes a pessimist and tells itself: "Oh! I have slipped...." That

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lasts the fraction of a second; that doesn't take even a minute, it is a fraction of a second; during a fraction of a second one has the choice. But one must be so awake, every minute of one's life! For a fraction of a second one has the choice, there is a fraction of a second in which one can prevent the accident from being serious, can prevent the illness from entering in. One always has the choice. But it is for a fraction of a second and one must not miss it. If one misses it, it is finished.

One can make it afterwards? (laughter)

No. Afterwards there is yet another moment.... One has fallen, one is already hurt; but there is still a moment when one can change things for the better or worse, so that it may be something very fugitive the bad effects of which will quickly disappear or something which becomes as serious, as grave as it can be. I don't know if you have noticed that there are people who never miss the opportunity of an accident! Every time there is the possibility of an accident, they have it. And never is their accident ordinary. Every time the accident can be serious, it is serious. Well, usually in life one says: "Oh! he is unlucky, he is unfortunate, indeed he has no luck." But all that is ignorance. It depends absolutely on the working of his consciousness. I could give you examples — only I would have to speak about certain people and I don't want to. But I could give you striking examples! And this — this is the sort of thing one sees all the time, all the time here! There are people who could have been killed and who come out of it unscathed; there are others for whom it was not serious, and it becomes serious.

But that does not depend on thought, on the working of the ordinary thought. They may apparently have thoughts as good as the others — it is not that. It is the second of the choice — people knowing how to react just in the right way at the right time. I could give you hundreds of examples. It is quite interesting.

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This depends absolutely on character. Some have such an awakened consciousness, so alert, that they are not asleep, they are awake within. Just at the second it is required they call the help. Or they invoke the divine Force. But just at the second it is needed. So the danger is averted, nothing happens. They could have been killed: they come out of it absolutely unhurt. Others, on the contrary, as soon as they have the least little scratch, something gets dislocated in their being: a sort of fright or pessimism or defeatism in their consciousness which automatically comes up—it was nothing, they had just twisted their leg and the next minute they break it. There is no reason for it. They could very well have not broken their leg.

There are others who climb up to a first floor on a ladder which gives way under them. They could have collapsed—they come out of that without the least hurt. How did they manage it? Apparently this seems wonderful, and still this is how things happen to them. They find themselves lying on the ground in an altogether fine state; nothing has happened to them. I could give you the names, I am telling you exact facts.

So, on what does this depend? It depends on whether one is sufficiently awake for the second of the choice to... And note that this is not at all mental, it is not that: it is an attitude of the being, it is the consciousness reacting in the right way. It goes quite far, very far, it is formidable, the power of this attitude. But as it is just a fraction of a second, it implies an altogether awakened consciousness which never sleeps, never enters the inconscient. For one does not know when these things are going to happen, isn't that so? Hence, one does not have the time to wake up. One must be awake.

I knew someone who, indeed, should have died and did not die because of this. For his consciousness reacted very fast. He had taken poison by mistake: instead of taking one dose of a certain medicine, he had taken twelve and it was a poison; he should have died, the heart should have stopped (it was many years ago) and he is still quite alive! He reacted in the right way.

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If these things were narrated they would be called miracles.
They are not miracles: it is an awakened consciousness.

*How were we saved the other day when working down
there with the crane?*²

I suppose you ought to know!

We know partly.

Very partially, vaguely, a sort of impression “like that” — an impression, almost an attitude, but not knowledge. How that works, one would not be able to say!

It was by Grace.

But if you can explain to me how that works, it would be interesting for everybody. It would be very interesting to know who exactly had that wakeful consciousness, had faith and a sort of... something that answered automatically, and perhaps not consciously.

There are degrees, many degrees. Human intelligence is such that unless there is a contrast it does not understand. You know, I have received hundreds of letters from people thanking me because they had been saved; but it is very, very rarely that someone writes to thank me because nothing has happened, you understand! Let us take an accident, it is already the beginning of a disorder. Naturally when it is a public or collective accident, the atmosphere of each person has its part in the thing, and that depends on the proportion of defeatists and those who,

² A team of young Ashram disciples was trying to lift a tree-trunk into a truck with the help of a crane, when the crane broke apart, flying into pieces on all sides, but without hurting anyone. Then the tree-trunk half lifted in began rolling slowly, causing the truck to lean on one side threatening to crush several boys, when, without any apparent reason or any physical object to hold it back, the trunk suddenly stopped in its course.

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on the contrary, are on the right side. I don't know if I have written this—it is written somewhere—but it is a very interesting thing. I am going to tell you.... People are not aware of the workings of Grace except when there has been some danger, that is, when there has been the beginning of an accident or the accident has taken place and they have escaped it. Then they become aware. But never are they aware that if, for instance, a journey or anything whatever, passes without any accident, it is an infinitely higher Grace. That is, the harmony is established in such a way that nothing can happen. But that seems to them quite natural. When people are ill and get well quickly, they are full of gratitude; but never do they think of being grateful when they are well; and yet that is a much greater miracle! In collective accidents, what is interesting is exactly the proportion, the sort of balance or disequilibrium, the combination made by the different atmospheres of people.

There was an aviator, one of the great "aces" as they are called of the First [World] War, and a marvellous aviator. He had won numerous battles, nothing had ever happened to him. But something occurred in his life and suddenly he felt that something was going to happen to him, an accident, that it was now all over. What they call their "good luck" had gone. This man left the military to enter civil aviation and he piloted one of these lines—no, not civil aviation: the war ended, but he continued flying military airplanes. And then he wanted to make a trip to South Africa: from France to South Africa. Evidently, something must have been upset in his consciousness (I did not know him personally, so I don't know what happened). He started from a certain city in France to go to Madagascar, I believe (I am not sure, I think it was Madagascar). And from there he wanted to come back to France. My brother was at that time governor of the Congo, and he wanted to get back quickly to his post. He asked to be allowed as a passenger on the plane (it was one of those planes for professional tours, to show what these planes could do). Many people wanted to dissuade my brother

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from going by it; they told him, "No, these trips are always dangerous, you must not go on them." But finally he went all the same. They had a breakdown and stopped in the middle of the Sahara, a situation not very pleasant. Yet everything was arranged as by a miracle, the plane started again and put down my brother in the Congo, exactly where he wanted to go, then it went farther south. And soon after, half-way the plane crashed — and the other man was killed.... It was obvious that this had to happen. But my brother had an absolute faith in his destiny, a certitude that nothing would happen. And it was translated in this way: the mixture of the two atmospheres made the dislocation unavoidable, for there was a breakdown in the Sahara and the plane was obliged to land, but finally everything was in order and there was no real accident. But once he was no longer there, the other man had all the force of his "ill-luck" (if you like), and the accident was complete and he was killed.

A similar incident happened to a boat. There were two persons (they were well-known people but I cannot remember their names now), who had gone to Indo-China by plane. There was an accident, they were the only ones to have been saved, all the others were killed, indeed it was quite a dramatic affair. But these two (husband and wife) must have been what may be called bringers of bad-luck — it is a sort of atmosphere they carry. Well, these two wanted to go back to France (for, in fact, the accident occurred on their way back to France), they wanted to return to France, they took a boat. And quite unexpectedly, exceptionally, right in the midst of the Red Sea the boat ran into a reef (a thing that doesn't happen even once in a million journeys) and sank; and the others were drowned, and these two were saved. And I could do nothing, you know, I wanted to say: "Take care, never travel with these people!"... There are people of this sort, wherever they are, they come out of the thing very well, but the catastrophes are for the others.

If one sees things from the ordinary viewpoint, one does not notice this. But the associations of atmosphere — one must

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take care of that. That is why when one travels in groups, one must know with whom one travels. One should have an inner knowledge, should have a vision. And then, if one sees somebody who has a kind of small black cloud around him, one must take care not to travel with him, for, surely an accident will occur — though perhaps not to him. Hence, it is quite useful to know things a little more deeply than in the altogether superficial way.

(*Looking at the child*) He looks as if he found life becoming very difficult in this way!

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What do you mean by the instinct of destruction in children?

It is not there in all children. I have known many who, on the contrary, were very careful.

Children are not as “concretised”, materialised in their physical consciousness as older people—as one grows up, it is as though one is coagulated and becomes more and more gross in one’s consciousness unless through a willed action one develops otherwise. For instance, the majority of children find it very difficult to distinguish their imagination, their dreams, what they see within themselves from outer things. The world is not as limited as when one is older and more precise. And they are extremely sensitive within; they are much closer to their psychic being than when they are grown up, and much more sensitive to the forces which, later, will become invisible to them—but at this moment are not. It is not unusual for children to have some sort of fits of fear or even of joy in their sleep, from dreams. Children are afraid of all sorts of things which for older people don’t exist any more. Their vision is not solely material. They have a kind of perception, more or less exact and precise, of the play of the forces behind. So, being in that state they are influenced by forces which otherwise have no hold over people who are shut up in themselves and more gross. And these forces—the forces of destruction, for example, or forces of cruelty, forces of wickedness, of ill-will—all, all these things are in the atmosphere. When one is more conscious and more well-formed within, one can see that they are outside oneself and deny them any expression. But when one is very young and lives in a half-dream, these things can exercise much influence and make children do things which in their normal state they

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would not do. I believe it is due to that above all.

There is also the phenomenon of unconsciousness. Very often a child does harm without even being aware that it is doing harm; they are unconscious, they are shut up in their movement, and they are not aware of the effect of what they do. That happens very often.

That means that if a child is rightly educated, and if one appeals to his best feelings and explains to him that to do things in such and such a way is harmful to others (and one can make this very tangible for them with a little demonstration), they stop doing harm, very often.

It is above all a question of education. These half-conscious movements of cruelty—it is very rare for parents not to have them; well, that is enough to set its impression upon a child's consciousness. There are some—but that is a very small number—who have an adverse formation inside them. These are irretrievably wicked children. But they are very rare. There are none here, happily.

"For it is certain that the nature of the child to be born depends very much upon the mother who forms it, upon her aspiration and will as well as upon the material surroundings in which she lives. To see that her thoughts are always beautiful and pure, her feelings always noble and fine, her material surroundings as harmonious as possible and full of a great simplicity—this is the part of education which should apply to the mother herself. And if she has in addition a conscious and definite will to form the child according to the highest ideal she can conceive, then the very best conditions will be realised so that the child can come into the world with the utmost potentialities."

On Education, CWM, Vol. 12, p. 9

When great souls want to be born upon earth, do they choose their parents?

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Ah! that depends on their state of consciousness, it depends on the state of their psychic formation. If the psychic being is completely formed, if it has reached the perfection of its being and is free to reincarnate or not, it has also the capacity of choosing. But I believe I have explained that to you already. They don't have a physical sight like ours so long as they are not in a body. So, evidently, they look for a body which is adapted and fit to express them, but they must give its share to the material unconscious, if it may be put thus, and to the necessity to adapt themselves to the most material laws of the body. So, from the point of view of the psychic, the choice of the place where one is born is important, it is more than an insignificant detail. But there are so many things that can't be foreseen. For instance, one chooses an environment, a country, a certain type of family, one tries to see the nature of the likely parents, one asks for certain already well-developed qualities in them and a sufficient self-mastery. But all this is not enough if one does not carry in oneself a sufficient dynamism to overcome the obstacles. So, all things considered, this is not enormously important. Anyhow, even at the best, even if the parents have collaborated consciously, there is an enormous mass of the subconscious and the yet lower unconscious which from time to time rises again to the surface, gets stirred up, damages the work, makes calmness and silence indispensable. Always, always a preparation is needed, even if one has chosen — a long preparation. Not to speak of the phenomenon of being half-stunned at the moment of birth, the descent into the body, which often lasts for a very long time before one can escape from it completely.

Some children are wicked. Is it because their parents did not aspire for them?

It is perhaps a subconscious wickedness in the parents. It is said that people throw out their wickedness from themselves by giving it birth in their children. One has always a shadow

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in oneself. There are people who project this outside—that does not always free them from it, but still perhaps it comforts them! But it is the child who “profits” by it, you see? It is quite evident that the state of consciousness in which the parents are at that moment is of capital importance. If they have very low and vulgar ideas, the children will reflect them quite certainly. And all these children who are ill-formed, ill-bred, incomplete (specially from the point of view of intelligence: with holes, things missing), children who are only half-conscious and half-formed—this is always due to the state of consciousness in which the parents were when they conceived the child. Even as the state of consciousness of the last moments of life is of capital importance for the future of the one who is departing, so too the state of consciousness in which the parents are at the moment of conception gives a sort of stamp to the child, which it will reflect throughout its life. So, these are apparently such little things—the mood of the moment, the moment’s aspiration or degradation, anything whatsoever, everything that takes place at a particular moment—it seems to be so small a thing, and it has so great a consequence: it brings into the world a child who is incomplete or wicked or finally a failure. And people are not aware of that.

Later, when the child behaves nastily, they scold it. But they should begin by scolding themselves, telling themselves: “In what a horrible state of consciousness I must have been when I brought that child into the world.” For it is truly that.

Sometimes it so happens that a mother educates her child well, but the people around spoil it. Then what can the mother do?

Yes, that’s perfectly true. The worst of all (which men usually do) is to leave their children with servants. It is a crime. For these people have an altogether vulgar consciousness, altogether low, altogether obscure; and quite spontaneously, without wanting

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to do so, they let it enter the children. Naturally, there is also the age when children are put to school and there they begin to come in contact with a host of children whose company is not always quite desirable. It is very difficult to avoid these relations. But all the same, if one has started life with a little consciousness and much goodwill, when one meets people who are not desirable company, one feels it. And if one is goodwilled, immediately one tries not to see them or not to be with them.

But if the power of ill-will is greater than the other person's goodwill?

Yes, that's true, that may happen. Fundamentally, this is why we always come back to the same thing: one must do all one can, as well as possible, and do it as an offering to the Divine, and then, once all this is settled and organised, well, if there is really an aspiration in the being, and a being that is a being of light, it can counteract all bad influences. But once one puts one's foot into this world, one can't hope very much to be quite pure and free from bad influences. Every time one eats, one absorbs them; every time one breathes, one absorbs them. Then, essentially, what is necessary is to do the work of cleansing, progressively, as much as possible.

Why do some children take interest in things only when there is some excitement?

They are tamasic. It is due to the large proportion of tamas in their nature. The more tamasic one is, the more does one need something violent and exciting circumstances. When the physical is tamasic, unless one eats spices and highly flavoured food, one does not feel nourished. And yet these are poisons. They act exactly like poison on the nerves. They do not nourish. But it is because people are tamasic, because their body's consciousness is not sufficiently developed. Well, mentally it is

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the same thing, vitally the same thing. If they are tamasic, they always need new excitements, dramas, murders, suicides, etc. to feel anything at all, otherwise.... And there is nothing, nothing that makes one more wicked and cruel than *tamas*. For it is this need of excitement which shakes you up a little, makes you come out of yourself. And one must also learn, there, to distinguish between those who are exclusively tamasic and those who are mixed, and those who are struggling within themselves with their different parts. One can, one *must* know in what proportion their nature is constituted, so as to be able to insist at need on one thing or another. Some people constantly need a whipping from life in order to move, otherwise they would spend their time sleeping. Others, on the contrary, need soothing things, silence, a retreat in the country-side — all things that do a lot of good but which must disappear as soon as one needs to make an effort for progress or to realise something or struggle against a defect, conquer an obstacle.... It is complicated, don't you think so?

The proportion is very important, this proportion of the three “gunas” (you know the three gunas?)¹ the proportion of the three gunas in the nature. And one must know the exact proportion in oneself and how to use one guna to fight the other, and so on. But there is a moment when one should attain a certain equilibrium, and then be capable of establishing it in oneself a little steadily and facing life without having to fall into holes or struggle against terrible things. From that moment on everything goes well.

It had been proposed that education in our school and our university centre would be given in accordance with the ideals of Sri Aurobindo. But so far the education

¹ The three principles of Indian psychology: *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattwa*. *Tamas* is the principle of inertia and obscurity; *rajas* the principle of passion, desire and dynamism; *sattwa* the principle of light and equilibrium.

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*given here is the same as in other schools; one follows
the same programme.*

Yes, my child. And for years I have been fighting for it to be otherwise. When you — you children, here — when you are old enough and ready to become teachers, then you will be entrusted with teaching the newcomers the right thing, in the right way. Actually, for the time being, it is much more a school of teachers than a school of students! What is wanted is that you prepare yourselves by learning what everybody knows — for there is an indispensable basis: it is not anything very much, it is not a very detailed or very deeply established basis, but still there is a basis of general human knowledge that's necessary — but once you have that basis and have at the same time benefited by the influence that is here, and when you have read and understood sufficiently well to be able to see from that angle — the angle of the true life — well, when you know all that, you will be the ones asked to teach the children from outside what you have learnt. That is part of the work.

It is true that apart from a few rare exceptions, the teaching is given on the most ordinary principles. I know it. But, for instance, in order that it be otherwise, the books which are used should be prepared here, with the extracts chosen here, even with the method of teaching worked out here. I have asked several persons to do it. But this is one of those interminable tasks which make you always put off for the next year the possibility of taking a class which does not follow the grooves of the past. That preparation of the material, for instance, for the true understanding of things, that takes time. One has to face very concrete problems. It is difficult to teach children without their having books to be able to study. But these books, finally, are perforce ordered from the stock available. There is not much choice. One tries to find the best that is available, but the best that is there is yet not very good. There also, I need people to prepare them, these books. But precisely, I believe

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that someone who has grown up here from childhood and felt things quite subconsciously when very young, and who has in spite of everything... that leaves a trace, it cannot go without any effect; and when one sees children brought up here beside those who come from outside, there is truly a great difference (perhaps not outwardly in the mechanical part of training, but in the understanding, the intelligence, in the inner awakening), there is a considerable difference, and the new ones need some time to come up to the same level. It is something beyond books, don't you see? It is like the difference between living in a pure atmosphere, filling the lungs with pure air every time one breathes and living in an infected atmosphere and poisoning oneself every time one breathes. From the point of view of consciousness it is the same phenomenon, and it is essentially the most important thing. And it is this which completely escapes the superficial consciousness. You are plunged in a sea of consciousness full of light, aspiration, true understanding, essential purity, and whether you want it or not it enters. Even for those who are shut up in their outer consciousness, well, they cannot sleep in vain. There is an action here during sleep which is quite considerable, considerable. So that has an effect, it is visible. I have seen people who had come altogether from outside, who knew nothing (only they had spent their life taking interest in children), well, the impression of these people — visitors, people just passing by — they are all quite bewildered: "But you have children here as I have never seen elsewhere!" As for us, we are used to it, aren't we? They are spontaneously like that, quite naturally. But there is an awakening in the consciousness, there is a kind of inner response and a feeling of blossoming, of inner freedom which is not found elsewhere. Some of the children who come here are terribly well brought up — so polite, so well-bred, who answer you so... and one gets the impression of little puppets, just half alive, who have been well polished, well brushed, well groomed outside, but within there is no response. Here, I cannot say that we give an example of unusual politeness (!), one is rather a

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little... a little what people call "ill-bred". But in that too one is so alive! One feels a consciousness vibrating here. And that is the most important part of all. And of this one does not speak, for these are things one *does*, but does not talk about — an occasion like today's must present itself for me to speak to you about it. Indeed, you have been here for so many years, and this is the first time I have had it. *Voilà*.

You have exhausted all your questions?

It is outside the subject. Mother, every year you give a message on the first of January. What does it exactly indicate?

Yes, every year.... During the war it was wonderful, it was like a prophecy of what was going to come. Now there is no longer any war and no more need of prophecy! But it is always an indication of the progress which has to be made. You will receive it tomorrow morning, the prayer.² But I advise you to reflect deeply on it. For truly it was spoken and considered as of great importance. Now we are becoming almost a thing of public interest, in the sense that there are lots of visitors coming and lots of people concerned about what we are doing here, and then they are taken round and told what we have supposedly done and what we are going to do and all that. And there was truly a great need to say: "I beg of you, don't speak so much about what we are doing: do it." That is all.

It is always better to do than to speak, and in the least details also.

There is another meaning too, much deeper. But about that I shall speak to you another time.

Voilà, au revoir my children.

² New Year Prayer of 1954:

"My Lord, here is Thy advice to all, for this year:
'Never boast about anything, let your acts speak for you.' "

Note on the Text

These talks of 1953 were given by the Mother in French and appear here in translation. The first eight talks were noted down by one of the participants; the rest were tape-recorded. The talks were first published in the French original and in English translation in the quarterly *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education* from August 1967 to February 1973. In 1976 the English translation, slightly revised, was brought out under the title *Questions and Answers 1953* as Volume 5 of the Collected Works of the Mother (first edition). The book was reprinted independently in 1998. The present volume has the same text as the first edition of the Collected Works, apart from some minor revisions of the translation.